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SCRIPTABLE

A Bispectral Review of Recent Books



Robert Tenor, editor
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EDITORIAL

[Scriptable](#) is an irregular review of what was once called the belles-lettres, where we essay upon a wide assortment of current books and articles with an eye open for “the beautiful jumble of discordant congruencies” derived from the authors and titles under discussion. We cast a wide academic net through the social sciences and humanities, with a strong orientation toward current events, social theory, religious and cultural studies.

With this number we move away from simple reportage of current scholarship to something more ambitious. The body of each issue includes editorial essays examining themes inspired by the works under consideration. Our [Annotated Bibliography](#) will review, list and link the titles under discussion, providing a faithful summary of its content and audience.

Our purpose is to inform and entertain. Through the review essays we hope to visit new and timeworn places through unsettled ideas in currency newly minted. Perhaps to see the outlandish as intimate and to show up the familiar as stranger than before thought.

Each issue should surprise.



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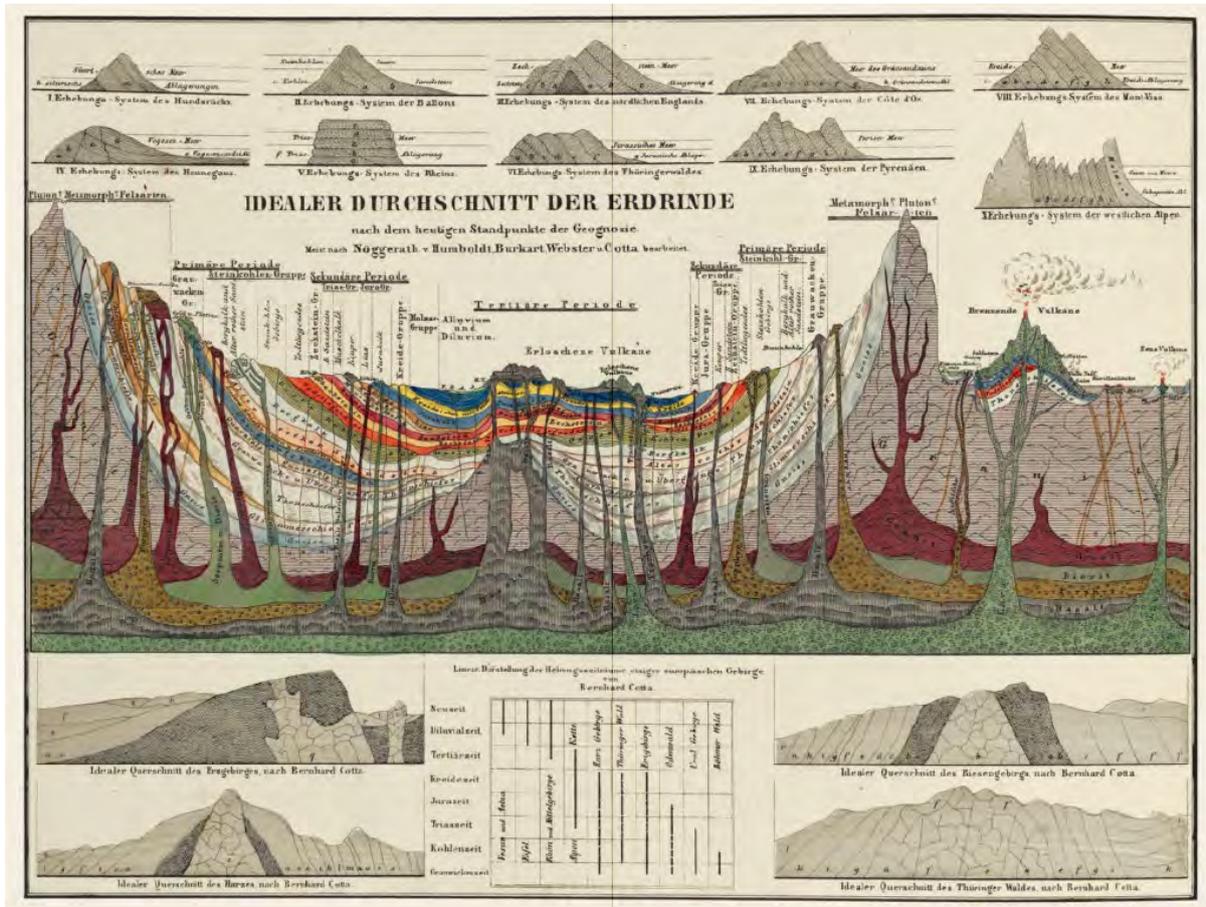
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CONNECTEDNESS: AN INCOMPLETE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE ANTHROPOCENE edited by Marianne Krogh, some contributing authors: Greta Thunberg, Diana Coole, Kirsten Halsnaes, Dehlia Hannah, Connie Hedegaard, Bill McKibben, Timothy Morton, Minik Rosing, Darren Sharpe, Superflex, Marianne Krogh [Strandberg Publishing, 9788793604865]



A plate from the atlas of Alexander von Humboldt's *Kosmos* illustrating the composition of the Earth's crust via colour-coding. Between 1799 and 1804, Prussian geographer, naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt travelled extensively in Latin America, exploring and describing it for the first time in a manner generally considered to be a modern scientific point of view. His quantitative work on botanical geography laid the foundation for the field of bio-geography.

Surveying humanity's impact on the planet, with contributions from Donna Haraway, Bill McKibben, Greta Thunberg, Bruno Latour, Alice Waters and others

This timely book, in the form of an encyclopedia, considers the totality of issues surrounding the Anthropocene, that geologic era characterized by humanity's vast impact on the Earth.

CONNECTEDNESS acknowledges the incomplete nature of its project seeing as how this riotous era is not yet finished. With contributions by Greta Thunberg, Bill McKibben, Alice Waters, Tomás Saraceno, Björk and many others, this publication consists of approximately 100 entries, arranged alphabetically, each reflecting on questions, phenomena, terms, possibilities and theories associated with the Anthropocene. Examples of entries include Air, Borders and Coexistence, as well as more

complex subjects such as Donna Haraway on the Chthulucene or Anders Blok on Climate Risk Communities. The content ranges from scientific to cultural-theoretical and artistic contributions featuring a wide span of scholars, philosophers, anthropologists, scientists, authors, artists and others. The book accompanies the exhibition at the Danish Pavilion at the 2020 Venice Architectural Biennale.

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Note for the reader The alphabetic structure of the book suggests a general reading sequence.

At the top of each contribution is a selection of words, concepts and brief sentences.

Black text marks key words related to the text, while red text offers references to other contributions in the book where you can read more about the given topics.

Each contribution is thus connected to several others, offering an alternative approach to the logic of the alphabet.

Connectedness is about Sharing

We humans intuitively recognize that we are intimately connected to our own family members, but we are much less conscious of the fact that we are also intimately connected to members of our own species whom we have never met, and to the physical and natural world around us. Humanity's connectedness to the surrounding world was obvious to our earliest ancestors, who, for the first 200,000 years or more after the evolution of modern humans, had no choice but to obtain food and shelter by foraging and hunting in nature. Thus, for most of human history, humans knew that their daily survival was completely dependent on a respect for humanity's connectedness with the physical and natural world.

In humanity's most recent history, we have learnt to harness external energy sources and to control our own food production. These innovations removed, at least for much of humanity, the daily reminders that confronted our ancestors regarding the importance of the connectedness between humanity and the global ecosystem of which we are a part. There is an old adage, out of sight, out of mind, and, indeed, it fits well when we consider this. Most of us have lost sight of the fact that our societies and their continued development are completely dependent on our connectedness with the Earth and its resources.

Societal development—that is, improving human wellbeing — whether we are talking about poverty, hunger, clothing, shelter, infrastructure or water, comes about through use of the Earth's resources. One can say that these resources are our true currency and that it is these resources, and not money, upon which humanity's prosperity is based. In other words, humanity is still intimately connected to these resources despite the fact that there has been little awareness about this connectedness in recent decades.

Fortunately, there is a growing awareness that respecting the connectedness between different societies and between humanity and the Earth's resources is a prerequisite for continued societal development. Collectively, we are rediscovering the importance of respecting humanity's connectedness with the world around us. This journey of rediscovery may have begun when astronauts on the Apollo Mission sent pictures back from space of the Earth. What impresses us most with these pictures is the fact the Earth is a completely isolated planet. There are no connections between the Earth and any other body in space. Ultimately, that means that when we have used the Earth's resources, we will get no more.

Our connectedness to the Earth implies that further societal development requires careful consideration of how we will share its limited resources among what is soon expected to be a global population of nine to ten billion along with all other living organisms. It is this sharing that connectedness is all about and that all of the contributions in this book, in one way or another, have in focus. Humanity is on a journey in which we are rediscovering just how connected we are with other members of our species and with the world around us. Nothing could be clearer proof of this than the current coronavirus pandemic. The contributions found in this book may help us to discover and understand many other aspects of our global connectedness.

May they enrich and support you on our common journey!

Katherine Richardson

Professor and the leader of the Sustainability Science Center, University of Copenhagen. Appointed by the UN General Secretary as a member of the Independent Group of Scientists that wrote the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report.

April, 2020



RIKKE LUTHER, ATMOSPHERE FROM THE WORK OVERSPILL – UNIVERSIAL MAP COMMISSIONED FOR THE 32ND SÃO PAULO BIENAL, BRAZIL, 2016 ORIGINAL PRINTED ON TILES, RECREATED ON TEXTILE IN 2018 2.25 × 4 M

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE CITY: INQUIRIES INTO POSTSECCULAR URBANISM edited by Helmuth Berking, Silke Steets, and Jochen Schwenk [Bloomsbury Studies in Religion, Space and Place, Bloomsbury Academic, 9781350037687]

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE CITY: INQUIRIES INTO POSTSECCULAR URBANISM challenges the notion that the city is a secular place, and calls for an analysis of how religion and the city are intertwined. It is the first book to analyze the explanatory value of a number of typologies already in use around this topic – from "holy city" to "secular city", from "fundamentalist" to "postsecular city". By intertwining the city and religion, urban theory and theories of religion, this is the first book to provide an international and interdisciplinary analysis of post-secular urbanism.

The book argues that, given the rise of religiously inspired violence and the increasing significance of charismatic Christianity, Islam and other spiritual traditions, the master narrative that modern societies are secular societies has lost its empirical plausibility. Instead, we are seeing the pluralization of religion, the co-existence of different religious worldviews, and the simultaneity of secular and religious institutions that shape everyday life. These particular constellations of "religious pluralism" are, above all, played out in cities.

Including contributions from Peter L. Berger and Nezar Alsayyad, this book conceptually and empirically revokes the dissolution between city and religion to unveil its intimate relationship, and offers an alternative view on the quotidian state of the global urban condition.

Review

A remarkably innovative theoretical intervention. This scintillating book goes beyond existing work in the burgeoning field of urban religion by focusing on religious pluralism in cities. Based on the recognition of cities' inherent pluralism, it explores how this pluralism has evolved historically, is reconfigured in our era of intensified mobility, and shapes religious life in major metropolitan centers across the world. The book magisterially unpacks new religious-secular cleavages and is highly recommended for students of social sciences, urbanism, and religion.—Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Professor of Cultural Sociology, University of Leipzig, Germany

Endorsement for the book **RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE CITY: INQUIRIES INTO POSTSECTULAR URBANISM** A timely and highly relevant book examining religious-secular dynamics in contemporary cities. By combining cutting-edge theoretical developments on space, power and religion, with rich empirical cases, the authors offer a comprehensive understanding of the nature and transformation of religious pluralism in urban contexts across the world. A must read for anyone interested in learning about the changing role of religion in times of pluralism.—Mar Griera, Associate Professor, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Helmuth Berking, Silke Steets and Jochen Schwenk deserve kudos for publishing this wideranging, provocative and empirically engaging collection examining religious pluralism and urban life today. The contributions are diverse and smart, both in their theoretical orientations and in their approaches to different cities and religious communities. Anyone interested in a multitude of pressing contemporary sociological and political issues will find this book both intriguing and of great value. —Mitchell Cohen, Professor of Political Science, Baruch College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA

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Overview of Book

These three problem areas for understanding the relationship between city and religion also served as a template for the structure of the present volume. After the conceptual contributions in Part One "From Secularization to Pluralization" and Part Two "Between Fundamentalism and Postsecularism: Conceptualizing the Relations between City and Religion" elaborate on the nature of the relationship among the city, religion, and modernity, Part Three "Religious Pluralism: Conflicts and Negotiations in the City" is dedicated to the lived urban pluralism in cities in different parts of the world. A strong empirical orientation sheds light on the negotiating, mediating, and controlling processes which govern relationships among the various forms of religion and between religious and secular worldviews. In closing, Part Four "Changing Urban Imaginaries" focuses on religiously imbued urban concepts, urban imagery, and scholarly conceptualizations of city and religion.

From Secularization to Pluralization

The volume opens with a contribution by sociologist and modernity theorist Peter L. Berger (Boston University). In his most recent book, *The Many Altars of Modernity* (2014), Berger develops a theory of pluralism, which is supposed to replace the theory of secularization, and which he applies in his chapter to the modern metropolis and particular urban spaces (such as, for example, hospitals). Berger assumes that modernity is shaped by "two pluralisms": a plurality of religions and moral systems coexisting in the same society and the coexistence of religion and a powerful secular discourse, without which a modern society would not function. He asks, first, how the two pluralisms at the political level of a society are managed institutionally and, secondly, how human beings handle the diversity of differing worldviews at the subjective level of the mind. The modern metropolis—and he demonstrates this with examples—provides ideal conditions for this research perspective, as differences in space merge in it.

Between Fundamentalism and Postsecularism: Conceptualizing the Relations between City and Religion

Whereas Berger emphasizes the positive and fascinating aspects of modern pluralist metropolises, urban theorist and planner Nezar AlSayyad (UC Berkeley) focuses on the conflicted relationship of city and religion. Under the impression of diminishing state power and the triumph of the neoliberal economic paradigm, he sees cities as the predestined sites where the struggle of social participation, political visibility, and collective (religious) identity constructions is—in part violently—carried out. AlSayyad understands "fundamentalism" as a specifically modern reaction by religious people to the challenges of modernity and through which the role of religion in the public sphere has been seriously challenged. Consequently, the "fundamentalist city" is a city where local or global forces shape highly exclusionary patterns of space. The central principle at work here is the religious, ethnic, and gender-related homogenization of the city by the majority population. As a result, AlSayyad perceives a "medieval ordering of space" characterized by the fact that a violently enforced homogeneity becomes the norm.

Much like in AlSayyad, the theologian and social scientist Christopher Baker (Goldsmiths, University of London) focuses on the effects of diminishing state power and the triumph of neoliberal capitalism, although he draws contrasting conclusions. While current forms of urbanity in many countries are characterized by what he calls "the great separation," that is, a splintered spatiality and commonality, Baker also observes examples of the great re-connection." What is meant is above all modes of civil engagement and ethical subjectivities that help to generate urban sustainability and humanization. The prerequisite for these, however, is a cosmopolitan religious imagination, in other words, a form of religion and religiosity that is conscious of its own standpoint (and the standpoint of other religions and thus of its own limitedness). Against the background of Habermas's concept of post-secularity, Baker argues that a reflexively applied cosmopolitan religious imagination can serve, first, as a basis for a polyphonic public space of discourse and, second, as a major (spiritual) source for practices of social responsibility in the city. In this way, it contributes to 'the great reconnection' and to what Baker calls 'the good city'

In critical analyses of the model of both the "fundamentalist city" and the "post-secular city: geographer Stephan Lanz (Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt [Oder]) calls for a theoretical research perspective on lived religion in cities around that world that is less loaded with preconditions. Adopting a post-colonial approach which opposes premature thematic attributions, Lanz discusses "specific urban-religious configurations understood as assemblages of material, social, symbolic, and sensuous spaces as well as social practices and subjectivities that mutually influence each other and thereby form specific modes of urban religion. Lanz demonstrates the fruitfulness of this approach with two examples: the self-made religion of marginalized urban dwellers in Rio de Janeiro (that serves primarily as subaltern infrastructures helping people to survive) and the religious metropolitan mainstream observed in Berlin and Istanbul (that mainly serves as an expression of an individual lifestyle). Interestingly, both urban-religious configurations operate in the framework of a ubiquitous global religious marketplace that functions in a similar manner and is founded on ideas, consumption habits, lifestyles, and messages which circulate globally and from which "consumers" or "believers" choose according to their needs. The city—understood here as the prime marketplace of heterogeneous worldviews—is the crucial place where these (urban) religiosities flourish.

Religious Pluralism: Conflicts and Negotiations in the City

At the center of the more empirically oriented contribution of sociologists Marian Burchardt (University of Leipzig), Irene Becci (University of Lausanne) and Mariachiara Giorda (University of Turin) are the material and symbolic superimpositions of religious forms of expression in the urban spaces of Barcelona and Turin. In comparing these two European cities they explore how spatial

strategies of religious groups have formed multifaceted, although highly contested urban fabrics. According to the authors, both Barcelona and Turin are shaped by what they call "religious superdiversity," that is, a socio-cultural context in which established religions coexist with diaspora or migrant religions, and emerging spiritualities. Each of these forms of religion has developed a different kind of relationship to the cities' power structures as well as spatial regimes. As a result, the authors observe different spatial strategies through which majority and minority religious groups compete for visibility and recognition: Inherited religious institutions such as the still dominant Christian traditions mostly apply strategies of "place keeping." Diaspora and migrant religions, by contrast, adopt strategies of "placemaking," whereas new religious and spiritual movements are mainly "place seekers." All in all, their analysis shows clearly that that urban space is an iconic arena in which religious superdiversity becomes visible.

The contribution by anthropologist Martijn Oosterbaan (Utrecht University) focuses on a city in the Global South: On the basis of the example of evangelical Christian carnival parades in Rio de Janeiro, Oosterbaan shows how an urban culture form which is extremely popular in Brazil—the street carnival—is captured by a religious minority group. Oosterbaan conceptualizes public space as a site where local and national belongings are fought out and confirmations and contestations of the relationships between nationality, ethnicity, and religion occur. In Brazil, Carnival as a cultural form is closely linked to both the Catholic and the Afro-Brazilian religious traditions, and is regarded as the most important marker of Brazilian national identity. In his article, Oosterbaan analyses evangelical carnival parades as a subversive spatio-temporal intervention designed to participate in this very popular cultural practice—without (deliberately!) becoming part of it.

The contribution of sociologist and anthropologist John Eade (University of Roehampton) also focuses on minorities, in this case, however, the migrant minorities of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants in and around London. Of interest are the ways migrants think about the norms and values of their place of origin in relation to their place of settlement. What does integration mean in everyday life? What role does the religious background of the migrants play in finding a way into their new social and cultural environment? And what is the relevance of dominant public discourses in these processes, in this case the discussions in Britain revolving around "Brexit"? Eade shows that most of the migrants in his sample try to behave as "respectable newcomers," which implies an emphasis on hard work, respect for rules and self-reliance. Interestingly, very few of the people interviewed associated these values with religion. While some still benefit from being part of international religious networks (e.g., Pentecostal), most migrants obviously adapted their practices to the image of London/the UK as a secular place.

Much like Eade, the contribution by religion scholar Veronika Eufinger (University of Bochum) deals with images and stocks of knowledge that guide social practices. In this case, however, it is not the social practices of individuals, but those of organizations. Eufinger investigates the organizational knowledge upon which the two major churches in Germany, the Roman-Catholic Church and the Protestant Church, act as players in German cities. The analysis makes clear that the city is regarded by both churches as, on the one hand, the site of a contested real-estate market, in which it is economically necessary to operate with as much acumen as possible in order to be visible at central sites. At the same time, the city seems to be a site where—unlike rural areas—religion has no traditional place. For this reason the churches seek to create new religious spaces, for instance new community centers that mix secular functions with religious ones. Using the example of the Okumenisches Forum HafenCity in Hamburg, Eufinger argues that it is through a careful aesthetic integration into the local neighborhood and a mixture of openness (for the worldly functions of the building) and closeness (of the chapel in the very heart of the building) that churches make their (new) places in the city.

Changing Urban Imaginaries

The focus of the chapter by anthropologist Tulasi Srinivas (Emerson College Boston) is the lived, indigenous, taken-for-granted, everyday encounter with the other, or in short, a "vernacular pluralism" typical for Indian cities. Through the example of her home city of Bangalore, Srinivas reconstructs the different historical layers which have made the city into a palimpsest of multiple and overlapping histories. This palimpsest reveals itself not only in a polycontextual, built fabric of the city, but it also brings out specific modes of sociability, which made interaction with and permanent confrontation with the other possible in the first place: Neighborliness, understood as everyday practices of social conviviality that downplay religious differences while making common local concerns more relevant, is a prime example of this. At the level of urban imaginary, a city as polyphonic as Bangalore obviously has the capacity to create a sense of belonging—to very different people.

On the basis of comparative analyses of visual representations of secular and religious groups in Jerusalem, geographer Tovi Fenster (Tel Aviv University) identifies the emergence of a new form of urban, which she refers to as the "neo-liberal global locality city" Whereas until a short time ago Jerusalem's public space was still primarily marked by in part intense dashes between secular and ultra-Orthodox Jews over the use of space, as well as symbolic demarcations, recently a new consumption orientation found in both groups seems to be exerting itself. For example, in the ultra-orthodox quarter of Mea Shearim, there are more and more high-priced apartment buildings, cafés, bike shops, and other stores selling secular goods appearing alongside traditional shops for holy books and objects. At the same time, it is striking that in the secular parts of the city less and less graffiti critical of religion is being seen and public spaces are being beautified. Fenster interprets these changes as an expression of neoliberal urban development processes that "soften" previous lines of conflict—and at the same time produce new forms of exclusion and changing urban imaginaries.

In the last chapter of the volume Ancient Oriental Studies specialist Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum (Free University of Berlin) deconstructs the view, widely accepted in both classical studies and in urban theory, that religion was a key factor in the development of the first cities in Mesopotamia during the third millennium BCE, summarized in the concept of the "Sumerian temple city." Until now it has been assumed that religion was the prime mover of civilization, and that the inhabitants of the area between the Euphrates and the Tigris were deeply religious people. As a result, the temple was not only regarded as the center of religious life in the city, but also as the nucleus of the state. However, Cancik-Kirschbaum shows on the one hand through which discursive constellations the image of the religion-dominated temple city developed in twentieth century classical studies and on the other hand that valid alternative explanatory approaches exist. Temples are described in these approaches less as one-sided religious institutions and instead as large companies run by members of a ruling elite that in addition to their economic function also bore special social responsibilities, for instance, caring for the gods. Put differently, according to Cancik-Kirschbaum, religion was only one of many factors or movers of civilization. In fact, it is due to the mechanisms of modern science that the scientific model of the "Sumerian temple city" was transformed into historic reality, entering encyclopedias and general histories.

ENTANGLED LIFE: HOW FUNGI MAKE OUR WORLDS, CHANGE OUR MINDS & SHAPE OUR FUTURES

by Merlin Sheldrake [Random House; Illustrated Edition,
9780525510314]

A mind-bending journey into the hidden universe of fungi, “one of those rare books that can truly change the way you see the world around you” (Helen Macdonald, author of *H Is for Hawk*).

“Dazzling, vibrant, vision-changing . . . a remarkable work by a remarkable writer, which succeeds in springing life into strangeness again.”—Robert Macfarlane, author of *Underland*

When we think of fungi, we likely think of mushrooms. But mushrooms are only fruiting bodies, analogous to apples on a tree. Most fungi live out of sight, yet make up a massively diverse kingdom of organisms that supports and sustains nearly all living systems. Fungi provide a key to understanding the planet on which we live, and the ways we think, feel, and behave.

In **ENTANGLED LIFE**, the brilliant young biologist Merlin Sheldrake shows us the world from a fungal point of view, providing an exhilarating change of perspective. Sheldrake’s vivid exploration takes us from yeast to psychedelics, to the fungi that range for miles underground and are the largest organisms on the planet, to those that link plants together in complex networks known as the “Wood Wide Web,” to those that infiltrate and manipulate insect bodies with devastating precision.

Fungi throw our concepts of individuality and even intelligence into question. They are metabolic masters, earth makers, and key players in most of life’s processes. They can change our minds, heal our bodies, and even help us remediate environmental disaster. By examining fungi on their own terms, Sheldrake reveals how these extraordinary organisms—and our relationships with them—are changing our understanding of how life works.

Praise for **ENTANGLED LIFE**

“**ENTANGLED LIFE: HOW FUNGI MAKE OUR WORLDS, CHANGE OUR MINDS & SHAPE OUR FUTURES** is a gorgeous book of literary nature writing in the tradition of [Robert] Macfarlane and John Fowles, ripe with insight and erudition. . . . food for the soul.”—**Eugenia Bone, *Wall Street Journal***

“[An] ebullient and ambitious exploration . . . This book may not be a psychedelic—and unlike Sheldrake, I haven’t dared to consume my copy (yet)—but reading it left me not just moved but altered, eager to disseminate its message of what fungi can do.”—**Jennifer Szalai, *The New York Times***

Review

“I fell in love with this book. Merlin is a scientist with the imagination of a poet and a beautiful writer. . . . This is a book that, by virtue of the power of its writing, shifts your sense of the human. . . . It will inspire a generation to enter mycology.”—**Michael Pollan (Bay Area Book Festival, 2020)**

“Fungi are everywhere, and Merlin Sheldrake is an ideal guide to their mysteries. He’s passionate,

deeply knowledgeable, and a wonderful writer.”—**Elizabeth Kolbert, author of *The Sixth Extinction***

“Sheldrake’s charm and curiosity make for a book that is delightful to read but also grand and dizzying in how thoroughly it recalibrates our understanding of the natural world and the often overlooked organisms within it.”—**Ed Yong, author of *I Contain Multitudes***

“True to his name, Merlin takes us on a magical journey deep into the roots of Nature—the mycelial universe that exists under every footstep we take in life. Merlin is an expert storyteller, weaving the tale of our co-evolution with fungi into a scientific adventure. *Entangled Life* is a must-read for citizen scientists hoping to make a positive difference on this sacred planet we share.”—**Paul Stamets, author of *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World***

“Reading this book, I felt surrounded by a web of wonder. The natural world is more fantastic than any fantasy, so long as you have the means to perceive it. This book provides the means.”—**Jaron Lanier, author of *You Are Not a Gadget***

“This engaging book shines light on the hidden fungal connections that link plants, trees, and us. I thought I knew a lot about fungi, but I found much that was new to me, and exciting. Sheldrake is a rare scientist who is not afraid to speculate about the truly profound implications of his work. A very good read.”—**Andrew Weil, author of *Spontaneous Healing and Healthy Aging***

“Sheldrake awakens the reader to a shapeshifting, mind-altering, animate world that not only surrounds us but intimately involves us as well. A joyful exploration of the most overlooked and enigmatic kingdom of life, and one that expanded my appreciation of what it means to be alive.”—**Peter Brannen, author of *The Ends of the World***

ENTANGLED LIFE is an exuberant introduction to the biology, ecology, climatology, and psychopharmacology of the earth’s ‘metabolic wizards.’—**Julian Lucas, *Harpers***

“Nearly every page of this book contained either an observation so interesting or a turn of phrase so lovely that I was moved to slow down, stop, and reread. . . . This book rocked me into remembering that nature, especially fungal nature, is big and encompassing and creative and destructive. It reminded me that fungi are, like the Universe, sublime.”—**Rob Dunn, *Science magazine***

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The book was dampened and inoculated with *Pleurotus* (oyster mushroom) mycelium. The mycelium then digested the pages - and the words - of the book, and sprouted over the course of seven days. *Pleurotus* can digest many things - from crude oil to used cigarette butts - and is one of the fungal species that shows the most promise in mycoremediation. It is also delicious when fried lightly with garlic and will make it possible for the author to eat his words. —Photo Credit: DRK Videography

Excerpt: Black holes, dark matter, gravity, space, time, and quantum entanglement are phenomena that fascinate scientists and artists alike. The exhibition *Entangle: Physics and the Artistic Imagination* and this accompanying publication present painting, installation, fashion, architecture, sculpture, film, digital artwork, and photography by fourteen internationally recognized artists who are inspired by the science that reveals the fundamental forces shaping our world. Together with the thought-provoking artworks, this publication also presents interviews with artists and physicists who share their different ways of seeing. In addition, key scholars in the field have generously contributed their essays on the critical encounter between art and physics.

The curator of *Entangle: Physics and the Artistic Imagination* is Ariane Koek, founder of the Arts at CERN program at the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland — a program which invites artists to create work linked to the search for the universe's smallest component parts.

A number of the artists in the Entangle exhibition and publication have participated in the CERN program, and some of the artworks were created especially for the exhibition at Bildmuseet.

Entangle: Physics and the Artistic Imagination is produced by Bildmuseet at Umeå University in Sweden. Bildmuseet is a public space for engaging with ideas in contemporary art together with, and alongside, current scientific and academic research — a creative space where different forms of knowledge and expertise can meet. As director of Bildmuseet, I am in a privileged position; I cannot imagine a more interesting and rewarding job. Together with my amazing team, I get to work with artists and curators to facilitate the realization of their new projects and articulate questions of urgency in contemporary society. For me, one of the shared qualities between art and science is that they challenge our preconceived ideas about the world, our ways of understanding the world and ourselves in it. Art and science propose another way of seeing and another way of being in the world — they force us to imagine the world differently.

Entangle is the result of a successful interaction. I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of the artists participating in the exhibition and the publication: Julius von Bismarck, Julian Charrière, Sou Fujimoto, Iris van Herpen, Ryoji Ikeda, William Kentridge, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Goshka Macuga, Davide Quayola, Solveig Settemsdal, Sarah Sze, Keith Tyson, Jorinde Voigt, and Carey Young. And to all of the physicists and essayists who have contributed to this publication: Philip Ball, Bilge Demirköz, Michael Doser, Peter Galison, Gavin Parkinson, Carlo Rovelli, Nicola Triscott, Subodh Patil, Kate Shaw, and James Wells. <>

RADICAL WORDSWORTH: THE POET WHO CHANGED THE WORLD by Jonathan Bate [Yale University Press, 9780300169645]

On the 250th anniversary of Wordsworth's birth comes an "appealing new biography . . . [that] illuminates Wordsworth's poetic originality." (Brad Leithauser, *Wall Street Journal*)

Published in time for the 250th anniversary of William Wordsworth's birth, this is the biography of a great poetic genius, a revolutionary who changed the world. Wordsworth rejoiced in the French Revolution and played a central role in the cultural upheaval that we call the Romantic Revolution.

He and his fellow Romantics changed forever the way we think about childhood, the sense of the self, our connection to the natural environment, and the purpose of poetry. But his was also a revolutionary life in the old sense of the word, insofar as his art was of memory, the return of the past, the circling back to childhood and youth. This beautifully written biography is purposefully fragmentary, momentary, and selective, opening up what Wordsworth called "the hiding-places of my power."

Reviews

"A bold and bracing account, masterful with its material, patiently brilliant in reading the poems, and gloriously convincing about its subject's social significance . . . a finely authoritative reading, rather than simple record, of Wordsworth's life . . . the distillation of a lifetime's expertise by a leading scholar and biographer.—*Daily Telegraph*

"*Radical Wordsworth* . . . is guided by enthusiasm. It is all the better for it. This excellent, intellectually rousing book is about the young poet. This is Wordsworth the dreamy, serious radical glimpsed

flying across frozen lakes on his skates, or marvelling at revolutionary Paris, or falling in love with the beautiful Annette Vallon in France. This is the Wordsworth who was the 'pure emanation of the spirit of his age', who pitied the poor, loved the natural world and believed 'all that we behold is full of blessings.'"—*The Times*

"This new book, like everything Bate writes, richly repays reading, and bears comparison with his pioneering life of Ted Hughes."—John Carey, *Sunday Times*

"[A] marvelous new biography of Wordsworth . . . that celebrates the fact that our lives are marked by turning points, not routine. . . . [An] inspiring, fleet-footed book."—*The Guardian*

"Bate is a supremely capable guide, steeped in the poet's work and milieu . . . **RADICAL WORDSWORTH: THE POET WHO CHANGED THE WORLD**—'radical' not just in his youthful politics but in his poetry's return to the roots of selfhood and society—deserves to take its place as the finest modern introduction to his work, life and impact. It shows how and why 'Wordsworth made a difference' . . . Bate delivers not a long-distance trudge of the kind the poet loved . . . but a collage of crisply written, intensively researched scenes . . . That approach suits a writer who argued that pivotal 'spots of time', fixed in memory, can order our past and heal our present."—Boyd Tonkin, *Financial Times*

"[An] appealing new biography. . . . Mr. Bate's radical focus is less political than literary. He illuminates Wordsworth's poetic originality . . . [and] clarifies some of the ways—multifarious, incongruous—in which Wordsworth marshals various voices to forge the complex tone of 'The Prelude.'"—Brad Leithauser, *Wall Street Journal*

"In this energetic literary biography . . . Bate . . . makes a strong case that, when Wordsworth was good, he was transformative. . . . Appealingly conveying his own love of and frustrations with Wordsworth, Bate demonstrates in his delightful volume how, flaws and all, the poet 'made a difference' in the way future generations would think and feel."—*Publishers Weekly*

"[*Radical Wordsworth*] breathes with exactly the kind of relaxed authority that's always made [Bate's] books a joy to read."—Steve Donoghue, *Open Letters Review*

"A captivating read. Jonathan Bate has produced a life of the longest living major Romantic poet foreshortened through those 'spots of time' that left their most enduring impact on his mind."—Denise Gigante, Stanford University

"Jonathan Bate brings to Wordsworth's poetry a great fund of local knowledge and a sympathy both personal and profound. This remarkable biography encompasses a life story and a subtle critical commentary, but it is also an invitation to think and act in defense of the natural world, 'the place where in the end / We find our happiness, or not at all.'"—David Bromwich, author of *The Intellectual Life of Edmund Burke*

"Wordsworth did indeed change the world, and Jonathan Bate superbly explains not only how the poet achieved that, but also why the change is for the better. This book has something for both those who know Wordsworth a little, and a lot."—James Engell, Harvard University

"This critical biography fills a long-felt need and does it superbly, making a convincing case for the great poet's originality and imaginative power. Skillfully interweaving perceptive criticism with biographical contexts, Jonathan Bate shows in depth how Wordsworth created a new poetry based in the language of ordinary life."—Leo Damrosch, author of *The Club: Johnson, Boswell, and the Friends Who Shaped an Age*

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Excerpt: We preserve the things that we value. We will not save that which we do not love. With this in mind, we might do well to attend to the title of the eighth book of *The Prelude*: 'Retrospect Love of Nature leading to Love of Mankind'.

The book begins with an image of belonging: a summer fair in Grasmere, during which there is harmony within the community and between the community and its surroundings. Exercising his 'pathetic fallacy' to the full, Wordsworth imagines the 'circumambient world' embracing his 'fellow-beings'. Each natural element — morning light glistening on silent rocks, reposing clouds, running brooks, the presiding mountain of 'old Helvellyn' itself, even 'the blue sky that roofs their calm abode' — is said to 'love' humankind. Wordsworth knows perfectly well that inanimate things are not capable of love: the whole point of the pathetic fallacy is to flip the thought. He imagines nature loving us in order to make us love nature. His great argument is that it is our task, our duty, to understand our dependence on our environment. If we so do, we will learn to love each other, to be kind, and to treat the stranger in our path as 'a brother of this world'. The French revolutionary value of fraternite must be extended not only throughout the world but to the world itself.

At this point in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth exemplifies his argument with a memory of a childhood walk in the mountains, on a day when the sun was gradually breaking through the mist. 'Emerging from the silvery vapours', he sees a shepherd and his dog, 'girt round with mists', standing in the light as if they were 'inhabitants / Of an aerial island floating on', breathed forward by the wind. The halo effect makes these figures, man and beast, into a secular version of the biblical Good Shepherd. Wordsworth then uses the skilled and loving communication between shepherd and sheepdog as an image of the necessary living bond between the human and the non-human.

The harmonious image of Grasmere Fair is a deliberate contrast to the chaos and squalor of Bartholomew Fair in the London memories earlier in *The Prelude*. Just as William Blake saw 'marks of woe' on the faces of the London crowd and heard the cry of the child chimney-sweeper and the curse of the girl reduced to prostitution, so Wordsworth saw the city as the place devoted to money-making at the expense of love of nature. As he wrote in one of the powerful sonnets gathered in his *Poems of 1807*:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The Winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.

The function of the poet, he implies, is to bring the inhabitants of the urban world, who have been deprived of the privilege of living with nature, back into tune with water, sky and wind. The 'world' of materialistic 'getting and spending' lays waste to our power to love and it will in time lay waste to the very world upon which we rely for our survival. The poet asks us instead to see into the life of things, to look with pre-industrial eyes, to imagine as 'pagans' once did that there are gods in nature:

Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

No one in the nineteenth century perceived the enervating and environmentally destructive dimensions of modernity more clearly than Wordsworth's disciple John Ruskin. Towards the end his long life, he began collecting his thoughts about the nature of the good life and the needs of society in a series of pamphlets, manifestos in the form of newsletters, called *Fors Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*. The fifth letter, dated May 1871, was entitled 'The Whitethorn Blossom', and here Ruskin wrote:

There are three Material things, not only useful, but
essential to Life. No one 'knows how to live' till he has got them.
These are, Pure Air, Water, and Earth.
There are three Immaterial things, not only useful, but
essential to Life. No one knows how to live till he has got them.
These are, Admiration, Hope, and Love.*

The asterisk cues a footnote that cites Wordsworth's *Excursion*:

We live by admiration, hope, and love;
And even as these are well and wisely fixed,

In dignity of being we ascend.

For centuries, the Christian church had taught that the three things by which we should live are faith, hope and love. With the long slow withdrawal of what Matthew Arnold called 'the Sea of Faith' from the shores of Victorian England, Wordsworthian 'Admiration', embodied in the wonders of nature, began to take its place. Arnold's prediction that the only part of religion to survive would be its poetry was beginning to be fulfilled.

Our only hope, Ruskin argues, is an admiration — we might now say a respect — for the raw elements without which we cannot live. He believed that modern 'political economy', the science of getting and spending, was not a means to life but a recipe for the death of the planet:

You can vitiate the air by your manner of life, and of death, to any extent. You might easily vitiate it so as to bring such a pestilence on the globe as would end all of you. Everywhere, and all day long, you are vitiating it with foul chemical exhalations; and the horrible nests, which you call towns, are little more than laboratories for the distillation into heaven of venomous smokes and smells, mixed with effluvia from decaying animal matter, and infectious miasmata from purulent disease.

On the other hand, he wrote, we have the 'power of purifying the air, by dealing properly and swiftly with all substances in corruption; by absolutely forbidding noxious manufactures; and by planting in all soils the trees which cleanse and invigorate earth and atmosphere'. Similarly, we may either tend the soil with care or erode it through reckless overuse. And as for water management: 'You might have the rivers of England as pure as the crystal of the rock; beautiful in falls, in lakes, in living pools . . . Or you may do always as you have done now, turn every river of England into a common sewer.' For Ruskin, then, there was a direct line from the Wordsworthian notion of love of nature leading to love of mankind to the practice of what we would now call 'sustainability'.

In this sense, Wordsworth's vision, and Ruskin's efforts at a practical implementation of that vision, answer to Shelley's high claim for the vocation of poetry: 'Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present . . . the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.' Ruskin argued in his essay 'The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century' that industrialized humankind was changing the climate. His darkly prophetic prose was a mirror of the gigantic shadow that the futurity of a carbon-warmed atmosphere cast upon his present. Wordsworth's poetry, meanwhile, is the unacknowledged pre-legislation of an alternative vision for the future in which love of nature and love of humankind are enmeshed in a sacred web. Or, in the closing words of *The Prelude*:

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
 A lasting inspiration, sanctified
 By reason and by truth: what we have loved
 Others will love; and we may teach them how,
 Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
 A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
 On which he dwells, above this Frame of things
 (Which 'mid all revolutions in the hopes
 And fears of men doth still remain unchanged)
 In beauty exalted, as it is itself
 Of substance and of fabric more divine.

When Wordsworth was born two and a half centuries ago, it was reasonable to expect that the earth on which we dwell would 'remain unchanged' through 'all revolutions in the hopes / And fears of men'. The stability of nature was a solace to him as he saw the French Revolution turn to violence, war and Napoleonic imperialism. Science tells us that this stability can no longer be relied

upon: the earth is changing at a rate unprecedented in its history. That is why, just as Wordsworth once invoked the great poet of political liberty and free speech by opening a sonnet with the line 'Milton! Thou shouldst be living at this hour', we might say Wordsworth, thou shouldst be living at this hour. And through his poetry, he is. It survives, a way of happening, a mouth, teaching us to love what he and his fellow poets loved:

the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness . . .
Man's only dwelling.
<>

VIRGINIA WOOLF, EUROPE, AND PEACE:
TRANSNATIONAL CIRCULATIONS, VOLUME I by Ariane
Mildenberg, Patricia Novillo-Corvalán, [Woolf Selected
Papers LUP, Clemson University Press, 9781949979350]

VIRGINIA WOOLF, EUROPE, AND PEACE: TRANSNATIONAL CIRCULATIONS enlarges our understanding of Virginia Woolf's pacifist ideology and aesthetic response to the World Wars by re-examining her writings and cultural contexts transnationally and comparatively through the complex interplay between modernism, politics, and aesthetics. The "transnational" paradigm that undergirds this collection revolves around the idea of transnational cultural communities of writers, artists, and musicians worldwide who were intellectually involved in the war effort through the forging of pacifist cultural networks that arose as a form of resistance to war, militarism, and the rise of fascism. The book also offers philosophical approaches to notions of transnational pacifism, anti-war ethics, and decolonization, examining how Woolf's prose undermines center/edge or self/other bifurcations. Breathing new life into Woolf's anti-war writings through a transnational lens and presenting us with the voices and perspectives of a range of significant scholars and critics, the chapters in this volume engage with mobile and circulatory pacifisms, calling attention to the intersections of modernist inquiries across the arts (art, music, literature, and performance) and transnational critical spaces (Asia, Europe, and the Americas) to show how the convergence of different cultural and linguistic horizons can significantly expand and enrich our understanding of Woolf's modernist legacy.

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VIRGINIA WOOLF, EUROPE, AND PEACE: VOL. 2 **AESTHETICS AND THEORY** by Peter Adkins and Derek Ryan [Woolf Selected Papers LUP, Clemson University Press, 9781949979374]

From the "prying," "insidious" "fingers of the European War" that Septimus Warren Smith would never be free of in *Mrs Dalloway* to the call to "think peace into existence" during the Blitz in "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," questions of war and peace pervade the writings of Virginia Woolf. This volume asks how Woolf conceptualised peace by exploring the various experimental forms she created in response to war and violence. Comprised of fifteen chapters by an international array of leading and emerging scholars, this book both draws out theoretical dimensions of Woolf's modernist aesthetic and draws on various critical frameworks for reading her work, in order to deepen our understanding of her writing about the politics of war, ethics, feminism, class, animality, and European culture.

The chapters collected here look at how we might re-read Woolf and her contemporaries in the light of new theoretical and aesthetical innovations, such as peace studies, post-critique, queer theory, and animal studies. It also asks how we might historicise these frameworks through Woolf's own engagement with the First and Second World Wars, while also bringing her writings on peace into dialogue with those of others in the Bloomsbury Group. In doing so, this volume reassesses the role of Europe and peace in Woolf's work and opens up new ways of reading her oeuvre. [Book not seen]

About the Authors

Peter Adkins is an assistant lecturer at the University of Kent. He has recently completed a PhD on modernism and the Anthropocene which examined how the novels of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Djuna Barnes responded to changing ideas about the planet, nonhuman life and the figure of the human in the early twentieth century. He is currently working on a monograph entitled *The Modernist Anthropocene: Nonhuman Life and Planetary Change in James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Djuna Barnes*.

Derek Ryan is Senior Lecturer at the University of Kent and author of *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life* (Edinburgh UP, 2013) and *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh UP, 2015). He has published widely on modernism and animality and is currently completing, with Linden Peach and Jane Goldman, the Cambridge Edition of Woolf's *Flush: A Biography*. His most recent book is *The Handbook to the Bloomsbury Group* (Bloomsbury,

2018), edited with Stephen Ross, and he is Literature Editor for the Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism.

Excerpt: A Pacifist Polylogue by Ariane Mildenberg and Patricia Novillo-Corvalan

Transnational Circulations

How can Virginia Woolf's anti-war writings be read transnationally and comparatively to recognize the emergence of international pacifist networks of writers, artists, and musicians who played a crucial role in the resistance to militarization in Europe and the rest of the world? Virginia Woolf, *Europe and Peace: Transnational Circulations* enlarges our understanding of Woolf's pacifist ideology and her aesthetic response to the World Wars by repositioning her modernist writings and cultural contexts across global comparative perspectives that offer new textual angles and geographical locations from which to re-examine the complex interplay between modernism, politics, philosophy, and aesthetics. The phrase "Transnational Circulations" should be read alongside recent theoretical orientations and debates associated with the spatial and temporal expansion of the "new modernist studies" (Mao and Walkowitz) and the parallel theoretical models that have emerged, including "geomodernisms" (Doyle and Winkiel), "modernism in the world" (Simon Gikandi), "planetarity" (Friedman), "transnationalism" (Berman), "modernisms at large" (Huysen), "modernism in transit" (Snaith), and "cosmopolitan desires" (Siskind), among others, as well as the recent revival of the Goethean notion of *Weltliteratur* and the "worlding" critical paradigms that have been proposed within the emerging field of world literature.

Our "transnational" reading of Woolf's modernist writings and their intersections with the discourses of war, violence, and pacifism is based less on questions of scale (we do not seek to ambitiously contain the "world" or, for that matter, a set of distinct global contexts) than on issues of method, implying a re-examination of the subject by means of transnationally and comparatively inflected historicized and theoretical approaches that revolve around the ideas of intercultural communities, reception, and translation, both locally and globally; as well as the transcendence of binaries, boundaries, and borders within Woolf's texts. In particular, we prioritize the transnational model proposed by Jessica Berman in her book *Modernist Commitments: Ethics, Politics, and Transnational Modernism* (2011) and, more recently, in her journal article "Is the Trans in Transnational the Trans in Transgender?" (2017), both of which function as conceptual critiques of the discursive categories of nationalism and gender normativity.¹ For Berman, "trans" is variously understood as a prefix, a rubric, and a critical praxis that "challenges prevailing assumptions about national belonging and scenes of reading (...) as it raises the question of gender and sexual identity as a constitutive dimension of those critical categories." Therefore, a "trans" critical orientation transgresses static readings by means of its transformative semantic possibilities across multiple critical domains, decentering fixed meanings as it attaches itself to discourses of nation and gender, as well as the polysemous crossings and "trans" circulations implied by "trans-lation," "transmedial," "transspecies," and "transdisciplinary" approaches. In fact, as Constance Bantman and Bert Altena stress in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn* (2017), thinking transnationally has "resulted in calling into question the traditional center/ edge periphery dichotomy, especially when it comes to the great narratives of Western history"; it was "born of efforts to rectify the national focus of traditional historiography and operates a process of decentering" and of looking "beyond national borders,"

This volume's transnational approach to Woolf's anti-war writings, emphasizing such a decentering through both temporal and spatial interconnections, can also be located within a continuum of recent assumptions about the "postcritical turn" in literary studies. Drawing upon insights from Bruno Latour's "actor-network theory," in *The Limits of Critique* (2015) Rita Felski claims that

"history is not a box; but is "woven out of threads crisscrossing through time," thus embracing 'models of textual mobility and transnational attachment' as well as "the transtemporal liveliness of texts and the co-constitution of texts and readers." A greater emphasis on such transtemporal "affinities and connections," Felski stresses, "make[s] the case for a less hemmed-in and less rigidly constricted model of meaning that gives texts more room to breathe' Breathing itself is "[a]n openness of the self to the other [...] breathing is transcendence in the form of opening up," writes Emmanuel Levinas in *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974). an opening up that is also a decentering of the self and a welcoming of other transnational historical experiences.

Concomitantly, the transnational paradigm advanced by this book is reoriented and rearticulated by means of a conceptual understanding of transnationalism and how such a paradigm is alert and attuned to the local particulars of the various global contexts that are examined, within and beyond Western Europe, including how non-European countries had to wrestle with the World Wars and their aftermaths, whether they were pressed to join sides, maintain neutrality, or—in the case of the Battle of the River Plate fought along the South Atlantic coast of Uruguay and Argentina—used as overseas battlegrounds for Britain and Germany to flex their military muscles. Uttered from a global South critical positionality, Mariano Siskind's question "What do we make of the privilege that the modernist critical tradition affords to British, French, German, and North American (and sometimes Italian) literature on war in general, and on the Great War in particular, in the face of the vast and unexplored Latin American, Asian, and African archives?" is pointedly pertinent to the variegated acts of decentering this book purports to engage with. In this sense, we conceive Europe less as a center than as a shifting gateway that interconnects the world literary system, while, at the same time, by temporarily decentering Europe we open the door to other spatial inquiries and cross-cultural comparisons in ways that can both transcend and expand Europe, establishing a sense of continuity and discontinuity with metropolitan discourses, as well as enabling non-European geographical spaces to be meaningfully re-centered. Within Europe itself, moreover, a dehomogenizing intervention is needed, as Lucia Boldrini reminds us "Many European countries have no imperial history if not a passive one, having themselves been 'colonised: subjugated or controlled by other political powers." Of course, Woolf's anti-imperialism and social critique addressed not only the colonial zones located on the fringes of empire—such as India, Africa, and southern South America—but also the tensions and divisions within Great Britain's fragile and uneven "union" of constituent countries, reflected in the hegemonic power exercised by Westminster over the Empire's kingdoms, colonies, territories, and protectorates, captured in the jingoistic and pro-imperial figure of Tory MP Richard Dalloway and his exploitative lifestyle. To be sure, as early as *The Voyage Out* (1915), Englishness is conspicuously associated with patriarchy, militarism, and insularity, satirically portraying the crumbling British Empire as a "very small island [...] a shrinking island in which people were imprisoned."

An increasingly expanding critical scholarship has pertinently addressed the transnational "turn" in Woolf studies, a discourse that has emerged in productive dialogue with postcolonial approaches, comparative literature, translation studies, cultural studies, and geography discourses, amongst others. Most prominently, the pioneering volume of essays entitled *The Reception of Virginia Woolf in Europe* (2002), co-edited by Mary Ann Caws and Nicola Luckhurst, broke unprecedented new ground by considering the diverse, multivalent, and crisscrossing literary histories of Woolf's legacy across numerous European contexts—impressively mapping out its French, German, Polish, Swedish, Danish, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Galician, Catalan, and Portuguese receptions—thus providing a much-needed paradigm for the emergence of an idiosyncratic "European" Woolf." If Caws and Luckhurst focused primarily on Europe, Natalya Reinhold's volume of essays, *Woolf Across Cultures* (2004), filled an important critical lacuna by imagining a "global" Woolf, or Woolf as a "world writer" (in Maria DiBattista's words)," expanding her internationalist engagement within and

beyond Europe, especially in examining little studied modernist geographies such as Turkey, Russia, Portugal, Korea, and Japan. Meanwhile, scholarly engagement with the spatial constructions that inform Woolf's literary imagination became the subject matter of *Locating Woolf: The Politics of Space and Place* (2007), edited by Anna Snaith and Michael H. Whitworth, a collection of essays concerned with "the politics of spaces national spaces, civic spaces, private spaces, or the textual spaces of the writer/printer," as well as the "global spaces of Woolf's novels." The geopolitics of space provides Snaith and Whitworth with a textured historicist paradigm that theorizes the interrelations between empire, modernity, and commerce that underpin Woolf's spatial politics approach, whether that be "locating" Woolf within the geographies of Ireland and China or situating radical theoretical and interdisciplinary spaces through the discourses of art, ecology, broadcasting, and phenomenology.

Meanwhile, a global South epistemological model has contributed to a further enlargement of the internationalist reach of Woolf's mutating, ever renewing legacy. Patricia Laurence's *Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes: Bloomsbury, Modernism, and China* (2013) identifies China as a vital geography within Woolf's literary imagination, as well as uncovering East-West transcultural relations through the study of Beijing-Bloomsbury literary communities, while, more recently, in "Reading Woolf in India" (2016), Sapriya Chaudhuri explores the nexus between Woolf and Bengali writer Rasasundari Dasi. At the same time, a "Latin American" Woolf emerges as a promising—albeit hitherto neglected—area of scholarship. Laura Lojo Rodriguez's exploration of the relationship between Woolf and the Argentine writer, editor, and feminist Victoria Ocampo makes important inroads into the study of Woolf's intersections with Latin American women writers. Moreover, Woolf's fictional engagement with Latin America as a geopolitical space, particularly her finely nuanced knowledge of the development of the meat trade in the Argentine Republic, has more recently been explored by Patricia Novillo-Corvalan in her article "Empire and Commerce in Latin America: Historicizing Woolf's *The Voyage Out*" (2017) in an attempt to challenge the "longstanding critical assumption that Woolf's knowledge of the continent was hopelessly vague and deficient," thus recuperating the overlooked Latin American contexts of *The Voyage Out*. Woolf's lifelong interest in foreign languages and translation (she studied Greek, French, Russian, German, Italian, and Spanish) is the subject matter of Emily Dalgarno's monograph *Virginia Woolf and the Migrations of Language* (2012), a study that examines language as an "intellectual domain that challenges the linguistic tradition that coincides with the idea of the nation." The "nation" being precisely the political unit that Woolf challenges in her war essay "The Leaning Tower" (1941), positing that literature is no one's private ground; literature is common ground. It is not cut up into nations; there are no wars there. Let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find out our own way for ourselves." These globalist approaches and localized readings of a "political" Woolf illustrate the richly productive intersections between Woolf studies, transnationalism, and postcolonial discourses, a critical practice firmly established by landmark publications such as Jane Marcus's now classic essay "Britannia Rules The Waves" (1992), Patrick McGee's "The Politics of Modernist Form: or Who Rules The Waves?" (1992), and Kathy J. Phillips's book-length study, *Virginia Woolf against Empire* (1994).

Furthermore, this collection's core thematic focus on Woolf and pacifist discourses owes an enormous debt to critical scholarship on Woolf's sociopolitical engagement with war, violence, and peace from Mark Hussey's *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth* (1991) to Christine Froula's *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (2007) and Sarah Cole's *At the Violet Hour: Modernism and Violence in England and Ireland* (2014), to name just some of the most influential. Complementing these scholarly efforts by reflecting on the interrelations between Woolf's anti-imperialist politics and anti-war ethics, the dialogues in and across this volume's essays take the form of a polylogue, a "proliferation of voices," to borrow from John Sallis.

Proximity, Peace, Polylogue

Not just a proliferation of voices, but also a "proliferation of languages"—twelve European languages to be precise—helped constitute a parallel reading of "Time Passes," the interlude in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), which we organized at the 28th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf in June 2018. The reading's intersections of spoken voices, accents, and traditions emphasized Woolf's dynamic modernist legacy and how our understanding of her work can be illuminated by the convergence of different cultural as well as linguistic horizons. "Time Passes" is an interlude that reflects on the shattering effects of war and relates past to future. By reading the section aloud in a multiplicity of languages—one language at a time at first and then all at once, like a murmuration of a crowd of voices—we aimed to capture in real time its transnational circulation through a polylogue that valorized the process of translation and the literary encounters it generated. While twelve voices interspersed, an airplane ominously, "to borrow from *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), flew over us, making an uncanny reference to the war upon which the reading reflected. As the crowd in the early airplane scene in *Mrs Dalloway* look up at the sky, challenged by an exercise in reading the letters spelled out by the airplane's smoke, which advertises Glaxo dried milk, a murmuration of seagulls interrupts the performance in the sky:

All down the Mall the people were standing and looking up into the sky. As they looked the whole world became perfectly silent, and a flight of gulls crossed the sky, first one gull leading, then another, and in this extraordinary silence and peace, in this pallor, in this purity, bells struck eleven times, the sound fading up there among the gulls. (MD 26)

In this moment, the birds' playful and silent freedom—an "extraordinary silence and peace"—cancels out the ominous sound of the airplane and war. The shapeshifting mass of gulls, highlighting both each bird's independence and their interconnection, reflects the murmuring of people below. These murmurs become thoughts as we move closer and, like birds, dip in and out of individual characters' heads in Woolf's novel: at times the thoughts become spoken language that does not always chime with the thoughts. All the while Big Ben chimes in the background. Clock time seems to clash with internal temporal dialogue. This is how time passes in *Mrs Dalloway*. When time has passed in *To the Lighthouse*, ten long years in which the decaying Ramsay home is filled with "ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammers," the "repeated shocks" (TTL 145) of which "still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups" (TTL 145), thus registering the cracks and destruction caused by the Great War, peace finally arrives: "Messages of peace breathed from the sea to the shore" (MD 154).

Thus, we return to the Levinasian metaphor of breathing, the "openness of the self to the other," a "form of opening up" that "reveals all its meaning (...) in the proximity of a neighbor, a peace of proximity that is the fundamental relation to, recognition of, and responsibility for the other. As John E. Drabinski observes, this openness to alterity lays bare a "site exposed to the decolonizing work of history" and "undoes the centering of subjectivity," and thus Levinas "becomes a thinker of the transnational." Just as the "being afflicted with alterity" in Levinas is "prior to the being affected by material being," meaning that alterity is not given to a "cognitive sensibility," but to a "sensuality," the very "susceptibility to being affected, Levinas speaks not of a "rational peace," which he thinks of as "calculation, mediation and politics" and thus a relationship of "exchange and commerce," but of a deep peace of the interpersonal encounter. For, as Rebekka A. Klein explains, "this rational peace would once again be a totalization of the world under a principle and thus merely a variation of war's basic structure," Levinas's peace of proximity, however, is an opening up of oneself to a relation of hospitality, "a further deep breathing even by the breath cut short by the wind of alterity."

Breath as well as breadth is necessary for the transnational polylogue to emerge: breath, the power behind any voice—the written voice too as this is physically rhythmic—is combined with a breadth of cultural perspectives. The multi-layered dialogues in and across this volume's written essays take

the form of such a polylogue—a comparative, interdisciplinary, intercultural, intertextual polylogue. In his 1982 text *Cinders*, Jacques Derrida, whose account of "hospitality" is related to but also critical of Levinas's notion of opening up toward the other—in fact, he calls Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* "an immense treatise of hospitality"—describes the polylogue as "an entanglement of an indeterminate number of voices." *Cinders* reads like such an entanglement, interlacing and reflecting on a number of passages and themes explored in Derrida's earlier texts, presenting us with traces of those words. *Cinders* themselves are traces of fire, of burning, like the cinders of war, a trace that appears only in the process of erasing itself; it is "that which preserves in order no longer to preserve," But cinders "may still have fire latent in [them]" and in this way they are different from ashes." Cinders are always about to become ashes, but can also help start new fires: "if cinder there is, it is because the fire remains in its retreat." With breath, with air blown into the cinders of a dying fire, the fire will burn better too. By meditating upon the figures of cinders and ashes in his own written works, including the ashes and traces of the Holocaust, Derrida "authorize[s] the cinder" (49) and tells us to listen to Virginia Woolf in *Three Guineas*:

No guinea of earned money (money earned by the women] should go to rebuilding the college on the old plan; just as certainly none could be spent upon building a college upon a new plan; therefore the guinea should be earmarked "Rags. Petrol. Matches. And this note should be attached to it: "Take this guinea and with it burn the college to the ground. Set fire to the old hypocrisies. Let the light of the burning building scare the nightingales and incarnadine the willows. And let the daughters of educated men dance round the fire and heap armful upon armful of dead leaves upon the flames. And let their mothers lean from the upper windows and cry, Let it blaze! Let it blaze! For we have done with this 'education!"

Thus, "done with this 'education!:" a university system implicated in patriarchal ideals of militarism and capitalism, in *Three Guineas* Woolf already authorized the cinder in order to start a new fire that could turn "the old hypocrisies" and fascism to ashes: "and may we live to see the day when in the blaze of our common freedom the words tyrant and dictator shall be burnt to ashes, because the words tyrant and dictator shall be obsolete" Following Woolf's lead, in this collection, we too authorize the cinder anew and propose a pacifist polylogue, a "writing apparatus [...] call[ing] to the voice, to voices," against dictatorial monolingualism.

Voices and Perspectives

Breathing new life into Woolf's anti-war writings through a transnational lens and engaging with a transtemporal and mobile model, this book offers fresh perspectives on Woolf's anti-war ethics and imperialist politics, a conjunction that is undergirded by the transnational pacifist communities of modernist writers, artists, and musicians worldwide that arose as a form of resistance to war, militarism, and the rise of fascism; an international humanitarian effort that tirelessly campaigned for peaceful methods of conflict resolution. The book also offers philosophical approaches to the notion of transnational pacifism or decolonization, examining how Woolf's writings themselves undermine self/other or center/edge bifurcations. Comprising four sections: "Musical Composition and Performance," "Comparative Pacifisms," "Voyages In, Voyages Out," and "Transnational Women's Networks, across transdisciplinary (art, music, literature, and performance) and transnational (Asia, Europe, and the Americas) critical spaces, the book shows how the convergence of different cultural and linguistic horizons can significantly expand and enrich our understanding of Woolf's modernist legacy.

The volume begins with a section that explores the potential of music and performance for peace-building, both in the modernist period and through the very practice of reading Woolf today. Using as her starting point the audio documentary "Scrapbook Series," a popular BBC broadcast that began in 1933 and lasted for over a decade, in the first chapter Claire Davison explores the connections between cooperative broadcasting policies, Woolf's heightened acoustic sensibility in the 1930s, and

the era's awareness of itself as being shaped by reiterable sound. Gravitating around the question "What was broadcasting doing for peace?" the chapter goes on to show how a trans-European broadcasting project contributed to a more interconnected Europe, using classical music as the bringer of peace and national as well as international cooperation. Music is also central to Emma Sutton's chapter, which draws our attention to Woolf's personal and textual relationships with the two French women composers Germaine Tailleferre and Nadia Boulanger. Detailing Woolf's knowledge of avant-garde music and French musical networks, Sutton places the relationships between these women within the larger contexts of pacifism during and after the First World War and their reception in the French and British press, reflecting on the role that their gender played in the critical reception of their work and aesthetic innovations. In the third chapter, Christine Froula sheds new light on the influences of Futurist aesthetics and music, Aristophanes's comedy *Peace*, and Beethoven's choral *Ode to Joy* in Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's unpublished 1914 play "War and Peace: A Dramatic Fantasia." Froula carefully details the ways in which Dickinson's allegorical "dream play for its wartime moment," as she calls it, was inspired by both *Peace* and *Ode to Joy*. contested F. T. Marinetti's glorification of machine warfare, and staged a glorious contest between war and peace. The final chapter in Part I turns to contemporary performance and the event of reading itself Spurred on by "The Particle and the Wave," an audio/video/ text piece tracing the 1,265 semicolons in Woolf's *The Waves* and performed by Himali Singh Soin and David Tappeser, Ariane Mildenberg reflects on how our engagement with Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) transgresses and subverts disembodied and hierarchical reading practices, instead welcoming what she terms "democratic reading." Situating this approach within the recent developments of "carnal hermeneutics" and "postcritical reading," building on recent discussions of the "transnational turn" in modernist studies, and drawing upon the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Luc Nancy, Mildenberg shows that *The Waves* invites a democratic and decolonizing reading practice of love and connection that sheds new light on the anti-imperialist, anti-militarist, and pacifist form of Woolf's novel.

The book's second part, "Comparative Pacifisms," offers new comparative perspectives on Woolf's central pacifist arguments. Starting with a famous quotation from William Blake's 1916 hymn "Jerusalem" in Woolf's "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" (1940), in the fifth chapter Michael Black not only shows how Woolf's reading of and "attribution" to Blake dismissed the contemporary usage of Blake's poetry as warmongering propaganda, but he also brings to light a Blakean aspect in Woolf's own pacifist aesthetics. Woolf's idea that "mental fight means thinking against the current not with it," Black claims, is in direct transhistorical dialogue with Blake's work and can also be seen as an assertion of the latter's authorship. Comparing Woolf's writings between 1918 and 1940, in the sixth chapter Andrew Palmer turns to Woolf's identification of politics as "the profession that is most closely connected with war" to consider how the modernist form of her work brought about a reimagining of the politician. While Woolf's critique of patriarchy and political dictatorship takes aim at "doctors, fathers, soldier-colonialists, and husbands," according to Palmer, Woolf's comments about politicians in her work seem much more conflicted. Connecting politics with the notion of friendship, Kate Haffey's chapter offers a comparative analysis of Jacques Derrida's and Woolf's reflections upon friendship, questioning how these might relate to peace and pacifism. In observing that Derrida in *The Politics of Friendship* (1994) deconstructs the idea of the friend in the Western tradition in terms of the fraternal relation between brothers, Haffey draws our attention to Derrida's emphasis of the absence of the figure of the "friend in the feminine," who is merely alluded to in the text. Derrida's entire book, the chapter argues, deconstructs the Western philosophical traditions that have failed to include her, thus carving out a new space for a "friend in the feminine," the sister. The chapter goes on to propose that Woolf's *Three Guineas*, a text in which the figure of the sister is so central, seems to anticipate and offer a response to Derrida's questions about the absence of a sister, thus moving beyond a politics rooted in "the principle of fraternity" that is

directly connected with war. Reflecting upon the same patriarchal ways as well as the nationalism that is interlinked with justifications for conflict and war, in the final chapter of Part II, E. H. Wright also draws upon *Three Guineas* as well as Woolf's novels, but makes comparisons between Woolf's pacifism and the dramas of women playwrights in the interwar period such as Vernon Lee, Cicely Hamilton, Muriel Box, Olive Popplewell, and Elizabeth Rye. Outlining the consequences of war for women as expressed by these playwrights, the chapter sheds new light on the general climate of modernist women's writing speaking out against war in the interwar years.

Part III, "Voyages In, Voyages Out," brings together three chapters that explore Woolf's transnational "circulations," whether that be her geographical imagination, her own experience of travel, or the way her writings migrate to new contexts. In the first chapter, Linden Peach explores Woolf's legacy in Wales by means of a comparative case study that focuses on the nexus between Woolf and the Welsh writer and pacifist Emyr Humphreys, an innovative comparison that uncovers aesthetic and political linkages through a historical exploration of the rise of Welsh pacifist organizations in the early twentieth century, the confluences between Welsh pacifists and the Bloomsbury Group, and Woolf's impact on Humphreys' novel *A Toy Epic* (1958). Peach shows that *A Toy Epic* engages with issues of Welshness (language, education, identity, and nationhood), while also emulating Woolf's modernist experimentation and treatment of subjectivity in *The Waves*. In the second chapter, Carole Bourne-Taylor charts Woolf's sensorial French "continental adventure" through a multi-faceted discussion of the physical and metaphorical interrelationship between reading, writing, traveling, and translating, as processes of both "self-displacement" and "starting afresh" that richly convey Woolf's deeply rooted European-ness and her abiding commitment to pacifism and feminist cosmopolitanism. In the third chapter, Angeliki Spiropoulou rethinks Woolf's lifelong aesthetic appreciation of Sophocles' *Antigone* through a nuanced re-examination of what she calls the "Antigone effect," particularly the way the Greek heroine epitomized Woolf's political response to the rise of fascist ideologies in the 1930s, and how Woolf's allegorical resignification of the Attic tragedy in *Three Guineas* continued and developed a long intellectual tradition of evoking Greek thought in connection with contemporary history and politics.

Part IV, "Transnational Women's Networks," offers fresh angles through which to rethink Woolf's legacy transnationally and comparatively, shining a spotlight on Woolf's relationship with female writers from Chile, China, and North America. In the first chapter, Patricia Novillo-Corvalan explores the relationship between Woolf and Chilean poet, diplomat, and activist, Gabriela Mistral. Focusing on Mistral's and Woolf's anti-war, anti-imperial, and anti-patriarchal responses to the Spanish Civil War (their works *Tala* and *Three Guineas* were published in May and June 1938 respectively), the chapter maps out historical convergences and networks of transcultural exchange between Bloomsbury and Buenos Aires, while rethinking both women's writings through the conjunctures elicited by their humanitarian engagements in the fight against fascism. In the second chapter, Deyan Meng continues the exploration of transnational literary communities by focusing on Woolf's relationship with Chinese modernist writer and painter Ling Shuhua. The two women converged around the Spanish Civil War (Shuhua had a romance with Julian Bell while he taught English at Wuhan University in China), a military conflict that profoundly destabilized their lives on a personal and political level. Meng shows that the tragic death of Bell in Spain supporting the Republican cause led to the beginning of a productive epistolary exchange between the women that served as a personal and aesthetic unifying space wherein they shared their artistic views, as well as their sense of distress at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War and the impending Second World War. In the third and final chapter, Kristin Czarnecki examines the nexus between Woolf and American author Louise Erdrich through an ecofeminist reading of Woolf's *Between the Acts* and Erdrich's *The Round House*—both of which are repositioned as "earthtexts"—exploring the interconnections between war, imperialism, and gender violence, particularly how hegemonic

concepts of land engender the violation of women, thus foregrounding the productive intertwining of feminist and ecological approaches in the discussion of Woolf's transhistorical convergences with women writers. <>

FANFICTION AND THE AUTHOR: HOW FANFICTION CHANGES POPULAR CULTURAL TEXTS by Judith May Fathallah [Transmedia: Participatory Culture and Media Convergence, Amsterdam University Press, 9789089649959] [Open Source]

The production, reception and discussion of fanfiction is a major aspect of contemporary global media. Thus far, however, the genre has been subject to relatively little rigorous qualitative or quantitative study—a problem that Judith M. Fathallah remedies here through close analysis of fanfiction related to Sherlock, Supernatural, and Game of Thrones. Her large-scale study of the sites, reception, and fan rejections of fanfic demonstrate how the genre works to legitimate itself through traditional notions of authorship, even as it deconstructs the author figure and contests traditional discourses of authority. Through a process she identifies as the 'legitimation paradox', Fathallah demonstrates how fanfic hooks into and modifies the discourse of authority, and so opens new spaces for writing that challenges the authority of media professionals.

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About the Series: Transmedia: Participatory Culture and Media Convergence

The book series *Transmedia: Participatory Culture and Media Convergence* provides a platform for cutting-edge research in the field of media studies, with a strong focus on the impact of digitization, globalization, and fan culture. The series is dedicated to publishing the highest-quality monographs (and exceptional edited collections) on the developing social, cultural, and economic practices surrounding media convergence and audience participation. The term ‘media convergence’ relates to the complex ways in which the production, distribution, and consumption of contemporary media are affected by digitization, while ‘participatory culture’ refers to the changing relationship between media producers and their audiences.

Interdisciplinary by its very definition, the series will provide a publishing platform for international scholars doing new and critical research in relevant fields. While the main focus will be on contemporary media culture, the series is also open to research that focuses on the historical forebears of digital convergence culture, including histories of fandom, cross- and transmedia franchises, reception studies and audience ethnographies, and critical approaches to the culture industry and commodity culture.

Excerpt: Fanfiction, the unauthorised adaptation and re-writing of media texts, is the fastest growing form of writing in the world. Fanfic is typically freely shared, makes no money and, though it has an analogue history, now exists primarily on the internet. Early academic interest in the subject tended to be quite utopian, seeing fandoms as a democratic and socially progressive response to increasingly homogenized and corporate media industries. Gray et al. called this the ‘Fandom is Beautiful’ phase of academia (2007, p. 1). It is generally now accepted that fanfic is neither automatically transformative of media texts, nor a peacefully democratic and supportive community. It is a complex and contested arena of textual production with its own hierarchies, norms and structuring practices. Moreover, despite and because of the laissez-faire attitudes to fanwork by TV auteurs like Buff y’s Joss Whedon and Supernatural’s Eric Kripke, fanfic still negotiates a subordinated relationship to its canons (Scott 2011).

This book adapts discourse theory, developed from the work of the Michel Foucault, to address the question of how fanfic generates new statements that alter or uphold discursive formations from three of the most popular and influential franchises on TV today. Through the tools of discourse theory and network analysis, I hope to provide one answer to Artier i’s timely call for investigation ‘whether and in what ways’ fannish textual production can take ‘forms that allow us to experience media contents differently as well as generate different interpretative categories of our society’ (2012, p. 463). The shows chosen for study are the BBC’s Sherlock, HBO’s Game of Thrones, and the CW’s Supernatural. This is partly due to their impact on popular culture, but, equally, some of the most prominent discursive formations in these shows relate directly to the cultural constructions of authorship and authority that lie at the heart of this argument.

The work of Suzanne Scott (2011) sets an important precedent here, identifying a gendered divide between legitimated and culturally approved work by fans, (primarily coded masculine, e.g. vid creation from licenced material) and fanwork that is scorned and devalued (primarily coded feminine, e.g. fanfic). Building on her recognition of the ‘fanboy-auteur’, who performs acceptance and legitimation of fannish production para-textually whilst retaining a position of economic and industrial power, this book is going to argue that fanwork is pervaded by and functions through what I call the legitimation paradox. Here, the legitimation and revaluation of the Other—be it racial, sexual, or gendered—is enabled and enacted through the cultural capital of the White male. The formations selected for analysis build upon each other to demonstrate this construction: First,

(White) masculinity in *Sherlock*; second, authority in *Game of Thrones*; and finally, authorship in *Supernatural*. In this clearest example, the fan's writing is legitimated by the TV-auteur, simultaneously empowered and contained as showrunners grant metatextual acknowledgement of and paratextual permission for fanfic. Derivative writing that changes popular culture is legitimated and empowered—because and so far as the author says so. By the final chapter, however, we will begin to see the deconstruction of the legitimation paradox at work, as the legitimacy of authorship itself begins to be questioned. From a similar standpoint, Paul Booth recently argued that 'media fandom is best understood as continual, shifting negotiation and dialogue within already-extant industrial relations' (2015, p. 1), wherein industry professionals and increasingly-visible fandoms are presently repositioning themselves with regard to each other. I locate this work, then, as responsive to Louisa Stein's call for a 'third wave of fan studies' that 'recognize(s) the deepening relationship between fandom and mainstream culture' with attention to the political-economic and cultural factors that influence that relationship (2015, p. 11).

Firstly, I will situate this work in the context of Foucauldian approaches to text and authorship. I argue that a discourse analysis based on Foucault's theories of power as an 'open and capillary network' (Callewaert 2006, p. 87) is appropriate to the online context of fanfic today. Moreover, Foucault's (1991) theory of the author-function and the ability of discourse theory to account for statements from fictional genres, traditions and contexts provides appropriate tools for treating fanfic as fiction: something that previous commentators on fanfic have either elided (e.g. Jenkins 1992; Black 2008), or bracketed to the exclusion of social context (e.g. Pugh 2005; Kaplan 2006). Therefore, as I go on to summarize previous work on fandom and fanfic, I locate the contribution of this research as a discourse analysis that accommodates the networked context and fictional orientation of fic.

Chapter 2, the methodology, explains in detail the processes by which I found, coded and analysed relevant fanfic. As Evans and Stasi have argued (2014), fan studies has not always been sufficiently rigorous and transparent in presenting its methodologies. Some of this resistance comes from a reluctance to engage with problematic notions of objectivity and truthfulness (pp. 8–9), particularly when quantitative methods are concerned, but this project combines an autoethnographic lens with a mixed methods approach, which I hope can balance rigour with accountability on behalf of the researcher. I will be paying specific attention to the means by which fandom hierarchizes, silences and disciplines its own texts via feedback, including praise and recommendation, insults and mockery; for, as Foucault has argued, discourses are constrained and ordered not only by external forces, but by powerful internal mechanisms of regulation (1981, p. 56). This is the first extended project to analyse the receptive, interactive, networked context of fanfic in web 2.0. Network analysis seeks to chart and analyse connections between nodes not simply in their functional capacity, but the capital and de/legitimation they confer (see Beaulieu 2005; Rebaza 2010), and the affiliations they indicate. A node, in this sense, simply means a definable point on a network, 'such as people, organizations, web pages, or nation states' (Hogan 2008, p. 143). Unsurprisingly, it has been frequently applied to studies of blogs, websites and social media. Yet, it has not been applied to fanfic before now. I address this gap; for, as Bronwen Thomas wrote in a stimulating article whose implications deserve more follow-up, these 'new modes of user involvement for online narratives [...] mean that we cannot [properly] analyse what is produced without analysing how it is produced and made available to others' and 'fan fiction cannot be understood in isolation from the network culture' (2011, pp. 206–207) facilitated by the structures of Web 2.0. I take specific note of link and recommendation networks as an indicator of the impact works of fanfiction make in their context.

Chapters 3–5 present the results of the research, treating the discursive formations in turn. The case studies of *Sherlock*, *Game of Thrones* and *Supernatural* have been chosen for several interlocking reasons. Firstly, each is presently an influential cult text with a productive, active online

fandom. Moreover, the creators and owners of these texts have taken explicit notice of fandom, making strong contrasting paratextual statements on their attitudes and policies towards it. At one extreme, George R. R. Martin initially sought to prohibit fanfic utilising his characters, though his stance has necessarily softened with the adaptation of his work to HBO and the introduction of new author figures in showrunners David Benioff and D. B. Weiss. At the other, Eric Kripke and the writers of *Supernatural* have gone to unprecedented lengths in the acknowledgement and address of their fandom, up to the inclusion of fanfiction and fan culture in the canon text. The *Sherlock* franchise operates somewhere in the middle, neither seeking to prohibit fan activity nor precisely embracing it, and its show runners contradictory statements of attitude towards it. A discursive analysis that addresses these authorial paratexts before going on to discuss fanfic's transformation of the canon benefits from these contrasting cases, casting light on how authorial positioning may or may not inflect the discourse (re) construction. Finally, three prominent discursive constructions in these texts and the consequent (re)constructive work of their fandoms connect intrinsically to the traditional figure of the White Male Author which still holds sway in popular imagination. (White) masculinity is addressed in *Sherlock*; the formation and fragmentations of authority in *Game of Thrones*; then the study culminates with an explicit address of authorship in *Supernatural*. First, the discursive construction in and around the texts are analysed, taking account of statements by showrunners and other author figures; then, consolidations and transformations by fandom are presented. The formations build upon each other: first, the BBC's construction of White masculinity in *Sherlock* is shown to be essentially conservative and rooted in the Victorian heritage of the character. It is predicated on the hierarchical division of mind and body and the superiority of White masculinity over other races and genders. Fanfic is shown to transform this discourse construction dramatically, yet in illustration of the legitimation paradox, these transformations are legitimated by and through the authorizing figure of the White man. Fandom's transformative reconstruction, then, paradoxically depends what is already culturally author-ized: the White male hero, and frequently the White male author figure behind him. This is the first illustration of the legitimation paradox, and accords with Booth's argument that whilst specific fan practices may well be resistant and transformative of mainstream ideologies, and underlying connection to and identity with the canonical source means that fanworks are 'in an always liminal state between resistant and complicit (2015, p. 3). Occasionally, we find the paradox working inversely, so that criticism of for example violence is not well received when it entails criticism of the author-ized White man. Fan writing can be made legitimate through the White male figure, and there is some resistance to attribute him with qualities that would make his authority less legitimate. Then, in Chapter 4, the fragmented and tenuous construction of authority in *Game of Thrones* is shown to be at odds with the traditional author figure of George R. R. Martin, and informed by broader cultural discourse on the conflict and connections between authority and power. Writing any kind of fanfic for *Game of Thrones* is a challenge to the construction of author as sole font of knowledge and the guardian of 'correct' meaning, as Martin has stated explicitly his dislike of the form and attempted to prohibit it for his book series. Perhaps in an ironic kind of deference to these wishes, fandom's transformations of the authority construct are quite subtle, constrained to a degree by the author-function as the limitation on 'proliferation of meaning' (Foucault 1991, p. 118). The structures of authority in the text are not dramatically transformed, and where they are, this tends to operate again through channels that are already constructed as culturally legitimate within the diegesis of the canon. The most distinct transformation fanfic makes is the attribution of authority to women. Yet again, a certain deference to the concept of a 'real' text and the wishes of the 'real' author(-function) complicate the transformative impulse at work, and fan texts are sometimes praised in terms of their authenticity or faithfulness to the author figure's canonical statements. We observe the legitimation paradox at work both diegetically and extra-diegetically at the same time: as characters in fanfic enact

transformation of the system by and through traditional forms of authority, fanfic transforms the discourse through self-conscious appropriation of Martin's text.

The final research chapter demonstrates the paradox most explicitly. Here, fanfic as a practice is legitimated yet contained by its presence in the show. By inclusion of fanfic about the show's own characters (*Supernatural* 5x01; 10x05), this writing has been sanctioned by the fanboy-auteur. Notably, as Newman and Levine have argued, the industrial construction of a tel-visual author-figure is itself a legitimation strategy, comparing television with traditionally legitimate art forms like the novel and later film (2012, p. 198). Fan discourse, then, takes the next step, frequently legitimating its own production in terms of the auteur's word. Paratextually, showrunner Eric Kripke professes to 'love' and 'welcome' fan production (Zubernis and Larsen 2012, p. 214). However, the manner in which fanfic is initially presented, as the work of the silly, obsessed, nymphomaniac fangirl, is a powerful discursive gesture of containment. Moreover, as a contrast, the author appears as a character in the text (*Supernatural* 5x01, 5x09, 5x22), either a prophet or, it is audaciously implied, God Himself. Whilst the second episode to feature fanfic mitigated this construction, fandom was reconstructing the author/fan relationship long before it aired, and this perhaps produces the most radical change to a discursive formation. Often, the primacy of the author and his text is affirmed. However, some fic, combining statements from the discourses of academia, literature and fandom to produce new knowledge, here begin to deconstruct the terms of the paradox in which the fic is only legitimated through the author. Assertions of a primary or original discrete text, a text that exists apart from the reader and/or fanfic writer, begin to be deconstructed. This, I suggest, is the means by which fanfic can compromise the legitimation paradox. Fanfic can thus be understood in postmodern terms, not only as a response or tactical counter to its predecessors, but as deconstructive of the concept of original, essentialist texts authored by God and White men, and *Supernatural's* re-(re)integration of that argument back into canon demonstrates the effect of these statements on media. Other postmodern art forms, especially the postcolonial, are already understood as deconstructive of this concept (see e.g. Kraus 1985; Hutcheon 1988; Bhabha 1994; Anyinefa 2000; Bannet 2011), even as they may problematically reaffirm it through citation, reference or the stance of tactically opposing a great predecessor (Jacziminski 2009; Singh 2012). Moreover, these meta-textual statements take highly self-conscious forms, demonstrating alertness within fandom to the problematics of the legitimation paradox, and wariness with regards validating one's work through what is already culturally legitimate (cf. Booth 2015, p. 11).

Supernatural's construction of its fandom has been double-edged. The first writing fangirl introduced onscreen was Becky Rosen (5x01), a hyper-feminine, slash-obsessed young woman who was permitted her onscreen pleasures at the cost of a degree of mockery. Johnson names this practice 'fan-tagonism': a form of discipline by discursive containment, in which the text displays the fan to herself in controlling forms (2007). Fan-tagonism supposedly de-legitimizes certain kinds of fandom—notably the excessive and feminine—by exposing, exaggerating and shaming (pp. 295–299). Yet, if discursive containment was the aim here, it has the opposite effect: a large body of fic (re)appropriates and transforms both Becky and the character of the author. I prefer the term textual provocation to describe the construction of fandom by canon and author figures. The double meaning in the term is intentional: such statements can be provocative in the sense of baiting, but they also provoke the production of more text, which potentially alters the formation. We will note instances of textual provocation in the paratexts around *Sherlock* and *Game of Thrones*, but the theory comes to full fruition in the final research chapter. Indeed, when *Supernatural* next introduced fangirl characters in 10x05, *Fan Fiction*, their construction was dramatically modified. These creative girls were fans, certainly, and ultimately still deferent to the diegetic the author figure, but they were, nonetheless, capable and creative writers in their own right, producing their own

version of the text according to their desires. Here, we may see a concrete example of how fanfic has changed canonical popular text.

Chapter 6 concludes with a summary, a discussion of the limitations of this study and implications for further research. I suggest that the legitimation paradox could be utilised to study how other kinds of text negotiate their reference to an author-ized predecessor, and the points where, through deconstruction of that concept, they might compromise the paradox. For the construction of the author is powerful; but it is still a discourse formation.

As the alteration of discursive formations by powerful new statements from fanfic will demonstrate, discourse formations are always malleable and subject to change. Moreover, as the Foucauldian method illuminates, discourse analysis is concerned with what is thinkable and sayable, in particular cultural contexts. As fandom's visibility and impact on popular culture increases, transformative work becomes a practice that may, as Artieri put it, 'generate different interpretative categories' (2012, p. 463) that reach beyond fandom and canon into broader society. If, as Booth (2015) and Chin (2013, p. 88) argue, big media producers are engaging with fan audiences in increasingly innovative and visible ways, the discursive transformations and consolidations constructed through fanfic hold increasingly higher stakes. <>

COMPARATIVE MYSTICISM: AN ANTHOLOGY OF ORIGINAL SOURCES edited by Steven T. Katz [Oxford University Press, 9780195143799]

This collection of primary texts introduces readers to the mystical literature of the world's great religious traditions. Beginning with an introduction by Steven T. Katz, a leading scholar of mysticism, the anthology comprises poetry, prayer, narrative, and other writings from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist, and Native American traditions.

This collection provides readers not only with the primary mystical texts from each religious tradition, but with an explanation of the context of the source and tradition. *Comparative Mysticism* shows how the great mystical traditions of the world are deeply rooted in the religious traditions from which they originated. The contextual methodological approach taken throughout the anthology also addresses the critical question of what these mystical traditions, at their highest level, have in common. Despite the prevailing view that mystical traditions throughout the world are essentially similar, the presentation of the sources in this volume suggests that, in fact, the various traditions have distinct teachings and different metaphysical goals.

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Excerpt: General Introduction

The writings collected in **COMPARATIVE MYSTICISM** address the most fundamental and important methodological, epistemological, and hermeneutical questions regarding the study and interpretation of mysticism and mystical sources across cultures. This anthology will be an invaluable resource to students and scholars of mystic tradition for years to come.

Preface

This anthology of original mystical sources has been created in order to provide students at all levels with a reliable, wide-ranging, methodologically sophisticated, philosophically and logically coherent introduction to the complex subject at hand. Each individual section, representing a different major mystical community, has been edited by an expert on the particular tradition under review. These section editors have provided helpful introductions to the traditions for which they were responsible; have selected the primary texts to be included in this collection; and have compiled useful, if brief, bibliographies of primary and secondary sources for further study. These bibliographies include some older as well as more recent titles. Readers will also note that in a few cases more recent translations of the works from which the selections included in this volume have been taken have appeared. Because the nuances raised by these translations in no way affect the quality of the present collection, nor the arguments regarding the contextual interpretations of mystical experience that it is advancing, the translations first chosen have been retained. The selection of texts has followed certain broad guidelines suggested by the volume's editor...

Steven T. Katz, editor

General Editor's Introduction by Steven T. Katz

I Scope of Definitions

The term "mysticism" derives, most probably, from the Greek term *muein* that meant either "to be silent" or "to close the eyes." It was first used in a religious context in relation to the Greek mystery religions and indicated that individuals should not reveal the secret initiation or other rites of these ancient cults. After the rise of Christianity, the term was adopted to refer to the spiritual truths of Christianity. In the late classical and early medieval eras it began to be associated with the notion of a direct, ineffable awareness of God, and this usage persisted through the medieval period and into our own. However, this definition is too narrow for contemporary scholarly purposes for it excludes those traditions in which there is no God, for example, Theravada Buddhism or Taoism, and also because it ignores many specific phenomena integrally related to mysticism and mystical experience. Yet, providing a more inclusive definition of the notion of mysticism is difficult given all the variegated phenomena and different types of experiences to which this term has been applied. At the same time, this difficulty recognized, I believe that the following working definition will serve readers of this book well in trying to understand the material herein collected: **"Mysticism is the quest for direct experience of God, Being, or Ultimate Reality, however these are understood, that is, theistically or non-theistically."**

It is important to add immediately to this definition these further qualifications and conditions:

- (1) "Mysticism" and mystical experience do not, as is often erroneously claimed, necessarily involve a loss of self. Sometimes they do; sometimes they do not. "Mystical experience" is known in both unitive and dialogical forms: the former carries a sense of loss of self and absorption into God or the Ultimate; the latter involves a sense of relationship in which the human self does not sense itself merging into the Absolute.
- (2) "Mysticism" and mystical states are not merely psychological. That is, they claim to be experiences of God or Ultimate Reality rather than solely subjective states of mind, however pleasurable or exalted.
- (3) "Mysticism" and "mystical experience" are not to be equated with certain psychedelic or drug-induced experiences. The latter are the consequence of transformations in one's subjective awareness of oneself and the world. Such experiences do not necessarily bring one into contact with God or Ultimate Reality. However, there are religious traditions in

which drugs are used as part of a larger process aimed at inducing not only altered states of consciousness but also contact with, experience of, transcendent realities or Reality.

- (4) The study of "mysticism" includes many phenomena. Among them are meditation and contemplation, special forms of prayer, visions, yoga, trances, auditions, ritual practices, and sacrifice, and the recitation of mantras. Though it is usual to concentrate on the peak moment of ecstasy and/or unity as the core element in mysticism, it is an error to focus solely on these elements to the exclusion of other phenomena that, at a minimum, lead to climactic mystical states and experiences.

We shall return to these elemental issues and the methodological problems and questions they raise as we proceed.

2 Epistemological Considerations

The academic study of "mysticism," the singling out of certain specific forms of human experience for classification and analysis under this rubric, began at the end of the nineteenth century. The reasons why this occurred just at this time are many, but I would suggest that perhaps the most important was the loss of traditional religious commitments by many men and women who still had a deep interest in and commitment to some sense of "the spiritual" or "the transcendent" and wished to confirm the existence of such metaphysical realms and access to such Absolutes outside of the boundaries of religious orthodoxy. Thus the "Ultimate Realities" and the human experiences thereof were approached as, and said to be approachable as, entities and forms of life that were not dependent on religious traditions, dogmas, rituals, priests, shamans, churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. Above and beyond these institutions there was to be had a purer, more direct, experience of the divine, of the Ultimate, the most-Real, the Absolute. And certain men and women of the past had reached these supreme experiences and had pointed the way for others to do likewise. So the modern scholarly notion of "mysticism" emerged as a separate and distinctive category within the study of religions and of human reality. Now, rather than seeing the great "mystical" personalities of the past as emerging out of and as inseparable from the world's religious traditions, these individuals were described as being essentially distinct from their religious communities, as being individuals who only out of necessity used the language, traditions, rituals, and teachings of their tradition. Moreover, having successfully made their own mystical journeys, they recognized the arbitrariness of the symbols, texts, and doctrines of their—and all—original religious communities. Still more important, it was argued that, having had authentic mystical experiences, they recognized that at the level of the Ultimate there was one common experience, the mystical experience, usually described as being unitive in character, wherein the self was absorbed into the Absolute.

This is the analytic position one finds presented with more or less learning and subtlety in the long, dominant, interpretive approach shared by William James, Rudolf Otto, Rufus Jones, Aldous Huxley, J. B. Pratt, Joseph Campbell, Evelyn Underhill, Walter T. Stace, and Geoffrey Parrinder, and more recently, in the work of Ninian Smart, Frits Staal, Richard Woods, and William Wainwright. And for many this remains the preferred explanation of mystical phenomena and experience. The continuing scholarly influence of William James, Rudolf Otto, and Walter T. Stace, in particular, is evidence enough of this.

However, over the past two decades a new model of how one should decipher and analyze mysticism has emerged. This second methodological approach rejects the earlier interpretive paradigm as simplistic and untrue to the data at hand and argues that mystics do not come to and do not have their extraordinary experiences in isolation from their sociohistorical and religious context. That is to say, mystical experience(s) reveal a necessary relationship between the prior education of the mystic and their mystical goal, the intentions of the mystic and their actual experiences. Put

more concretely, this means that Sufis are Muslims and that being a Muslim is essential to being a Sufi; that being a Jewish mystic, a kabbalist, is inseparable from other fundamental aspects of Judaism; that Christian mystics are formed by Christian teaching; and that Enlightenment (nirvana) is unintelligible and not sought as an experience outside of the larger Buddhist worldview. The reason why this is so is due to the fact that neither mystical experience nor more ordinary forms of human experience give any indication or grounds for believing that they are unmediated. All experience is processed through, organized by, and makes itself available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways. The notion of unmediated, that is, pure, experience seems at best empty if not self-contradictory. This epistemological circumstance exists because of the sorts of beings we are, even with regard to the experiences of those ultimate objects of concern with which mystics have intercourse, such as God, Being, nirvana, and so forth. This "mediated" aspect of all our experience has to be properly acknowledged if our investigation of experience, including mystical experience, is to get very far.

This fact leads to the recognition that in order to understand mysticism it is not just a question of studying the reports of the mystic after the experiential event but of acknowledging that the experience itself, as well as the form in which it is reported, is shaped by concepts which the mystic brings to, and which shape, his or her experience. To flesh this out, what is being argued is that, for example, the Hindu mystic does not have an experience of *x* that he or she then describes in the familiar language and symbols of Hinduism but, rather, has a Hindu experience. That is, the experience is not an unmediated experience of *x* but is itself, at least partially, the preformed anticipated Hindu experience of Brahman. Again, the Christian mystic does not experience some unidentified reality, which he or she then conveniently labels "God," but rather has at least partially prefigured Christian experiences of God, or Jesus, or the like. Moreover, and importantly, based on the evidence supplied by the great mystics of the world, the Hindu experience of Brahman and the Christian experience of God are not the same. We shall support this contention in more detail below.

The significance of these considerations is that the forms of consciousness that the mystic brings to experience set structured and limiting parameters on what the experience will be, that is, on what will be experienced, and they rule out in advance what is "inexperienceable" in the particular given, concrete, context. For example, the nature of the Christian mystic's premystical consciousness informs the mystical consciousness such that he or she experiences the mystic reality in terms of Jesus, the Trinity, or a personal God rather than in terms of the nonpersonal, noneverything Buddhist doctrine of nirvana. Care must also be taken to note that even the plurality of experience found in Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist mystical traditions have to be broken down into smaller units. Thus, for example, we find in Hinduism monistic, pantheistic, and theistic trends, while Christianity knows both absorptive and nonabsorptive forms of mysticism. Again, close attention has to be paid to the organic changes in ideology and historical development that specific traditions undergo internally and to how these changes affect the experiences that mystics have. For example, absorptive mysticism is not found in the earliest strata of Christian mysticism, while the experience of the Jewish mystics of Talmudic times—known as merkavah mysticism, based on the chariot vision of Ezekiel—is different from the Zoharic (late-thirteenth-century) and Lurianic (sixteenth-century) mysticism of the later Middle Ages.

To help understand more clearly why mystics of different religious traditions have different religious experiences, consider the following comparison of Jewish and Buddhist mystics. A Jewish mystic will have learned and been conditioned in all kinds of ways from childhood on that (1) there is more to reality than this physical world; (2) this "more" than reality is an Ultimate Reality, which is a personal God; (3) this God created the world and men; (4) men have spiritual souls that can commune with God; (5) God enters into covenants with men; (6) even in covenants He remains a separate reality;

(7) God's Being and man's being are ontologically distinct; (8) God entered into special covenants with Abraham and his heirs, Israel; (9) these covenants are expressed in the acts of circumcision and the giving of the Torah; and (10) the Torah and its commandments (mitzvot) are the most perfect expression of God's Will, as well as the most perfect means of relation between man and God. Furthermore, the Jewish mystic will have learnt to fit all these items into a special "mystical theology" known by the broad term Kabbalah, in which the visible and perceivable is contingent and imperfect and the unperceived and nonsensual is the real. One could extend this comparatively small list of learned Jewish thought and behavior at great length. All these cultural-social beliefs and their attendant practices, especially the regular practice of the mitzvot, clearly affect the way in which the Jewish mystic views the world, the God who created it, the way to approach this God, and what to expect when one does finally encounter this God. The entire life of the Jewish mystic is permeated from childhood up by images, concepts, symbols, ideological values, and ritual behavior and there is no reason to believe that he leaves these aspects behind during his mystical experience. Rather, these images, beliefs, symbols, and rituals define, in advance, what the experience is that he or she wants to have and what these experiences, when he or she does have them, will be like.'

Given the mystical evidence we possess, it is clear that this complex, pre-experiential pattern affects the actual experience of the Jewish mystic. The Jewish conditioning pattern impresses itself so strongly on kabbalists that the majority of them do not have experiences of God in which one loses one's identity in ecstatic moments of unity. (And when they do have such unitive experiences, and some do, it is because they have been students of particular, minority traditions of kabbalah, which, drawing on Neoplatonism in various forms, legitimate and encourage the pursuit of such unitive experience. That is, this sort of outcome in a Jewish context does not disconfirm the general theory presently being argued for.)² What the Jewish mystic generally does experience is the Divine Throne, or the angel Metatron, or aspects of the sefirot (the Divine Emanations that comprise the highest levels of the upper world), or the heavenly court and palaces, or the Hidden Torah, or (in the medieval and early modern era especially) *devekuth*, which literally means "adhesion" or "clinging to" God. According to this last circumstance, the mystic is not absorbed into God but has, rather, an intimate relationship with God in which one remains aware of the duality between God and the individual soul. The limited presence of the kinds of experience of unity that are regularly associated with mysticism, even often identified as the "essence of mysticism," in the majority of Jewish mystical contexts is strong evidence that pre-experiential conditioning affects the nature of the experience one actually has. Because the Jew is generally taught that such experiences of unity do not, as a rule, happen for reasons flowing out of the Jewish theological tradition—particularly God's uniqueness and transcendence of all created things—he or she does not, in fact, in most instances, have such experiences.

Now let us compare the most significant Jewish form of mystical experience, *devekuth*, the act of "clinging" to God, to the radically dissimilar situation found in Buddhism. The preconditioning of the Buddhist consciousness is very different from that of the Jewish, and this variation generates the radically divergent mystical experience that the Buddhist aims at and reaches. Consider the following doctrines that the Buddhist learns from his or her tradition, starting with the "four noble truths" that lie at the foundation of Buddhism. These truths are:

"Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, association is suffering, separation from what is pleasant is suffering, not obtaining what one desires is suffering..." ;

The cause of suffering is "craving" or "desire; "craving for sensual desires, and craving for becoming, and craving for non-existence";

Suffering can be overcome by the proper discipline and understanding;

There is an eightfold path that leads to the cessation of suffering (nirvana). (1) Right understanding, that is, understanding the four noble truths; (2) Right thought, that is, thought free from desire and craving and cruelty, which is referred to as samkalpa, the proper "shaping together" of one's consciousness; (3) Right speech, that is, refraining from lying, slander, malicious gossip, frivolous speech; (4) Right action, that is, the avoidance especially of killing, stealing, and general misconduct; (5) Right livelihood, that is, not earning a living by inappropriate means, for example, as an astrologer; (6) Right effort, that is, striving to purify oneself of evil thoughts; (7) Right mindfulness, that is, being properly mindful of the nature of one's body and mind; and (8) Right concentration, that is, practicing the proper meditation patterns, especially the four dhyanas or trance states.

Thus we see that the Buddhist is conditioned to reach nirvana by sila or moral behavior, samadhi or concentration, and prajna or wisdom.³ These elements of "the four noble truths; and their corollaries, are then further elaborated upon in the Buddha's second great sermon, the "Discourse on the Marks of Not-Self," in which he taught the essential doctrine of "no-self" (anātman)—that there is no simple, pure substance that is permanent and that has its own, independent substantial existence analogous to the doctrine of the soul in western traditions or to ātman in Hinduism. In addition, the no-self anātman doctrine is taken to entail the important doctrine of pratityasamutpada, "dependent origination," and to be related to the doctrine of the impermanence of all things. The only "something"—or is it a nothing?—that avoids anitya (impermanence) and which we have as our mystical goal is nirvana wherein we avoid the wheel of suffering that is the condition of all existing realities. The stages of sanctification that carry a man upwards toward nirvana have been summarized as follows:

In passing from existence as a common person (prthagjana) to experiencing nirvana, several stages can be delineated. The first task is to become a member of the family of spiritually elect noble personages (arya pudgalas). To do this one must first make himself fit to commence the practices that will make him an arya pudgala. Even to begin this quest is significant, resulting in the stage of gotrabhu or member of the family (of aryas). From here, depending on temperament and capability, one of two courses is open: either the follower in faith (skaddhan-usarin) for those with mild faculties, or the follower of Dharma (Dharmanusarin), for those of keen intellect. By progressively gaining insight into each of the four noble truths, one becomes, at the culmination of the process, a srotapanna, or "streamwinner," the first class of the arya pudgalas. Having abandoned totally belief in the self, doubts about the Three Jewels (i.e. Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), and belief in the efficacy of rituals, the streamwinner is assured of enlightenment within one more lifetime. Progressing further still, the adept becomes an anagamin or "non-returner," assured of enlightenment within one more lifetime. When all negative qualities have been eradicated and the adept is pure in all respects, he is able experientially to realize nirvana, thus becoming an arhant, and establishing himself as a true saint in Buddhism.⁴

This brings us directly to nirvana, the goal of the entire Buddhist enterprise in all its elaborate detail. While it is a subject of fiercely debated divergent opinion among Buddhologists, for our purposes it seems fair to note that nirvana (1) is the recognition that belief in the phenomenal "self" of mundane existence is an illusion; (2) is most especially characterized by the extinction of "suffering," that is the predominant feature of ordinary reality; (3) is not a conditional or conditioned reality; (4) provides the attainment of a unique wisdom or insight into the impermanence (anitya) of all existing things; (5) is not a Being; (6) is a state or condition, that is, in the sense of being "Nirvanaized"; and (7) is not a relational state of being.'

Among the varied elements in this complex structure let us concentrate especially on two cardinal features of the Buddhist account. First, the basis of the entire system is the awareness of suffering in the world and the goal of the system is the extinction of suffering; secondly, the goal, nirvana, is not a relational state in which the finite self-encounters a saving or loving transcendental Being, God, but

rather is a new ontological state of being (if these terms are not inappropriate). That there is no encounter of any sort results from the fact that there is no real self and no transcendental other Self. Again, it should also be noted that according to Buddhist doctrine there is no divine will that plays any role in history or nature as there is no divinity. Rather, in place of the divine will, one has the strict law of ethical causality, Karma, that is at the root of the causal chain of existence, reexistence or reincarnation, and release.'

Just setting this Buddhist understanding of the nature of things over against the Jewish should, in itself, already be strong evidence for the thesis that what the Buddhist experiences as nirvana is different from what the Jew experiences as devekuth. However, let us draw this out more clearly. To begin, when the Jewish mystic performs his special mystical devotions and meditations, kavvanot, he does so in order to purify his soul, that is, to remove the soul from its entrapment in the material world in order to liberate it for its upward spiritual ascent culminating in devekuth. The Buddhist mystic, on the other hand, performs his meditative practices as an integral part of the Buddhist mystical quest, not in order to free the soul from the body and purify it, but rather in order to annihilate suffering by overcoming any notion of "self;" holding that the very notion of a substantial "self" or "soul" is the essential illusion that generates the entire process of suffering. Buddhist literature specifically represents the Buddha as criticizing the belief in a permanent or substantial self (the Hindu doctrine of atman) as a false, even pernicious doctrine that paradoxically, insofar as it encourages egoism in one's pursuit of one's own eternal happiness, makes the fulfillment of one's happiness an impossibility.

In addition to its insistence on the extinction of suffering through the elimination of the "self," nirvana is also not a relational state. It is not the meeting of two distinct selves or realities who come together in loving embrace. Nirvana is the absence of all relation, all personality, all love, all feeling, all individuality, all identity. Nirvana is the achievement (if we can use this term, but we have no better one) of calm, of peace, of tranquility. While it is the banishment of care or anxiety, of concern or striving, it is not the creation of a new condition of meeting. Nirvana is not "something," nor does it contain or permit the continued existence of either individual beings or one grand Being. Its ontology cannot even be easily classed as theistic, monistic, or naturalistic. In the world of religious ideas it comes the closest to reminding one of Wittgenstein's remark, made in another connection, about "not being a something nor a nothing either." Moreover, and this cannot be emphasized too strongly, it is this theoretical structure of the impermanence of all existence, the suffering of all beings, and the doctrines of no-self, meditation, and so forth upon which the whole of Buddhist life and its goal, nirvana, is built. The Buddhist understanding of reality generates the entire elaborate regimen of Buddhist practice, and it is this understanding of reality that defines in advance what the Buddhist mystic is seeking and what given the evidence we have, he finds. To think that his preconditioned consciousness of how things are and how to find release from suffering in nirvana is extraneous to the actual Buddhist mystical experience is bizarre.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to conclude that nirvana and devekuth—insofar as words mean anything and philosophical inquiry has any significance—are not the same thing and do not refer to the same, or even similar, experiences. There is no intelligible way that anyone can legitimately argue that a "no-self" experience of "empty" calm is the same thing as the experience of intense, loving, intimate relationship between two substantial selves, one of whom is conceived of as the personal God of western religion and all that this entails. The losing of self is not equivalent to the finding of another, especially when this other is conceived of as the God of Jewish tradition.

One could extend this argument for difference by introducing parallel analyses of the fundamental claims of still other traditions, for example, the Hindu, Christian, Taoist, and Muslim. But, in this context, this is unnecessary. Enough has already been said to make the case for a more

sophisticated, contextual analysis of mysticism and mystical experience. Instead, I would like to consider further some of the central, logical-philosophical problems inherent in the study of mysticism, beginning with the issue of the meaning or meanings of terms used by mystics to describe or interpret their experiences, for it is this factor—the meaning of words—that misleads many students of the subject into thinking that all mystics are referring to the same experience or to a small number of similar experiences. For example, W. T. Stace, in his argumentation for the existence of a "universal core" common to all mystical experiences, compares, among other things, Eckhart's Christian neoplatonic experience of Nothingness, the Jewish kabbalist's experience of *devekuth*, and the Buddhist doctrine of *sunyata* or the Void. In each case Stace believes that the use of apparently similar language reflects an underlying "core" experience. So he holds that the "fact" that in each of these mystical reports it is claimed that there is no empirical content in the experience—and that these reports seem to describe their experience as being nonspatial, nontemporal, beyond language and ineffable, paradoxical, sublime, and joyful, among other traits—is clear evidence for his claim as to the existence of a "common core" to all mystical experience. However, Stace, and others who follow a similar procedure and arrive at analogous results, is here being misled by the surface grammar of the mystical reports studied.

What appear to be like-sounding descriptions are not, in actuality, similar descriptions and do not indicate the same experience. And this is because language is itself contextual and words "mean" only in context. The same words—beautiful, sublime, ultimate reality, ineffable, paradoxical, joyful, transcending all empirical content, and so forth—can apply and have been applied to more than one object. Their mere presence alone does not guarantee anything: neither the nature of the experience, nor the nature of the referent of the experience, nor the comparability of various claims is assured by this seemingly common description. Consider the following exercise. A Jew could use all these terms to refer to his experience of *devekuth* with the moral, personal Absolute Being he or she calls God. At the same time the Buddhist could use all these phrases to refer to the absence of all being in nirvana, while the Hindu could use them to refer to his or her experience of absorption into the Impersonal Absolute Brahman. Again, the Taoist could use these terms, as well as Plotinus or the nature mystic, in referring to Nature. We can express this unexpected complexity clearly by considering the following example. Consider the ambiguity of the proposition:

X transcends all empirical content, is beyond space and time, is ultimate reality, gives a sense of joy, is holy, can only be expressed in paradoxes and is actually ineffable
where X can be replaced by several, radically different and mutually exclusive candidates, such as God, Brahman, nirvana, Nature.

What emerges from this argument is the awareness that choosing descriptions of mystical experience out of their total context does not provide grounds for their comparability but rather severs all grounds of their intelligibility for it empties the chosen phrases, terms, and descriptions of definite meaning. This logical-semantic problem plagues all the attempts that various scholars from William James on have made to provide a common phenomenological description of mystical experience. The fact is that lists of supposedly common elements not only always reduce the actual variety of disparate experiences to fit a specific theory but also turn out to be of little help in understanding mystical experience because they are so broad as to fit any one of several mutually exclusive experiences. Consider, for example, William James's list of the supposed common characteristics of mystical experience set out in his famous *Varieties of Religious Experience*. James suggests four common elements: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity. Without too detailed a review let us consider as models the terms "ineffability" and "noesis," that James himself considered the most important. "Ineffability" James rightly defines as an experience or subject that "defies expression, that no adequate report of its content can be given in words," and goes on to conclude as a consequence that "it follows that its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be

imparted or transferred to others."? While this is an accurate description of "ineffability," James's definition is not the basis on which one can compare experiences, nor the basis on which one can conclude that different experiences are actually similar. And this because, though two or more experiences are said to be "ineffable," the term "ineffable" can logically fit many disjunctive and incomparable experiences. That is to say, an atheist can feel a sense of dread at the absurdity of the cosmos which he labels ineffable, while the theist can experience God in a way that he also insists is ineffable. Thus in *I and Thou*, Martin Buber describes the dialogical encounter with God, the Eternal Thou, as ineffable, whose "meaning itself cannot be transferred or expressed," while Kafka, whose brilliant and haunting tales also suggest the ineffability of existence, intends no such encounter, nor reflects any faith in the existence of an Eternal Thou. To argue that, because both Buber and Kafka see their respective experiences as ineffable, the dialogical experience of Buber's relational I with the Eternal Thou is the same as or similar to the experience of the lost souls in Kafka's *The Castle* is absurd. Where one finds "meaning confirmed," the other finds "emptiness." Again, "ineffable" nirvana is not the ineffable Allah of the Sufi, nor the ineffable Tao of Taoism. The ontology or reality of Brahman/Atman that lies "beyond all expression" in the *Mandukya Upanishads* is not the "ineffability" encountered in Eckhart's Christian experience. "They were dumb because the hidden truth they saw in God, the mystery they found there, was ineffable." Even less comparable is Eckhart's "ineffable" God with the reality being pointed to by the Zen master who when asked "What is the Buddha?" replied (in quite typical Zen fashion), "A dried shit stick."

Let us also briefly consider James's emphasis on the universality of "noesis" as a distinguishing and comparable element in mystical experience. James defines this characteristic in the following way: "Although so similar to states of feeling, mystical states seem, to those who experience them, to be states of knowledge." That is, he continues, "states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect." James has caught something important in calling attention to the noetic element in mystical experience, but it is nonetheless not an element that provides the commonality he desires. Consider, to begin with, the variety of different knowledge claims that could fit James's definition and which his own examples acknowledge, that is, this characteristic has been claimed for experiences that might be classed as aesthetic, ethical, natural, religious, and mystical. To argue, as James, does, that because each such experience claims to give "insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect" all the experiences are the same, fails to recognize both the diversity of "insights" one could have into the "depths of truth" and the variety of "truths" that can lurk in these depths waiting to be "plumbed." The competing claims made for such knowledge of the "truth" is staggering, with a range encompassing Pythagorean speculations; voodoo, animism, and totemism; Madame Blavatsky's theosophy; and Huxley's and Ramakrishna's *philosophia perennis*, to say nothing of the variety of more traditional religious teachings.

Related to the linguistic-cum-ontological confusion just discussed, there is also a substantial logical issue that was briefly referred to earlier and which now calls for more sustained discussion. This issue relates to the claim that mystical language is defined by its "ineffability" and its "paradoxicality." These two features are standard elements in all phenomenological descriptions of mystical experience and are taken to be grounds for their comparability; but do they actually support this position? What leads me to ask this question is the following consideration: the terms "paradox" and "ineffable" do not function as terms that inform us about the content of experience or any given ontological "state of affairs." Rather they function to cloak experience from investigation and to hold mysterious whatever ontological commitments one has. As a consequence, the use of the terms "paradox" and "ineffable" do not provide data for comparability; rather, they eliminate the logical possibility of the comparability of experience altogether. Consider the following example: mystic A claims experience X is paradoxical and ineffable, while mystic B claims experience Y is paradoxical and ineffable. The only logically permissible conclusion one can draw in this situation is that both

mystic A and mystic B claim their experiences are paradoxical; nothing can be said about the content of their respective experiences X and Y for there is no way to give content to experiences X or Y in such a manner as to learn anything about them that could then serve as the basis of a reasonable comparison. To assume, as many scholars have done, that because both mystics claim that their experiences are paradoxical they are describing like experiences is a non sequitur.

3 Cultural, Religious, and Sociological Considerations

In order to gain a fuller, more adequate understanding of the epistemological and contextual issues involved in the study of mystical materials it is necessary, given the essential link between what one reads, learns, knows, intends, and anticipates, and the mystical experience one has, to investigate what these premystical circumstances and conditions are and how they influence the eventual mystical experience. This means studying, among other things, the methods, forms, and structures of traditional education; the role of the learning of scripture in the formation of consciousness; the substance and implications of normative doctrines and traditional Weltanschauungen (worldviews); and the role and nature of religious communities like monasteries and sanghas.

Consider, for example, the importance of religious teachers and gurus in the training for and acquisition of mystical experience. In almost all mystical traditions we find an emphasis on the need for a teacher or guru who will lead the novice along "the way." In the Jewish tradition there is a strong aversion to autodidacticism. Indeed, among kabbalists, until the historic calamity of the expulsion from Spain in 1492 called for a radical new approach to mysticism, mystical wisdom was always held very close by its devotees and was only taught in small circles to a select few. The constant fear was expressed that this knowledge, if obtained by the unlettered without the guidance of a teacher, could lead to antinomianism and heresy. In the Buddhist tradition, one also finds the same emphasis on being guided along the path toward nirvana by a qualified teacher. Only a Buddha reaches self-enlightenment, all others must be helped toward this end. In all schools of Buddhism spiritual guides are held to be necessary. Here too, one needs to note not only the importance of a qualified teacher or bhiksu but also how this insistence on proper instruction grew into the widespread institution of Buddhist monasticism, with all its strict discipline and ideological commitments. And these emphases, of course, are not unique to Buddhism; the institution of the guru-like master being is found in all eastern traditions, as for example, in Hinduism especially in its Tantric variety, and in Zen. The Zen tradition is highly instructive at just this juncture, for though it made spontaneity a great virtue in achieving satori, this spontaneity was achieved through the mediating role that the Zen master played in the "enlightenment" of his disciples. Not only were the Zen masters considered the paradigms of Zen practice to be emulated by their disciples, but they even became the objects of Zen meditation for their disciples. Even more importantly, it is the Zen master, through the seemingly meaningless koans that he sets his students to meditate upon, as well as in the purposeful physical and mental abuse he subjects his students to, who destroys the illusions in which the disciple is imprisoned and which prevent him from reaching satori. The master induces in the disciple the condition of "Zen sickness" that allows the disciple to break the bonds of conditional experience and to encounter reality as it really is, in its "suchness." | |

Again, this aspect of the mystical situation is highly focused in the history of Sufism, which developed a widespread, highly refined tradition of Sufi-schools that aided the believer salak at-tariq ("traveling the Path"). The essence of these mystical Orders, often centered in special Sufi monasteries known as khanaqahs, was the formal relation of master and disciple, of murshid and mucid, based upon the ideology that, though each man, potentially, latently, possessed the ability to merge with Allah in ecstatic union (fana), this potency could be actualized only with the assistance of a qualified master (except in the case of a small spiritual elite or elect known as khawass or Sufiyya on whom Allah has bestowed special favor). The disciple followed the tariqa ("the way") which was a practical method

for moving upward through a succession of stages (maqamat) culminating in the experience of fana—unity in Allah. The tariqa consisted of set prayers, supererogatory exercises, varied liturgical and penitential acts, fasts, retreats, vigils, and the like. This highly structured procedure prepared the disciple for his experience, putting him in the specifically Sufi frame of consciousness, both ideologically and existentially, for his ecstatic experience, the form of which was also anticipated in advance.¹² Likewise, the overwhelming preponderance of Christian mystics are found in monasteries and holy orders with their lives centered around chastity, "good works," and an extremely rigorous regimen of prayer.

In all these instances, one must ask: "What does the guru teach?" The answer is that he teaches a speck way and a specific goal; his students follow him along the former because they want to reach the latter. Thus, the Buddhist "seeker" comes to his master (and the sangha) and follows his prescribed meditations and yoga practices to reach that state in which suffering is annihilated and the erroneous notion of self is completely overcome. Alternatively, the Hindu "seeker" loyally adheres to his guru's instructions because he desires to affirm the ultimacy of his self and its relation to the universal Self. Again, the murid is loyal to the rigorous discipline of his murshid because he seeks to merge his soul with the personal God of Islam; while the kabbalist practices his regimen of prayer and asceticism, as taught by his rabbinicalmystical teacher, in order to achieve devekuth. The Buddhist guru does not teach what the Hindu guru teaches, though superficial association of the term confuses the unwary. The murshid does not teach what the kabbalist teaches, nor again does Teresa of Avila teach St. John of the Cross the same "way" as Don Juan¹³ or the Taoist Master. Decisive proof of this is found not only in a close examination of the respective "teachings" of the various teachers but also in the polemical spirit manifest by many, if not most, mystical masters. Shankara does not shrink from entering into heated polemics with his Buddhist opponents about the meaning of the ultimate experience, understood by him in a nonpersonal monistic way, or again from his more theistically minded Hindu colleagues saying, "They are wrong! They do not understand! They do not have the ultimate experience!" Only he and his students find the ultimate experience because only they are properly equipped to find it. Alternatively, in the Christian tradition we find, for example, Ruysbroeck prepared to criticize those mystics for whom mystic experience does not involve moral imperatives as inferior, while Zen Buddhists have tests and rules for investigating whether a person really has achieved satori or nirvana.¹⁴ It should also be noted that classical mystics do not talk about the abstraction "mysticism"; they talk only about their tradition, their "way," their "goal": they do not recognize the legitimacy of any other. The ecumenical overtones regularly associated with mysticism in our culture have come about primarily as a result of the work of nonmystics of recent vintage who have fostered this image for their own purposes.

Consider here, too, the complementary role played by respective mystical "models" in each mystical tradition. By "model" in these contexts I do not mean a theoretical construct as in the physical sciences but rather the nature of "individuals" who become norms for their tradition in a variety of ways. Such individuals become Ideals; their individuality becomes categorical; their biographies didactic. The normative individual is the medium of a universal teaching; the instrument for the revelation of more general truths. These paradigmatic figures can be either human or divine and either male or female, with examples of each of these types to be found in the sources. Examples of such figures would include Abraham and Moses among kabbalists, Jesus in Christian tradition, Mohammed in Sufi communities, and the Buddha in Buddhist teaching and practice. In each case, the individual mystic seeks to emulate the "model" extolled by his or her tradition—to become like Moses or Jesus or Mohammed or the Buddha—to the degree that such replication is possible.

In this context, another word about the role of canonical scriptures in mystical traditions will help to fill out this picture of the education of mystics, the formation of mystical world-views, and the personal ambitions of those who seek to follow the mystical way. I would begin by pointing out that

the literature produced by the world's major mystical traditions is not, as one might infer from scholarly studies on the subject of mysticism, primarily about an independent and individual religious experience but is, rather, more often than not, composed of esoteric commentaries on canonical texts. Without much effort one can identify, in supporting this essential claim, the following major works that have been created by the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist mystical traditions.

The mystical compositions of the rabbinic era are based primarily on elusive passages in the Bible that are connected with the creation of the world in the book of Genesis, Moses' various theophanies, the vision(s) of Isaiah, the Song of Songs, and the extraordinary vision of the chariot (merkkavah) in chapter I of Ezekiel. Commenting on these passages, the sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud produced the sources on, and encouraged the experience of, the so-called hekhalot (heavenly palaces) and the Merkavah, as well as related esoteric material. Among medieval kabbalistic works the greatest was undoubtedly the Zohar, the preeminent Jewish mystical work, which has the form of a commentary on the Torah.

The Christian mystical tradition, developed primarily but not exclusively out of the Pauline corpus—including Paul's own mystical ascent to the "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2-4)—the Gospel of John, and the same set of biblical passages that were so influential among the Talmudic sages, drawn from Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, the Song of Songs, and Ezekiel. The patristic era saw the creation of such seminal and influential works as Basil of Caesarea's (fourth century) *Hexaëmeron*, on the story of creation in Genesis; and Gregory of Nyssa's (fourth century) *De Vita Moysis* and his *Homilies on the Song of Songs*. In the medieval era, the products of the great Christian mystical tradition include Bernard of Clairvaux's twelfth-century *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Richard of St. Victor's (twelfth century) *The Mystical Ark*, that deals with various themes in Genesis and other biblical books, and Eckhart's highly influential (late twelfth century and early thirteenth century) *Commentaries on Genesis* (as well as on other biblical texts), and his German sermons on biblical themes. In addition, one should take note of the lives of Jesus (and related works) written by mystics—for example, Julian of Norwich's (fourteenth century) *Showings* and Thomas A. Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* (fifteenth century).

Among Sufis, the Qur'an is the work around which all speculation, teaching, and experience revolve, and the experience of the Prophet Mohammed is the paradigmatic "mystical" moment. Indeed, as Sahl ibn-Adullāh al-Tustari announced, "All ecstasy is vain if it is not witnessed by the Qur'an and the Prophetic example." In consequence, Sufis, over the centuries, have been continuously and consistently preoccupied with the production of commentaries on the Qur'an.

Likewise, in the Hindu tradition, with its powerful sense of rootedness in the Vedas, and then the Upanisads, traditionally held to be the concluding section of Vedas, commentarial activity, the exegesis of the canonical texts, is an ancient and fundamental endeavor broadly categorized as *Mimāmsa* and *Pūrva Mimāmsa*. In turn, *Pūrva Mimāmsa* is integrally related to the study of grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), and of logic (*nyāya*), two additional disciplines required for the serious study of scripture. Understood as constituting a spiritual discipline, exegetical effort and Vedic study (*svādhyāya*) are means of gaining insight into and ways of accessing the gnostic truths at the core of the original revelation(s). As such, they are intellectual-spiritual procedures of estimable weight that, not surprisingly, have spawned an enormous corpus.

Similarly, Buddhism has a rich, internally important, exegetical tradition. Moving away from the *Suttapitaka*, which is probably the earliest record of the Buddha's teaching, compiled by the First Buddhist Council at Rājagṛha on the testimony of the Buddha's closest disciples, following the Buddha's death, the dharma has continued to grow and to be lived through the channels of

commentary and explanation. The different schools of Buddhist interpretation—Mahāyāna, Theravāda, Hinayāna—that arose after the Buddha gained parinirvāna, and the arguments about doctrine that divided them, required theological and logical defenses that were based on construals of the first, unimpeachable layers of accepted teaching. And given the nature of these disputes they could be settled only by arguments, based, in large measure, on the exegesis—or what was claimed to be the exegesis—of the accepted canonical writings of the community.

The enormous, varied commentary literature produced within the world's great mystical traditions offers strong evidence that such interpretive activity has been central to, and essential for, these traditions. The great mystics have come to their experience and wisdom by saturating themselves in and working through the canonical texts of their traditions.

4 Linguistic Considerations

The many ways in which the study of language is inseparable from the study and analysis of mysticism here needs special emphasis. It is often said, "Mystics do not say what they mean and do not mean what they say"; trapped by the unclosable abyss between experience and utterance, the adept uses a language he or she knows to be necessarily inferior and hopelessly inadequate to the descriptive task at hand. Such futilely employed language is most often the familiar tongue of a particular religious tradition and specific sociohistorical environment, but this is merely an unavoidable contingency. The mystic knows that all language, including the sacred, dogmatic, ritual language of his or her religious community, is too impoverished to perform the descriptive role assigned it and that, in any case, the true unity of Being, the nature of God or Brahman, transcends linguistic expression. Or so, at least, is the standard understanding of the subject.

But is this all there is to say on such an essential matter? Are we to take this position as self-authenticating? Or, alternatively, does the close study of mystical language, of mystical literary sources in their various forms, reveal a more complex and very different picture of the way things actually are? That is, do mystics use language in ways that belie the standard claims that dominate the history, as well as the contemporary study, of this subject?

Before entering into a more detailed philosophical and hermeneutical analysis of linguistic matters, I remind readers of four facts that require recognition:

(1) The main legacy that we have of the great mystics is their writings and related linguistic creations. We have no access to their special experience independently of these texts.

What we refer to as the great historical mystical traditions of the world are in fact a series of documents of differing sorts. No one has any privileged access to the original mystics' experience outside its textual incorporation. And it is these documents that are the data for all analytic decipherment and scholarly reconstructions.

These literary remains, in their variegated forms, necessarily and inescapably include "interpretive" structures. Neither mystics nor we, their readers, can overcome this fact. What we have are the already encoded experiences now reported—this and this alone is what is available for study.

It must be recognized that mystical literature is composed from differing perspectives and in different ways: first-person reports, the mystic's own interpretation of his or her experience, and the "interpretation" of such reported experience by members of one's own religious community or again by members of other religious traditions. All these situations can be more or less highly ramified.

Mystical literature comes in many forms, and the modality chosen as the means of communication in any instance is not incidental or tangential to the content. These diverse forms include biography, biblical exegesis, aphorisms, theoretical and theosophical treatises, poems, prayers, polemics,

sermons, and didactic compositions. All these genres enrich and complicate the decoding of mystical reports. In this introduction I shall not concentrate on the decipherment of these literary theological forms. However, the significance of the complexity of the literary corpus that composes the world's mystical traditions should be understood.

I would now make four arguments about the relationship of language and mysticism. First, it is customary, and not unreasonably so, to think of language as descriptive in character. The word "book" refers to a book, and the sentence "The book is on the table" refers to the factual, ontological circumstance of a book being on a table. On this referential and semantic model, the language of absolutes, such as God and Brahman, must likewise refer to the Absolute (known by its different "names"), and it is just this grammatical possibility that negative and apophatic theologies deny. Indeed, by refusing to accept that any predicates can be correctly ascribed to the Absolute (called by whatever "name"), this premise of denial gives rise to the consensus that language and the Absolute remain always asymmetrical and incongruous. But even if one accepts this argument, such denotative and referential meaning is not the only sense that mystical (and other) language can have. Much classical mystical language and many mystical linguistic forms have other purposes; for example, and to begin, language is instrumental in the transformation of consciousness.

The clearest and best-known example of this occurs in Zen koans. In posing the koan, the master is not attempting to pass information of a doctrinal dogmatic sort to his student—although what is taught by the master and what is learned by the student do carry such content in an extended or a translated sense. Rather, the master is seeking to revolutionize the student's consciousness, particularly in the context of meditation—when consciousness is particularly sensitive—such that it breaks free of and transcends the regulative categories of knowing and thereby is opened up to new forms of awareness that are conducive to, and permit, *satori*. Here language performs an essential mystical task, but it is not a descriptive task. Meditation on the "nonsensical" koan, defined by paradox or absurdity, "the sound of one hand clapping," is the linguistic means whereby language corrects itself. That is, it corrects the errors of propositional and descriptive language that lead the mind to false ontic commitments, which, particularly in the Buddhist context, are understood in terms of selfhood, the substantiality of things, and the (non)existence of a (or the) One. By denying, necessarily, any logical, and hence transcendental, analysis, by repudiating regular and regulative forms of epistemic construction and deconstruction, the koan undermines the absoluteness of the ordinary, the force of the syllogism, the requirements of the law of the excluded middle, and the metaphysical and epistemological claims of an ontology of substance, and it pushes the disciple toward the deeper, highly counterintuitive truth of "not-self" and nirvana or, in Nagarjuna's language, *sunyata* (Emptiness). It is the ability of language to induce "breakthroughs" of consciousness by being employed "nonsensically," literally non-sense-ically, that is fundamental to the traversal of the mystical path, to the movement from consciousness A to consciousness B.

Second, an elemental premise of the dominant theory regarding the insufficient fit between language and transcendental experience is that language is a human convention. As such it is earthbound, ill-suited to objects/subjects of ultimate concern. But this repercussive thesis is not universally accepted. Many of the world's most significant religious and mystical traditions begin with the belief that their language is sacred—the very language of God or Being. As such, it possesses an ontic status altogether different from merely immanent/ conventional languages, making it capable of expressing transcendental realia in various ways, with a particular competence. This claim, among others, is made by kabbalists on behalf of Hebrew, Sufis on behalf of Arabic, and Hindus on behalf of Sanskrit. In each case, the mystic of the said tradition sees him- or herself as possessing, in language, both the vehicle of divine/ transcendental expression and one of the very sources of divine creativity. Accordingly, the employment of linguistic forms in these languages, particularly as embodied in sacred texts, is not subject to the same restrictions as are imposed by the utilization of conventional

semiotic systems. Knowledge of the Tetragrammaton, the Hebrew four-lettered name of God, for example, and its appropriateness vis-à-vis the Divine is not the same as either the correspondence between the word "chair" and a chair, or even that between the English word "God" and the Divine. For the Tetragrammaton is the Absolute's self-identification, possessing powers, by virtue of this ontic ground, this metaphysical source and connectedness, that other linguistic ascriptions lack. For the kabbalist, therefore, meditation and manipulation of the four-lettered Name is a theurgic, meditative, and transformative act made possible by the necessary link between it and its transcendental source/Object.

Kabbalah is, of course, not alone in offering up these types of linguistic speculations. Pythagoreans as well as Muslims and individual Christian mystics engaged in these sorts of explorations share the presupposition that language is not merely utilitarian, conventional, or instrumental in character. In Sufism, for example, Arabic words and roots connected to the ninety-nine names of Allah, particularly the supreme name Allah itself, were manipulated in much the same way as the Hebrew names of God were by kabbalists in order to construct prayers and incantations for various contemplative and practical (e.g., healing) purposes. As part of *al-asma al husna*, the theology of the Divine Names, Sufis have employed these names in order to empower their spiritual movement heavenward and to affect the world below.

Third, there is the conception of language as power, one of the elemental employments of language in mystical traditions. Contrary to asserted, oft-championed, apophatic claims, most mystical traditions are keenly sensitive to the energizing ontic possibilities that (certain) language, employed with spiritual integrity and in an efficacious manner, is said to possess. This understanding manifests itself in, for example, the manipulation of alphabetical signs in the world's mystical teachings in order to achieve contemplative and cosmic ends. Here, however, I would like to consider this idea in several of its additional manifestations, beginning with the conception that language directly aids in mystical ascents to other worlds and realms of being. Which is to say, words are held to exert locomotive power. They transport the spiritual self from the world below to the world above. Perhaps the clearest expression of such a doctrine, even of such an experience, is found in the Hekhalot and Merkavah texts of the rabbinic era (i.e., texts of the first six centuries of the common era). In these documents, words serving as magical names, formulations, and "seals" make it possible for the adept to ascend to a hierarchically arranged heaven where, with their aid, he is able to continue his upward journey until he comes to the Seventh Heaven, in which he encounters the Almighty seated on His celestial throne (see Isaiah 6:11 for the origin of this description).

The theme of ascent likewise plays a central role in Sufism. Related essentially to Muhammed's *mi'raj* (ascent to heaven), the Sufi seeks to replicate the Prophet's heavenly journey through prayer and meditation. Although Muhammed's *mi'raj* lacks the linguistic and magical elements of Hekhalot and Merkavah ascents (the only residue of this earlier tradition being Muhammed's examination by the angel Isma'il, which Muhammed passes successfully), the Sufi wishing to make a similar ascent uses words, especially prayer, after Muhammed's own teaching on prayer, to facilitate his transport. It is not at all surprising that Sufis from the time of Bayezid Bistami employed the language of the *mi'raj* as the primary linguistic resource from which to draw the vocabulary for their own transcendental experiences.¹⁵

Dhikr, the recollection of Allah's names, or some related formula (e.g., *la ilaha dia Allah*), plays a complementary role in Sufism as well. Most of the main handbooks of Sufi teaching emphasize this activity as a key to mystical ascension. Najmuddin Kobra (Abu 'I-Jannab Ahmad),¹⁶ for example, includes such linguistic performances as among the required ritual activities of the Sufi Ten-Fold Path. Dhikr causes man to be present to Allah and Allah to man; on hearing Allah's name(s), the soul

is transported. It is this meaning that many Sufis give to the Koranic passage "I am the prayer companion of whoever remembers [read dhikr] me; and when my servant seeks Me, he finds Me."

Mantras, mystical alphabets, lexicons, ascent texts, prayers, the repetition of scripture, the recitation of religious poetry, and still other linguistic acts embody a primal, radiant, metaphysical energy. They incorporate and encapsulate a dynamic power, the kind of dynamic power that enlivens the entire cosmic order. By deciphering their meaning, by utilizing their potential, the mystical personality is empowered to alter its own nature and fate, and thereby affect the historical and metahistorical order of things.

Finally, in addition to the transformative, magical, and theurgical tasks that language performs in the world's mystical traditions, language operates informatively. It is used to describe, however this term is qualified—and it is, of course, regularly so qualified—that "knowledge" that is gained in the mystical moment. This use of language, constantly undervalued by analysts of mysticism, presents us with particular and fascinating intellectual puzzles. Which is to say that, contrary to their own sincere declamations regarding ineffability, the structural logic of mystical theories, such as Neoplatonism and mystical utterances, necessarily tell us more than proponents of apophysis recognize. And this fact should be taken as being true of mystical systems universally. Despite their avowal of *neti neti*, "not this, not this," the reality is otherwise. That is, mystics reveal, however unintentionally, more of the "truth" they have come to know in language than their overt negations of meaning and content would suggest.

In light of the surprising richness and complexity of mystical language, of the many ways that language is used by mystics, it is evident that whatever else the world's mystics do with language they do not, as a rule, merely negate it. Pressed to the outer limits of the "sayable" by the transcendental objects/subjects of their concern, yet often assisted by the resources of positive revelation and/or the content of their (and others') "noetic" experience (including states of consciousness reached through various forms of meditation), and, as a rule, urgently desirous of sharing these extraordinary truths and experiences, they utilize language to convey meaning(s) and content(s) in a variety of amazingly imaginative ways. It is, indeed, their success at just this sort of substantive communication that allows us to speak of, to learn of, and to participate in mystical traditions at all. This fact does not yet explain or resolve the still more recalcitrant logical problems generated by claims of ineffability and the like but it does indicate that resolution is to be sought in ways more informed by the many things that mystics actually do in and with language than has hitherto been the case.

5 Conclusion

We return, in conclusion, to the definition of mystical experience offered at the beginning of this Introduction. As a consequence of the epistemological and socioreligious factors at work in the creation of religious experience, it can now be understood that mystics—and this is what makes them mystics—have what philosophers call knowledge by acquaintance as compared to knowledge by description. They possess firsthand, existential knowledge of what their co-religionists know only through propositions. Moreover, it is the search after such immediate, if meditated, experience, and the report of such experience, that comprises the bulk of the world's mystical literature. To begin to understand all this more adequately let us now turn our attention to this intriguing primary literature. Instead of talking about these sources let us engage them.

Notes

1. For further material on the Jewish tradition see Steven T. Katz, *Jewish Ideas and Concepts* (New York, 1977); Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages* (Jerusalem, 1975); Solomon Schecter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York, 1961); Hayim Donin, *To Be a Jew* (New York,

1972); George Foot Moore, *Judaism* (New York, 1973); and Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism* (New York, 1947).

2. For details see Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1954); idem, *Kabbalah* (New York, 1974); and idem, "Devekuth," in his *Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1972), 203-26. Cf. Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, 1988); and Moshe Idel and Bernard McGinn, eds., *Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York, 1989), who argue for a more prominent place for unitive experience in kabbalah.

3. This account generally follows the excellent summary of the Buddhist position in Charles S. Prebish, ed., *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective* (Pennsylvania, 1975), 29-35. See also Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (London, 1974; New York, 1965); Richard Robinson, *The Buddhist Religion* (California, 1970); Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York, 1962); and David Rhys, *Buddhism* (London, 1914).

4. Prebish, *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective*, 34.

5. For a technical discussion of the Buddhist doctrine of nirvana see David Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy* (Hawaii, 1976), 69-90; Prebish, *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective*; L. de la Vallee Poussin, *Nirvana* (Paris, 1923); Isaline Blew Horner, *The Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected* (London, 1936); Rune Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvana* (New York, 1970); Fedor I. Stcherbatsky, *The Buddhist Conception of Nirvana* (Leningrad, 1927); and Guy Welbon, *The Buddhist Nirvana and Its Western Interpreters* (Chicago, 1968).

6. In addition to the sources already cited see Ninian Smart, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy* (London, 1964); Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London, 1941); David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Hawaii, 1975); Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India* (Michigan, 1967); Kulatissa Nanda Jayatilleka, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1963); and idem, *Survival and Karma in Buddhist Perspective* (Kandy, 1969).

7. *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1958), 292-93.

8. *Ibid.*, 293.

9. From Reginald Horace Blyth, *Zen and Zen Classics*, vol. I (Tokyo, 1960), 114-15.

10. On Buddhist monasticism see Charles S. Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Orders* (Pennsylvania, 1975). Consult also Nalinaksha Dutt, *Early Monastic Buddhism* (Calcutta, 1960); Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India* (London, 1962); Isaline Blew Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline*, 6 vols. (London, 1938-66); and Gokal Das, *Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha* (Calcutta, 1955).

11. For more on Zen Buddhism, see Shoku Watanabe, *Japanese Buddhism* (Tokyo, 1968); Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism* (London and New York, 1963); Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (New York, 1964; London, 1969); Joseph M. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York, 1966); and Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 3 vols. (London, 1949-53).

12. On Sufi monasticism and the Sufi orders see the excellent work by John Spencer Trimingham entitled *Sufi Orders* (Oxford, 1971). See also Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (North Carolina, 1975); and Richard Gramlich, *Die schutischen Derwischorden Persiens* (Wiesbaden, 1965).

13. This is the name of Carlos Castaneda's Mexican Indian teacher. See for more details Castaneda's trilogy *Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (Berkeley, 1970); *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan* (New York, 1971); and *Journey to Ixtlan* (New York, 1972). The authenticity of this work, however, has been called into question and students should be aware of its highly problematic nature. For our present comparative purposes citing it can, nevertheless, serve a purpose.

14. For Zen sources on "testing" nirvana or satori see the discussion of the Zen koan and other procedures that take place between a Zen Master and his disciples. Some discussion of this matter can be found in, for example, Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism* (London and New York, 1963); Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen* (Boston, 1967); Guy

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15. For more details see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 219.

16. Wajmuddin Kubra, *Faiva'ih al jamal wa fawatih al jalal*, ed. Fritz Meier (Wiesbaden, 1957).

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THE ROUTLEDGE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL MAGIC

edited by Sophie Page and Catherine Rider [Routledge Histories, Routledge, 9781472447302]

THE ROUTLEDGE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL MAGIC brings together the work of scholars from across Europe and North America to provide extensive insights into recent developments in the study of medieval magic between c.1100 and c.1500.

This book covers a wide range of topics, including the magical texts which circulated in medieval Europe, the attitudes of intellectuals and churchmen to magic, the ways in which magic intersected with other aspects of medieval culture, and the early witch trials of the fifteenth century. In doing so, it offers the reader a detailed look at the impact that magic had within medieval society, such as its relationship to gender roles, natural philosophy, and courtly culture. This is furthered by the book's interdisciplinary approach, containing chapters dedicated to archaeology, literature, music, and visual culture, as well as texts and manuscripts.

THE ROUTLEDGE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL MAGIC also outlines how research on this subject could develop in the future, highlighting under-explored subjects, unpublished sources, and new approaches to the topic. It is the ideal book for both established scholars and students of medieval magic.

Review

"The breadth of this volume – geographical, linguistic, chronological and disciplinary – is a huge feat, and *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic* is an important addition to existing scholarship. The sections entitled 'Future directions' are perhaps the book's most important component, providing a way forward for future research in a field that offers so much, standing as it does, in the words of Kieckhefer, at a 'kind of crossroads where different pathways in medieval culture converge'."—
Joanne Edge *Ceræ: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*

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The study of medieval magic has seen a great deal of important work in recent decades. Since the 1990s, scholars have demonstrated that a wide range of people were engaged in magical activities from all groups in society, and that a great variety of magical texts were in circulation. In addition to this, they have continued to explore topics that have long attracted attention, such as the relationship between medieval magic and the witch trials of the early modern period. It has become clear from this recent scholarship that magic was not a marginal area of medieval culture but intersected with many larger and more conventional historical topics. Taking a lead from Richard Kieckhefer, who in an influential 1989 book described magic as a "kind of crossroads where different pathways in medieval culture converge", historians have explored the ways in which magic interacted with mainstream religion, medicine and science, law, and the culture and politics of royal and aristocratic courts, to name but a few areas. The resulting publications are spread widely across academic publishers and journals — another sign that medieval magic is no longer regarded as a marginal topic — but the subject has found a place particularly in Pennsylvania State University Press's *Magic in History* series and SISMELE's *Micrologus Library* series.

This Routledge History therefore has two aims. First, it offers an overview of the work that has been done since the 1990s, exploring historiographical trends and the lively debates that now exist in many areas of medieval magic studies. Second, it aims to act as a guide for future research, setting out what still needs to be done, highlighting manuscripts and texts that would benefit from further study, and discussing topics that remain under-researched. It is not primarily intended to act as an overview of the history of medieval magic as there are other publications that offer this, some focusing purely on the Middle Ages and others covering a longer chronological span.² Rather, it aims to move beyond these surveys to set a research agenda.

The book looks primarily at the period from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, which have been the focus of most of the recent work on magic by medievalists. In several respects, these centuries can be seen as a distinct period in the history of magic. This is not to say that the twelfth century marked a complete break from what had gone before, and important points of continuity with magic in the earlier Middle Ages are discussed in this volume. One of these was the influence of Augustine (d. 430), who laid the foundation for much of the medieval theorization and critique of magic. Another was the nature and use of texts and objects that were accessible to the illiterate.⁵ These practices, which Richard Kieckhefer termed the "common tradition" of magic, saw a high degree of continuity from the early Middle Ages into the early modern period and beyond.

Nevertheless, the twelfth century saw the beginning of two developments that had profound implications for the ways in which magic was understood and practised in later centuries, as well as how it was viewed by the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. The first of these was the appearance in Latin of magical texts translated mostly from Arabic but also, to a lesser extent, from Greek and Hebrew. This was part of a much broader translation movement that took place in the Latin West in the central Middle Ages. Beginning in the late eleventh century and continuing into the thirteenth, numerous philosophical, scientific and medical works were translated into Latin from these languages. The translations from Arabic were made in the areas of Europe that had Muslim and Jewish populations most notably Spain, southern Italy and Sicily. Their impact has been well documented by historians of medicine, science and philosophy but they had an equally profound effect on magic, because a significant number of magical texts were translated alongside other works. Indeed, magical works were often closely related to scientific and philosophical knowledge.

Scholars such as David Pingree and Charles Burnett have outlined some of the routes by which Arabic, Greek and Hebrew magical texts entered the Latin West and were disseminated but much remains to be discovered.⁸ Although these magical texts were at first only accessible to the small minority of the medieval population that was literate in Latin and able to gain access to sometimes rare manuscripts, they offered to intellectuals new techniques for doing magic such as the creation of images or talismans linked to celestial influences. They also sometimes sought to justify the place of magic in wider schemes of learning, for example by presenting it as one of the seven liberal arts. By the mid-thirteenth century, however, learned magic texts were beginning to circulate in court circles and in the vernacular, reaching new audiences such as the nobility and the urban elites.

The second development that shaped the history of magic after 1100 was the establishment of universities and the emergence of a class of educated clerics who studied there. Again, the development of universities, from the informal schools of early twelfth-century France to the carefully organized and powerful corporations of the thirteenth century and later, has been well studied. So too has their impact on later medieval society. However, the rise of universities had several implications for the history of magic in particular. They provided one setting in which magical texts circulated: for example William of Auvergne, Bishop of Paris (d. 1249), claimed to have read magical texts as a student. Perhaps more importantly, the university disciplines of canon law and theology shaped later medieval thought about magic by offering systematic, detailed discussions of what magic was, how it worked, and which aspects of it were, or were not, legitimate. Canonists sought to clarify which ritual practices should be categorized as magic and prohibited by the Church. Theologians and natural philosophers explored the place of magic in the universe, including such issues as the role of demons in magic and their relationship with human magicians, as well as the question of why magic was wrong. And sometimes why it was right. Some thinkers approved of the use of the term "natural magic" to refer to the production of marvellous but natural effects, argued that the science of images was based on natural forces and used the vocabulary of experiment or empirical knowledge to explain the effects of occult properties in the natural world that magic texts utilized.

When they considered these issues, medieval canonists and theologians drew on earlier Christian writers (particularly Augustine) but from the twelfth century onwards their discussions were far more detailed and covered a wider range of practices. They also engaged with texts, such as works of astrological image magic or the *Ars Notoria*, which had not existed in Augustine's time but were circulating in later medieval universities. The legal and theological frameworks that resulted shaped educated churchmen's attitudes to magic throughout the late Middle Ages and also informed the laws that were made against it and the activities of secular and ecclesiastical courts and inquisitors.

This volume ends in the fifteenth century, which again marks a transitional period in the history of magic. It saw the beginning of two developments in particular which continued to the early modern period. The first was a growing fear of magic, and with this a growing emphasis on the relationship between demons and magical practitioners. Superstitions were being demonized more strongly than before, and clearly defined and gendered mythologies of witchcraft were emerging. This was also the period which saw the increasing numbers of trials for witchcraft.¹⁴ This increased readiness to demonize magic and put practitioners on trial was far from universal in fifteenth-century Europe but nonetheless it marked a change from earlier centuries. For much of the Middle Ages, although churchmen had repeatedly condemned magic as demonic, trials of magic workers (or alleged magic workers) seem to have been comparatively rare.¹⁵ During the fifteenth century, this began to change. The 1430s-1440s saw the emergence of a new mythology of diabolical witchcraft in the Alpine areas of modern Switzerland, Austria and Italy. This new mythology encompassed a cluster of characteristics. Besides being a practitioner of harmful magic, the witch came to be seen as a member of a devil-worshipping sect that engaged in a variety of antisocial activities. The nature of

the witch and her (or, less often, his) practice varied according to different trials and areas, but key to the stereotype of diabolical witchcraft (at least in the Lausanne region) was that witches attended secret meetings known as "sabbaths", at which they worshipped the devil and engaged in orgies, cannibalism and child murder as well as harmful magic. According to some sources, they also flew to these sabbaths. At the same time, some regional authorities, clerics and secular elites became convinced of the existence of sects of devil worshipers and initiated trials. The number of witch trials and witchcraft treatises really only intensified after 1560 (although scholars of early modern witchcraft now emphasize that even then many suspected witches were never prosecuted and peaks in witch-hunting were often short-lived and localized); nevertheless the fifteenth century laid the conceptual and legal foundations for these later prosecutions.

However, the fifteenth century also saw a second important development: the emergence of less fearful and more confident attitudes to learned magic which continued into later centuries. Magic texts were reaching ever wider audiences through vernacular translations, with learned magic appealing to readers from the court to the cloister. In fifteenth-century Italy, a new intellectual climate allowed authors of learned magic texts to underpin their writings with Neoplatonic, Hermetic and humanist currents of thought. The translation of Neoplatonic texts from Greek gave educated writers such as Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) new ways to conceptualize magic and develop philosophical justifications for the human capacity to manipulate the forces of the universe.

Scope of this book

This companion to medieval magic's history begins by discussing the conceptual issues involved in studying medieval magic, focusing on the difficult question of definition. Scholars working on many different societies — historical and modern — have long debated how to define magic and how magic relates to religion on the one hand, and science on the other. This issue is intimately bound up with practical questions about how medievalists should approach magic: Which practices and ideas fit into a history of "magic"? What questions should scholars ask? And what methodologies should they use? The four short pieces in the first section of the book offer different approaches to this problem. Richard Kieckhefer argues that "magic" is too general and ambiguous a term to allow for rigorous analysis, and instead suggests that scholars focus on "constitutive terms", that is, subcategories such as "conjunction". These constitutive terms refer to individual elements of the broader phenomenon of magic that may, or may not, be combined and are, he argues, precise enough to allow for meaningful analysis. Claire Fanger, from a different perspective, argues that scholars should not be afraid to use the term "magic" (or other large, ambiguous terms) as the focus for analysis. Instead, she suggests that we acknowledge the term's ambiguity and view it not as a single entity but as denoting "a particular kind of problem" in medieval thought: the problem of how to deal with phenomena (positive or negative) whose causes were mysterious or opaque. Viewed in this way, medieval anti-magical and pro-magical arguments are part of the same conversation rather than simply opposing views of particular practices.

Bernd-Christian Otto agrees with Kieckhefer that a generalized or universal definition of magic is not precise enough for scholarly analysis. Focusing on learned magic in particular, he argues for the importance of understanding the "insider discourse" of magic, as articulated by its medieval practitioners. Finally, in contrast to Otto, David L. d'Avray argues that we cannot just focus on the categories used by medieval writers themselves, either the "insider" categories used by those who practised magic, or the categories of churchmen who condemned magic. He suggests that scholars need to find their own modern, scholarly terms for the phenomena they study. These will allow analyses of medieval magic which distinguish between different phenomena that medieval writers may group together, or conversely highlight the similarities between phenomena which medieval writers regarded as distinct. He goes on to suggest some possible categories that can be used to analyse different aspects of the relationship between magic and religion.

These four pieces highlight different, often contrasting, approaches to how scholars can or should define magic; whether the term "magic" is useful for scholarly analysis at all; whose definitions scholars should use (medieval or modern, insider or outsider); and the ways in which different definitions allow us to ask different questions about medieval magic or focus on different aspects of the topic. The responses — in which Kieckhefer, Fanger, Otto and d'Avray discuss aspects of each other's chapters — show just how much scope for debate there is. Taken together, this section demonstrates that there is no single "right" way to define or approach magic, in the Middle Ages or in any other period. However, it also underlines the importance of thinking carefully about the concepts and definitions one plans to use, however one plans to approach the history of a particular aspect of medieval magic. Definitions are tools that can be used to serve a variety of purposes, and the ones that scholars choose will direct them towards particular questions and problems in the history of magic.

The other sections of the book cover the major areas where research into medieval magic has occurred in the last twenty years. "Languages and Dissemination" examines the dissemination and impact of magic as it acquired distinctive identities in different parts of Europe. It focuses first on the reception into Europe and later influence of the magic texts from the Arabic and Jewish traditions, which transformed the status of late medieval learned magic from an illicit activity into a branch of knowledge. Later chapters examine the geographical spread of these works into central and Eastern Europe; their dissemination in the vernacular; and the ways in which Western European magic interacted with existing magical traditions in two areas of Europe where these are especially well documented: Scandinavia and the Celtic lands.

"Key Genres and Figures" examines one of the most significant research areas in the recent historiography of late medieval magic: learned magic texts. These texts circulated in manuscripts, described complex rituals and often drew on the same cosmological concepts as more scientific works such as ideas about the influence of the stars on earth, or the nature and powers of spirits. More than one hundred distinct texts and several hundred surviving manuscripts with magical contents have now been identified by scholars, although many remain hardly studied and new copies of magic texts are frequently being identified. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, some authors of magical texts also, for the first time, allowed their works to circulate under their own name rather than ascribing them to legendary figures such as Hermes or Solomon. Since theological condemnation made it dangerous to claim authorship of a magical text, the fact that authors were becoming confident enough to put their real names to works of magic is a striking development, and is evidence of a gradual shift towards more positive attitudes towards certain magical texts and ideas in Western Europe. The second half of this section examines the work that has been done on these important "author-magicians".

The fourth section, "Themes", looks beyond the traditions, genres and authors of medieval magic to explore the ways in which magic interacted with other aspects of medieval culture. Several of the chapters in this section highlight areas that have seen exciting scholarship in recent years such as Jean-Patrice Boudet's chapter on magic at court, or Peter Murray Jones and Lea T. Olsan's chapter on magic and medicine. Others discuss important issues that would benefit from more research, for example Robert Goulding's chapter on conjuring and illusion, and Catherine Rider's chapter on magic and gender (a topic that has received more systematic attention from early modernists than from medievalists). The final chapters in this section explore the relationship between magic and other media and disciplines: visual and material sources for magic; magic in medieval literature; and the role of music in magic rituals. These chapters are intended on the one hand to highlight sources that have been underexploited by scholars and on the other to bring expertise from other disciplines to bear on the history of magic.

The final section of the book surveys the key ways in which medieval writers — often, but not always, clergy — tried to categorize magic and discourage people from practising it. The sources left by condemnations and trials provide much of the surviving evidence for medieval magic and for ecclesiastical concerns about illicit rituals. They range from the sophisticated critiques of magic made by highly trained theologians in medieval universities, discussed by David J. Collins, to simpler works aimed at a wider audience of clergy and laity, as discussed by Kathleen Kamberick. Michael D. Bailey's chapter examines negative medieval attitudes towards popular "superstitions", exploring how by the fifteenth century churchmen were increasingly concerned with "elite" as well as common superstitions, and how they were diabolizing common practices and associating superstitious error increasingly with women. The chapter on Witchcraft by Martine Ostorero brings this section together and concludes the volume by examining the early witch trials, drawing on the large amount of important work done by Swiss scholars in recent decades which is discussed in more detail below. Finally, a short piece by Alejandro Garcia-Aviles concludes the book by analysing the cover image in detail and the cosmological ideas that lie behind it. It is a helpful illustration of the ways in which visual and textual sources can be brought together to shed light on medieval ideas about magic and is an example of the kind of work this book hopes to stimulate, which combines the approaches of different disciplines to shed new light on medieval magic.

Recent developments in the history of medieval magic

The individual chapters in this volume discuss, and draw on, several major developments in the historiography of medieval magic that have taken place since the 1990s. The most important of these is the discovery and detailed study of surviving magical texts, which has revealed the extraordinary cosmologies of learned magic texts originating in diverse Arabic, Jewish, Greco-Roman traditions, their successive Christianization through processes of translation, adaptation and dissemination, and the richness of the imaginative worlds that their readers subsequently had access to. In the exotic rituals of occult texts translated and disseminated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Christian authors found Arabic and Jewish spirit hierarchies, images and characters, lists of occult properties in natural objects and correspondences between heaven and earth. Perhaps surprisingly, they interpreted these as viable instruments for achieving goals that ranged from the pious seeking of the vision of God to the transgressive pursuit of knowledge from demons. Significant work in this field has investigated the hermetic roots of ritual magic, and more recent scholarship has focused on unpacking the "Solomonic" tradition' and its influence.

In addition to discovering and editing learned magic texts, historians in this field have begun exploring their readership and circulation among physicians and in the clerical underworld, competitive court circles and the monastic cloister. Our knowledge of the routes of transmission of magic texts is still patchy, and it is hard to bring individual practitioners to rounded life based on the surviving sources, but it has become increasingly clear that manuals of ritual magic were tailored to the individual interests of their owners, whether this was talking to spirits or having success in love. The circulation of ritual magic texts among physicians and in universities is less well studied, and research into the vernacularization of magic texts from the mid-thirteenth century onwards is at a very early stage. In addition, few links have yet been made between this process of vernacularization and the "common tradition" of magic, although historians have long acknowledged that many collectors of learned magic texts were also interested in charms, recipes and textual amulets and that non-literate practitioners were influenced by the ritual magic tradition. Whether this frequent (if not typical) combination of interests influenced the increasing condemnation of popular practices as superstitious in the fifteenth century has not yet been explored. But historians have recently revealed vibrant and inflammatory links between ritual magic and other parts of mainstream religious practice such as mystical texts and exorcism.

As noted above, historians generally agree that there was a shift towards positive attitudes to learned magic in the late Middle Ages, despite increasing concerns about witchcraft. This means that the strategies with which the authors of learned magic texts appealed to the intellectual curiosity and the spiritual thirst of medieval men and women were to a large extent successful and flourished even in the difficult conditions of the late Middle Ages. Historians have begun to explore one of the reasons for this success: the fact that the theology of witchcraft shifted the authorities' gaze onto female popular practitioners and away from the male practitioners of learned magic.²⁷ Another contributing factor to the late medieval success of ritual magic was the ways in which texts were stored, annotated and rewritten to avoid censorship and reflect the creative choices of scribes. Some strategies are well known such as the concealment of occult texts owned by the cleric, surgeon and writer Richard de Fournival (c.1201—c.1260) in a secret room to which only he had access, and the compilation of magic texts with more acceptable genres such as astronomy, medicine, devotional literature and natural philosophy. Some readers took the view that a pious vocation enabled them to safely handle suspicious texts and even draw out useful things from them, while powerful secular rulers did not necessarily need to conceal their occult interests. Finally, in manuscripts themselves, tactics to evade suspicion took the form of cautionary marginalia or even notices condemning magic, which allowed the piety of the owner to be expressed while the usability of a ritual was unaffected. The general history of the censorship (and self-censorship) of magical texts, of rituals being cut out of manuscripts, names erased, magical characters being altered to turn them into crosses and books being revised and burnt has yet to be written. When it is explored more fully, it is likely that further lines of comparison and influence will be opened up with contemporary attitudes to heresy and witchcraft.

Important work has also been done on other kinds of source material. Some of this has sought to shed new light on genres of source which scholars have known about for a long time. For example, texts produced as part of the activities of the medieval church have long played a central role in the history of medieval magic. Ecclesiastical sources have been especially crucial to studies that focus on tracing the earlier medieval origins of fifteenth-century ideas about diabolical witchcraft. Since, as Norman Cohn argued in the 1970s, these ideas seem largely to have originated among the educated, the writings produced by educated clergy are one obvious place to look for evidence. Cohn himself used inquisitorial manuals and theological treatises, alongside other kinds of source material, to analyse changing stereotypes of magical practitioners and the relationship of those stereotypes to early modern witchcraft. A number of more recent studies have continued this line of investigation, including Michael D. Bailey's 2001 discussion of changing clerical attitudes to magic (which used the fourteenth-century inquisitorial manuals of Bernard Gui and Nicholas Eymeric) and Jean-Patrice Boudet's important book on magic and astrology in the medieval West, which included substantial discussion of ecclesiastical condemnations of magic, among many other sources.³¹ New studies have also analysed individual genres of source in depth such as Patrick Hersperger's survey of magic in the commentaries on the twelfth-century canon law textbook, Gratian's *Decretum*.

Even with ecclesiastical sources, however, in recent decades the focus has broadened to include a wider range of texts. For example, Alain Boureau has published and analysed a document from 1320 (first rediscovered in 1952) in which Pope John XXIII consulted a series of theologians and canon lawyers about ritual magic. Another broader kind of source material that has attracted renewed attention is the literature of pastoral care, including sermons, preaching materials and treatises on confession. These sources, often structured around mnemonic schemes such as the Ten Commandments or Seven Deadly Sins, were intended to help clergy in their dealings with the laity, and so often focus on the sins and problems that priests might encounter on the ground. They frequently included some discussion of magic and "superstition", although these particular sins were not the first concern of most preachers or authors of confessors' manuals. Related to these general

works on pastoral care are treatises that focus on the sin of superstition. These were primarily a product of the fifteenth century and scholars such as Karin Baumann, Michael D. Bailey and Kathleen Kamerick have investigated what concerns they express about magic and why, as well as their relationship to emerging ideas about diabolical witchcraft. Some of this work intersects with a wider scholarly discussion of "superstition" in other periods. These genres of source were not completely neglected by earlier scholars (Cohn, for example, uses the thirteenth-century exempla of Caesarius of Heisterbach and a pioneering article published by G. R. Owst in 1957 considered magic in medieval English sermons) but recent scholarship has investigated this material in far greater depth.

Looking across these different forms of ecclesiastical text, we now have a much more diverse view of medieval churchmen and their attitude to magic. Authors of canon law texts, pastoral care literature and treatises on superstition were always influenced by a core of authoritative texts and ideas but within these general parameters there was a considerable amount of variation. Authors differed as to which practices they discussed, with some describing activities they claimed happened in their own regions. We can also see varying levels of concern. Much of the confession and preaching literature of medieval England, for example, devoted a relatively small amount of space to magic and superstition. By contrast, authors of fifteenth-century superstition treatises were clearly more concerned about these issues, but even then there were differences. Some worried about any unofficial ritual practice that might be defined as superstition or magic, while others identified genuine (if sometimes muddled) expressions of lay piety or legitimate protective practices that could be employed against maleficent witchcraft.

A further important development links to the work on fifteenth-century superstition treatises. This is a renewed interest in the fifteenth-century sources that describe the new crime of diabolical witchcraft. At the heart of this is a large project centred on the University of Lausanne, which since 1989 has published and analysed many of the earliest witch trials and witchcraft treatises. The many scholars involved in this project have made these previously understudied sources available in modern editions and translations (usually into French, sometimes German) as well as studying the trial procedures, defendants and evidence for witchcraft. One focus of their research has been a register of twenty-seven fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century trial records which was probably put together in the early twentieth century, but the team has also published an important anthology of the earliest treatises which described devil-worshipping witches. More recently, some of the scholars involved in this project have published detailed studies that discuss demonology (Martine Ostorero) and the relationship between fifteenth-century witchcraft and heresy (Kathrin Utz Tremp). Taken together, these studies have emphasized the importance of understanding the local factors and local judicial systems that lay behind individual trials. They have also underlined the continuity between earlier persecutions of heretics and fifteenth-century witchcraft trials, at least in Western Switzerland. In addition, this work has given us a far more nuanced understanding of the intellectual debates surrounding the new stereotype of the witch, and has led several scholars to suggest that ideas about witchcraft were less homogeneous than earlier studies often suggested.

Finally, scholars have turned to sources that did not set out to discuss magic but often mentioned it within their scope. Medical and scientific texts often include information that could be categorized as magical. Their authors discussed (sometimes in great detail) how astrological forces or powerful words could affect the human body; treatises on the properties of stones, plants and animals list the marvellous effects these objects could have; and medical texts included remedies for illness which involved the speaking of charms or the wearing of amulets. The power of words — both written and spoken — has received particular attention. Meanwhile, Michael McVaugh, and Lea T. Olsan and Peter Murray Jones have focused on incantations and charms, examining their relationship with other aspects of medieval medicine and the ways in which medical writers presented them, as well as how these rituals might have been performed. Don C. Skemer has investigated the related area of

textual amulets — powerful words and symbols that were written down and worn on the body, focusing in particular on their relationship to mainstream religion. Much of this research has emphasized that many so-called "magical" cures in fact held an accepted, if marginal place in medieval culture.

Other significant sources for understanding late medieval magic are the visual and material culture of magic and literary instances of spells and enchantment. The former is very under-researched, a situation that three chapters in this book, respectively on the iconography of magic and magicians, magical diagrams and the material culture of magic, address. Visual sources in particular allow us to track transformations in the perceptions of magic and its relationship with mainstream religion and science (as Garcia-Aviles does in his discussion of the cover image), and to note the appearance of late medieval Christian innovations such as the magic circle. The rich evidence of literary magic is explored in chapters by Mark Williams and Corinne Saunders, who ask questions that reveal fruitful contrasts to current understandings of medieval magic and complicate our view of it: "Where does magical power come from? What are the imaginative conventions which govern its representation? What are the range of attitudes to its use, and how do they differ by genre?" One of the aims of this volume is to set these analyses of diverse genres side by side so that new connections can be revealed. The richly imagined vision of a pre-Christian world in medieval Irish literature, with magical immortals and fantastic sequences of enchantment, complicates the Christian understanding of the cosmos in an appealing and provocative way that is comparable to the syncretic cosmological frameworks of learned magic texts. Another example of similar connections being made in different genres is the close relationship between necromancy and natural magic, and of both to the theory and practice of medicine. This is discussed by Corinne Saunders in the context of medieval romance and by Isabelle Draelants in her chapter on natural philosophical texts. We hope that our readers will notice further connections.

Conclusion

The study of medieval magic is developing in many exciting ways. As the footnotes to this Introduction make clear, a great deal of work has been published in recent decades by scholars from many countries including the USA, Canada, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary and Britain. Although much remains to be done, our understanding of certain areas — in particular the contents and readers of magical texts — is now much clearer than it was three decades ago. One result of this is that the field is now so large and lively that even scholars who research medieval magic struggle to keep up with all the new work being published, in several languages. It is therefore a good moment to take stock, to summarize new developments for the benefit of scholars in the field as well as other medievalists and to consider where to go next. This Routledge History is designed to showcase the new research that has been carried out in recent years and is still ongoing, with contributions from both established scholars in the field and recent Ph.Ds. However, many sources, in a range of genres, are still unpublished and little studied. For this reason, the book sets out some of the directions that the field could take in the future. It discusses areas that would benefit from more research; questions that remain unanswered or only partially answered; and authors and texts that need more in-depth study.

The chapters in the book were chosen to reflect the vitality of medieval magic studies at this point in time. They also reflect its diversity. As editors, we gave all the authors featured here a similar remit: to outline the most important developments in their field and discuss future directions for research. They have responded admirably. Within this general framework, however, we have tried to preserve the different approaches and styles employed by scholars who work in different places, different languages and different scholarly disciplines. We hope that the results will inspire scholars in the field and in related areas, as well as students who are embarking on their studies of medieval magic. <>

THE GREATER & LESSER WORLDS OF ROBERT FLUDD: MACROCOSM, MICROCOSM & MEDICINE by Joscelyn Godwin [Inner Traditions, 9781620559499]

An illustrated reference book on a seminal figure of occult philosophy and Renaissance thought

- Explains Fludd's thoughts on cosmic harmonies, divination, the kabbalah, astrology, geomancy, alchemy, the Rosicrucians, and multiple levels of existence
- Includes more than 200 of Fludd's illustrations, representing the whole corpus of Fludd's iconography, each one accompanied by Godwin's expert commentary
- Explores Fludd's medical work as an esoteric Paracelsian physician and his theories on the macrocosm of elements, planets, stars, and subtle and divine beings and the microcosm of the human being and its creative activities, including material never before translated

One of the last Renaissance men, Robert Fludd (1574-1637) was one of the great minds of the early modern period. A physician by profession, he was also a Christian Hermetist, a Rosicrucian, an alchemist, astrologer, musician, and inventor. His drive to encompass the whole of human knowledge--from music to alchemy, from palmistry to fortification--resulted in a series of books remarkable for their hundreds of engravings, a body of work recognized as the first example of a fully-illustrated encyclopedia.

In this in-depth, highly illustrated reference, scholar and linguist Joscelyn Godwin explains Fludd's theories on the correspondence between the macrocosm of elements, planets, stars, and subtle and divine beings and the microcosm of the human being and its creative activities. He shows how Fludd's two worlds--the macrocosm and the microcosm--along with Paracelsus's medical principles and the works of Hermes Trismegistus provided the foundation for his search for the cause and cure of all diseases. The more than 200 illustrations in the book represent the whole corpus of Fludd's iconography, each one accompanied by Godwin's expert commentary and explanation. Sharing many passages translated for the first time from Fludd's Latin, allowing him to speak for himself, Godwin explores Fludd's thoughts on cosmic harmonies, divination, the kabbalah, astrology, geomancy, and the rapport between the multiple levels of existence. He also analyzes Fludd's writings in defense of alchemy and the Rosicrucians.

An essential reference for scholars of Renaissance thinkers, traditional cosmology, metaphysics, and the Western esoteric tradition, this book offers intimate access to Fludd's worlds and gives one a feel for an epoch in which magic, science, philosophy, spirituality, and imagination could still cohabit and harmonize within a single mind.

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Robert Fludd (1574-1637) was the first encyclopedic author to appreciate the power of illustrations and to have the resources to put it into practice. He wrote, of course, in the universal language of Latin, with a prolixity and redundancy that are a translator's nightmare. However, nothing better confirms the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. Fludd's illustrations, entrusted to some of the best copper engravers in Europe, often bypass the text and make his point directly via the eye. They also include some of the most impressive abstract compositions in the history of engraving. Once understood, they provide a master key to the blend of Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, and Christianized Kabbalah that is at the center of the Western esoteric tradition.

I became interested in Robert Fludd in the early 1970s as part of an exploration of esoteric writings on music. In 1979 the London house of Thames & Hudson published my two short books in its Art and Imagination series: *Robert Fludd, Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* and *Athanasius Kircher: A Renaissance Man and the Quest for Lost Knowledge*. With translations into French, German, Spanish, Greek, and Japanese, they gave many readers access to the marvelous imaginations of these two seventeenth-century polymaths. Thirty years on, with interest in Athanasius Kircher growing exponentially, it was time to do him better justice. The result was a large-format book, *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World*, copublished in 2009 by Thames & Hudson and Inner Traditions, with over four hundred illustrations and a text to match. This too has appeared in French and Italian.

Fludd also deserved a fuller and a fresher presentation, especially as there had been surprisingly little scholarship and almost no new publications about him. Two works by William Huffman stand out, one a historical study and the other an anthology (see the bibliography). The present book aims to fill the gap, taking advantage especially of recent German scholarship. After decades of absence from the field, I returned to the original volumes at Cornell University for a fresh reading and mining of their illustrations. Only the account of Fludd's controversies with his contemporaries has been lifted from my previous book. Having outgrown the somewhat "New Age" approach of the 1970s, I resolved to follow Fludd's own program rather than imposing a thematic one of my own. Hence the greater emphasis placed here on his medical writings, which were the grand project of his later years.

For all the immediacy and ingenuity of Fludd's illustrations, they still need exegesis and the translation of Latin terms. Whenever possible, the captions provide this in Fludd's own words (sometimes paraphrased and distinguished from my text by being set in a different type style), and the appendices add some passages selected for pure pleasure and even humor. While almost everything about the Fluddean philosophy is alien to today's world, its consistency and grandeur can only command admiration.

In the captions to the illustrations, Fludd's works are cited by abbreviations, to be found at the beginning of the bibliography. The final citation in a caption is to the relevant book of Fludd's and to the page therein on which the illustration occurs. Any internal parenthetical citations following passages of text or translations refer to the book in question.

A Memory Palace

An encounter with the works of Robert Fludd (1574-1637) is like exploring a Renaissance memory palace, perhaps on the scale of the Pitti Palace in Florence or the Escorial in San Lorenzo, and equally labyrinthine and laden with meaning. I imagine two vast symmetrical wings marked with the signs of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm, the latter still unfinished. At the juncture of the two is a library, where grandiose lecterns support the Holy Scriptures and the works of Hermes Trismegistus, with those of Plato within easy reach. The central hall of each wing is hung with heraldic shields celebrating Fludd's ancestry and views of the foreign cities he visited. From it, many corridors radiate, their walls lined with charts, tables, and diagrams, leading to further clusters of rooms, no two alike. One room may hold a collection of cannons; another, a bubbling alchemical furnace or a giant mechanical harp. Here a group of students is spattering paper with ink dots, to be interpreted through geomancy; there, they are reading each other's palms.

At the back of the main building is a third wing, half built and more austere in architecture. Pictures of all the organs and internal details of the human body decorate its walls, as well as portraits of the angels and demons who take an interest in it. No surgery is done here, but corpses are sometimes smuggled in, for concoction of the weapon salve. The official faculties are those of urinomancy and astrology, with a research institute for studying the pulse in the light of the recent discovery of the circulation of the blood. There is a consulting room, and a Protestant chapel in which prayer is offered when medicine fails.

Outside the palace is a yard for military drill, a large herb garden, and some ingenious waterworks, but nothing affording pleasure for its own sake. Statues of Fludd's friends and opponents dot the parterres. The former, more numerous, include King James I, King Charles I, the royal physician Sir William Paddy, and one or two archbishops. The second group includes Johannes Kepler, Pierre Gassendi, and two twisted, leering figures labeled "Father Mersenne" and "Parson Foster." A small pavilion, its door sealed, is marked with Rosicrucian symbols. Other outbuildings house a meteorological station and, surprisingly, a factory for the forging of steel. The whole complex is surrounded by moats and bastions in the shape of a star. Nowhere in it is a single woman to be seen.

Thus, emulating Fludd's flair for visualization, we may sketch an intellectual world unrivaled in its breadth and ambition; for the era would soon pass in which one man's mind could encompass so much of human knowledge. This very ambition was one cause of the obscurity into which Fludd fell, almost as soon as he was dead. He was not original enough in any of the disciplines that would make history, such as astronomy, mechanics, philosophy, medicine, or the arts. Another reason was his obsession with a few dominant ideas, such as the pyramids of spirit and matter, the monochord, the weatherglass, a theory of winds, geomancy, and an alchemical experiment with wheat. Each of these generated book-length studies in which every circumstance and combination is laboriously explained, with frequent recourse to biblical authority. The reader can usually get the point in a fraction of the time from the illustrations, as Fludd himself admitted when he wrote against Kepler's prolixity: "What he has expressed in many words and long discussion, I have compressed into a few words and explained by means of hieroglyphic and exceedingly significant figures." The number of illustrations in Fludd's works exceeds those in any encyclopedic literature before Diderot's. It was these that kept Fludd's reputation alive and his books in the libraries of bibliophiles, though more out of curiosity than respect.

Historians, at least until recently, have neglected the current of thought to which Fludd made his most permanent contribution: it was the esoteric tradition, and specifically the blend of Christian Hermetism with the occult sciences. Here his amplitude of mind found its true range, which was not the horizontal one, taking in the multiple fields of man's activities, but the vertical one that starts from the first principles of theology and metaphysics, and descends the chain of being to its limit.

Fludd's Philosophical System

At the summit of Fludd's cosmos is one Absolute God, whom he usually represents by the Hebrew Tetragrammaton or its transcription as "Jehovah." This supreme, impersonal principle is beyond the distinctions of good and evil. But although it is a perfect unity, it has a dual power: it can either remain in itself, contained in a state of potentiality, or it can act. The Kabbalists call both of these powers by Aleph (X), the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, distinguishing them as the "light Aleph" and the "dark Aleph." Fludd says that God's dark side seems like an abyss of chaos, the parent of all the evils and discord in the world. It is the source of Satan and the demons who trouble the world and fight perpetually against the angels of light. But since God's unity includes it, we must accept it as an aspect of him and hence ultimately good. God's active state, on the other hand, is obviously good, for it gives the whole universe being and sustains it with all its creatures. Fludd calls this dichotomy a "Sphyngian riddle" that will not be solved until the end of the world, when (as described in the book of Revelation) the seventh seal will be opened. Then the mystery will reveal itself, and the two opposites will return to one harmonious unity.

The process of creation, on every level, fascinated Fludd, and he was anxious to find the common ground of the creation myths in the two books he most respected: the Bible and the writings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus (*Corpus Hermeticum*). He explains the creation of the universe as the result of a ray of God's active light, sent out into the void and diminishing gradually as it went farther from him. The light was pure spirit, and around it the darkness coalesced in the form of matter. The stronger the ray, the less matter could exist in its presence. But in the outer reaches of God's illumination, the darkness gradually prevailed over light, exceeding and finally extinguishing it. The various compounds of spirit and matter became worlds and regions of worlds, of which there are three main divisions. First is the empyrean world, or heaven, where light exceeds darkness, the latter taking the form of very rarefied matter. Second is the ethereal world, in which light and darkness are equal and make a substance we call ether (the "quintessence" of Aristotle's system). Third is the elemental world, where darkness predominates over light, producing the four elements of fire, air, water, and earth. The earth itself is the darkest and most material place in the universe, of which, following the geocentric system, it is the center.

There is a curious ambiguity in this image of creation. First we are led to imagine God as the center, presumably of a sphere, and the states of light and darkness surrounding him, getting darker and more material as they are farther away. But then the system is turned inside out, with the earth at the center and God at the circumference. The entire cosmic system is then enclosed as a minuscule bubble within his infinity. This is more like the Kabbalistic idea that God made the cosmos by withdrawing from a part of himself, creating by absence the only space that is not God. When we examine Fludd's illustrations we discover that the limitations of graphic design not only force him to represent this "bubble" as a two-dimensional circle, but to show only a slice of this circle from its center to its circumference. The result is a one-dimensional scale with God at one end, the earth at the other. Out of this come his three major symbols, which are all linear: the monochord, the intersecting pyramids, and the weatherglass.

Far from being lifeless spaces, Fludd's worlds are thronged with beings: the empyrean with angels; the ethereal with stars, planets, and demons; the elemental with men, animals, plants, and minerals. All these creatures partake of God's light in measure according to their place on the hierarchy. But

there is one level in particular that, though not the top of the scale (or the circumference of the sphere), is especially favored by God. This is the sun, which is placed at the crucial midpoint of the ladder of being, where spirit and matter are in perfect equality and balance. As the psalmist says, God has set a tabernacle in the sun, and from this secondary residence his active power radiates anew to all the lower realms. God's powers, says Fludd, are transmitted to the three worlds by his ministers. The angels are the servants of his light aspect, the demons of his darkness: two parallel hierarchies that strive perpetually one against the other. They are not exactly equal, however, for the demons were beaten down from the empyrean heaven by the archangel Michael and his host before the lower worlds were even created, and Michael then took up his abode in the sun.

Fludd's theogony and angelology are complicated and intertwined in such a way that some very remarkable conclusions emerge. His most important concepts are those of nature, the anima mundi (world soul), the Kabbalists' Metatron, the archangel Michael, the Messiah, and God the Son. Nature is the feminine, maternal principle, whom Fludd describes in glowing terms as God's first creation and also as his spouse. As such, we see her dominating the great frontispiece of the History of the Macrocosm (see ill. 2.1, pp. 30-31). In later works Fludd speaks less of nature and more of the world soul. This is the same thing, though less personified: the creative forces of light, will, intellect, and so on, which sustain the cosmos. He describes its origin as follows: the Logos gives off an emanation of light, which is the "eternal spirit of wisdom." This creative principle infuses the humid chaos, turning it from a potential state to an active one, so that it becomes the substratum for the world. From the world's viewpoint, this divine light is its very soul. In the words of Mosaicall Philosophy, "the soul of the world, or mens divina in mundo [the divine mind in the world], simply taken, is that divine mental emanation absolutely in itself, being distinguished from the created spirit" (149).

In the same chapter Fludd draws a parallel with the individual soul, which gives life to the body and spirit (the latter meaning the subtle substance between body and soul). Analogously, the world soul provides the essential life of the world's body and spirit. Fludd recognized the same principle in Metatron, which he translates as "the gift of God." Again, in the words of Mosaicall Philosophy, he calls it "that universal Spirit of Wisdom which God sent out of his own mouth, as the greatest gift and token of his benignity ... which reduceth the universal Nothing into a universal Something" (151-52).

Fludd's answer to Kepler implies that he considered this principle to be none other than the second person of the Trinity. Here he actually says that the Light Aleph is the Son, or Wisdom, or Light, or the Word, adding "And the Platonists accept this 'Wisdom' of the Hebrews, and 'Messiah' of the Christians, and 'Mittatron' of the Cabbalists, and 'Word' of the Prophets and Apostles as the true Soul of the World, whom they say filled harmonically all the intervals of the world in threes, squared and cubed" (302-3). The reference here is to the description of the world's creation in Plato's Timaeus where, following Pythagorean number theory, the universe is organized mathematically and harmonically.

This kind of syncretizing had its roots in the Florentine Platonists of the fifteenth century, especially Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, who sought to reconcile the pagan philosophers with the Jewish and Christian revelations. (See appendix 2, "The Wisdom of the Ancients.") By Fludd's time the CounterReformation had made such compromises suspect, and Marin Mersenne objected in virulent terms. Nothing could be more impious, said the friar, than Fludd's equating this world soul that permeates all beings—angels, demons, men, and beasts—with the angel Michael, Metatron, the Messiah, and ultimately with Christ.

Fludd's reply explained that he was not equating these to one another, but that they are manifestations of a single principle in different worlds. In the archetypal world (above even the angels), it is Adonai, the Lord, whose light is Ensoph, the infinite. In the angelic (empyrean) world the

principle is the soul of the Messiah, whose light is Elchai, the living God. In the celestial (ethereal) world it is the anima mundi or Metatron, whose light is Sadai, the all-powerful. And in the human microcosm it is the soul, illuminated by mind. This dispute highlights the most essential principle of Fludd's philosophy: the correspondence between worlds or levels of being. That the whole of magic rests on this presupposition may explain why Mersenne, the enemy of all things occult, found it so repellent.

The same principle underlies Fludd's demonstration of the harmony between microcosm and macrocosm. According to this, man is a miniature universe, and the universe is structured like a great man. Therefore if one understands the little world, one will have a key to understanding the greater one. Fludd interprets in this spirit the words that God speaks in Genesis: "Let us make man in our own image;" and also the Hermetic axiom "That which is above is like that which is below."

Harmony implies relationships, and nowhere are quantitative relationships so keenly felt as when they manifest as musical proportions. Here quantity becomes quality and numbers are experienced as feeling. The ratio of 1:2 gives the octave, 2:3 the perfect fifth, and so on with other intervals. The chords and intervals that he posits between different levels of being may not be scientifically demonstrable or even accurate, but they testify to Fludd's faith in an orderly world, in which nothing is related by chance and all is imbued with a harmony that we will one day understand and hear for ourselves.

These areas of Fludd's thought illustrate his independence from sectarian Christian theology, his readiness to recognize wisdom wherever he found it, and his conviction that reality consists of multiple states of being. All three set him apart from the dominant philosophical and theological concerns of his own day and of the centuries that followed. Seen from one viewpoint, he did represent, in William Huffman's phrase, "the end of the Renaissance." But the Renaissance, with its respect for antiquity, its curiosity about the origins of religion, its practice of concordance between different systems and faiths, and its vision of the dignity, even the divinity, of man, did not end with the Scientific Revolution. Seen from another viewpoint, Fludd takes his place in the tradition of Christian esotericism that includes figures as disparate as Hildegard of Bingen, Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus, Nicolas of Cusa, Marsilio Ficino, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, Michael Maier, Jacob Boehme, Thomas Vaughan, Jane Leade, Emanuel Swedenborg, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Franz von Baader, Eliphas Levi, Rudolf Steiner, and Valentin Tomberg. <>

DANTE'S BONES: HOW A POET INVENTED ITALY by Guy P. Raffa [Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 9780674980839

A richly detailed graveyard history of the Florentine poet whose dead body shaped Italy from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the Risorgimento, World War I, and Mussolini's fascist dictatorship.

Dante, whose *Divine Comedy* gave the world its most vividly imagined story of the afterlife, endured an extraordinary afterlife of his own. Exiled in death as in life, the Florentine poet has hardly rested in peace over the centuries. Like a saint's relics, his bones have been stolen, recovered, reburied, exhumed, examined, and, above all, worshiped. Actors in this graveyard history range from Lorenzo de' Medici, Michelangelo, and Pope Leo X to the Franciscan friar who hid the bones, the stone mason who accidentally discovered them, and the opportunistic sculptor who accomplished what princes, popes, and politicians could not: delivering to Florence a precious relic of the native son it had banished.

In **DANTE'S BONES**, Guy Raffa narrates for the first time the complete course of the poet's hereafter, from his death and burial in Ravenna in 1321 to a computer-generated reconstruction of his face in 2006. Dante's posthumous adventures are inextricably tied to major historical events in Italy and its relationship to the wider world. Dante grew in stature as the contested portion of his body diminished in size from skeleton to bones, fragments, and finally dust: During the Renaissance, a political and literary hero in Florence; in the nineteenth century, the ancestral father and prophet of Italy; a nationalist symbol under fascism and amid two world wars; and finally the global icon we know today.

Review

"Dante Alighieri changed literature forever by reimagining the afterlife, and *Dante's Bones* now captures Dante's afterlife in a way that has never been done. Adeptly guiding us through medieval politics as well as modern science, Guy Raffa achieves the elusive accomplishment of vividly bringing Dante to life through his death."—**Matthew Pearl, author of *The Dante Club***

"*Dante's Bones* is at once a vivid retelling of Dante's fortunes in the centuries following his death and an important work of historical scholarship. Guy Raffa's deft prose illuminates the enduring contest over the great poet's mortal remains, providing a remarkable instance—by turns comical, deadly serious, and always captivating—of the appropriation of literary genius for political and cultural purposes."—**Albert Ascoli, author of *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author***

"*Dante's Bones* is an enormous gift to readers and scholars of the poet and Italian history. With intensive scholarship in a wide variety of fields as his loom, Raffa has woven a fascinating tapestry out of 700 years of guarding, stealing, hiding, maintaining, studying, celebrating, debating, and claiming the material form and symbolic meaning of Dante's remains."—**Arielle Saiber, author of *Measured Words***

"In fiction and in fact, Dante Alighieri has been influencing the world order for centuries. Just how he's achieved global-icon stature is the subject of Guy P. Raffa's fascinating, comprehensive new book."—**Jenny McPhee, *Air Mail***

"Fascinating...In tracing the history of Dante's bones, Raffa also provides an illuminating exploration of Italian nationalism and political thought."—**Publishers Weekly**

"Pulling together many threads of Dante's story, Raffa offers an engaging, informative, and original account of the material culture of the poet's epic body of work. Highly recommended."—**Library Journal**

"An intensively researched, gripping story of Dante's lively bones that also tells a brisk history of modern Italy. Raffa keeps a detached historian's eye on how Italian political figures used Dante to justify their own vision of the nation, the race, and the culture...Fascinating."—**Kelly Scott Franklin, *Law and Liberty***

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Dante's Ghost

In Latin, it was the verb *humare*, to bury, which gave the primary and proper meaning to the noun *humanitas*, human civilization. —GIAMBATTISTA VICO

Timing was not the only "miraculous" part of the discovery of bones believed to be Dante's. The hidden location of the wood box extracted by Pio Feletti's pickax gave people even more reason to suspect the intervention of mysterious forces. Corrado Ricci, the foremost authority on the history of the poet's tomb and remains at the time, repeated a story he had heard from many living witnesses in the late nineteenth century. The anecdote, which Ricci reported as follows, was viewed in retrospect as a prophetic sign of Feletti's discovery of Dante's bones.

The sacristan of Ravenna's Braccioforte chapel recounted to fellow citizens a dream that had frightened him while he slept among the ancient tombs in the chapel. He often spent the night there, falling into a deep, heavy slumber after imbibing large quantities of alcohol. One of those nights, sometime before 1865, he saw in his dream a male figure, dressed all in red, materialize in a corner of the building and then stroll around the chapel and the neighboring cemetery before approaching the inebriated dreamer. When the sacristan asked who he was, the crimson apparition answered, "I am Dante!" It was as if the master of the afterlife had risen from his tomb to wander the area around his gravesite.

Local residents with whom the sacristan shared his dream of Dante's ghost understandably dismissed it as a silly if entertaining story. Employed by the Confraternity of Mercy (a local charity organization), the sacristan was fittingly called Grillo. Italian for "cricket," this nickname implied not only a propensity to chatter like the chirping insect but also, less charitably, a reputation for flights of fancy.² It is small wonder that the man, sleeping off his inebriation in a mortuary chapel beside a cemetery and Dante's tomb, said he saw the poet's ghost in his dream. Even if nineteenth-century Italians thought the sacristan was telling the truth, they were less likely than their ancestors (and perhaps their descendants post-Freud) to find deep meaning in such a dream.

People in Dante's day, conversely, frequently interpreted dreams as prophecies. They took the words and actions of their imagined figures as signs explaining or pointing to future events. The poet

himself, a learned man of the late Middle Ages, put ample faith in prophetic dreams, one of which had great bearing on his life. The night after he first received the greeting of Beatrice—the young Florentine woman who would become his beloved yet unattainable muse—eighteen-year-old Dante had a dream revealing a "marvelous vision": a lordly man, enveloped within a fire-colored cloud, joyously carried Beatrice as she slept, her naked body covered only by a blood-red cloth; holding Dante's burning heart in his hand, the man woke Beatrice and forced her to eat it, after which, weeping bitterly, he gathered her in his arms and rose to Heaven. The meaning of this disturbing vision, Dante told readers of his *New Life* (*Vita nuova*), was not seen by anyone at the time, though later it was "perfectly clear to the simplest." Anyone could see in hindsight that the dream was prophetic, a sign foretelling Beatrice's untimely death seven years later in 1290 (at age twenty-four) and her ascension to God's celestial kingdom.

As happened for Dante's dream of Beatrice, later events cast the sacristan's dream of Dante in a whole new light. While telling of his encounter with the poet's ghost—as he frequently did—this "cricket" would point excitedly to a corner of the Braccioforte chapel where a former doorway to the cemetery had been sealed with bricks. That was the spot where he saw Dante's spirit, clad in red, enter the chapel. Miracles aside, responses to the dream changed from mocking condescension to reverent awe after Pio Feletti discovered a box of bones hidden behind those same bricks. People marveled even more at the sacristan's story because they knew it was not some tall tale he had made up after the fact to appear clever or prophetic: the man had died a few days before Feletti's pickax dislodged the bones—precisely where Dante's ghost had appeared—on May 27, 1865

Right after recounting the sacristan's dream, Corrado Ricci reminds readers that this was not the first time the poet's ghost starred in a dream with a message about hidden treasure—at least not if Giovanni Boccaccio's fourteenth-century word (or that of his sources) could be trusted. Dante's first biographer, Boccaccio (1313-1375) provided a wealth of information about Dante's life and times, much of it based on direct testimony from people who had known the poet in Florence and the cities in which he had lived in exile. But Boccaccio was also an extraordinarily inventive storyteller—a talent on full display in his prose masterpiece, the *Decameron*—whose engagement with Dante's life and works over many years shaped his own literary agenda. Numerous claims and episodes in Boccaccio's biography of Dante therefore merit a healthy dose of skepticism, this dream included. As it is, Boccaccio's account of Jacopo's encounter with his father's ghost eerily complements the sacristan's dream over five hundred years later, one pointing to the remaining pieces of the poet's body of work, the other to the discovery of remains purported to be his dead body.

Boccaccio, who visited Ravenna in 1346, only twenty-five years after Dante's death, claims to have been told of the dream by Piero Giardino, a disciple and close friend of the poet during his final years. This dream reveals information not about Dante's bones but about the final cantos of the *Divine Comedy*. At the time of Dante's death in 1321, according to Boccaccio, he had not yet sent the last thirteen cantos of *Paradiso* to Cangrande della Scala, his former benefactor in Verona. Dante dedicated the *Paradiso* to Cangrande and customarily sent batches of cantos to him upon their completion. After a fruitless search for the missing pages in Ravenna, the poet's sons, Pietro and Jacopo, reluctantly concluded that their father had not finished the work before his death. On the advice of friends, they decided they would do their best to compose the final cantos themselves when, mercifully, Dante appeared to Jacopo in a "marvelous vision" that saved him from "his foolish presumption." He also showed his son where to find the missing portion of the "*divina Comedia*."

The first person known to attach the label "divine" to the title of the poem (Dante simply called it his "*Comedy*"), Boccaccio reports that Jacopo showed up at Piero Giardino's house late one night during the ninth month after the poet's death. He arrived just before dawn. Jacopo told Piero that just a short while earlier, he had seen his father in his sleep. Dante wore bright white garments, his

face aglow with an otherworldly light. Jacopo asked him if he were alive, to which Dante replied yes, "but in the true life, not in ours." Still dreaming, Jacopo asked his father if he had managed to finish his poem before passing to this "true life," and, if he had, where were those last thirteen cantos? "Yes! I finished it," Dante reassured his son. Jacopo imagined that Dante then took him by the hand and led him to the poet's former bedroom.

"Here is what you have looked for for so long," Dante said, while touching a spot on the wall. With these words, the ghost disappeared, and Jacopo snapped awake. Understandably agitated, he immediately sought out Piero Giardino so they could go to the indicated place and learn whether he had been visited by "a true spirit or false delusion."

People in the Middle Ages believed that early-morning dreams were especially good at revealing the truth, and this one proved no exception. When Jacopo brought Piero to his father's bedroom, they found a mat affixed to the wall at the very spot touched by Dante in the dream. After gently removing the mat, they saw a recess they had not known about. Reaching inside the opening, they grasped a bunch of written pages. Fragile and discolored from the humidity, the parchment was on the point of total ruin. As the men removed mold and mildew from the pages, Dante's unmistakable verses came into view. The final thirteen cantos all accounted for, Jacopo diligently copied them for Cangrande and then joined them with the rest of the poem, which Dante's son affectionately and proudly called his "sorella," his sister. Now totaling one hundred cantos, "the work of so many years" was finally complete. Jacopo had the original manuscript of the full Divine Comedy.

Giannozzo Manetti (1396-1459), a Florentine humanist, drew freely from the Italian biographies of Dante by Boccaccio and Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444) in writing a Latin life of the poet in 1440. He views Jacopo's dream as evidence that Dante put the finishing touches on the "divine poem" (divino poemate) soon before he died. The poet, in Manetti's telling, had hidden several sheets containing the final cantos of the Paradiso somewhere in his house, waiting for the proper moment in which to add them to the other cantos and thereby bring the magnificent poem to completion. Because Dante did not live long enough to see this moment, it took a miraculous encounter with his ghost in the afterlife—the kind of extraordinary meeting the living poet imagined having with the dead—for the Divine Comedy to achieve its final form of one hundred cantos. The "shade of the deceased poet" speaks from beyond the grave, leading his son to the hidden location of the final cantos.

Today we have only manuscript copies of the poem—and copies of copies—the earliest ones dating to the 1330s, a decade after Dante's death." The original pages of the Divine Comedy, the verses written by Dante himself—or perhaps in later years dictated by the poet to his sons—did not survive or have otherwise been lost to posterity. This is true of Dante's other texts as well. So far as we know, no copy of any of the poet's works written in his own hand graces a library, museum, or private collection anywhere in the world. What happened, then, to those moldy pages with the final thirteen cantos (if the dream is to be believed) and to the first specimens of the other eighty-seven cantos of the poem? Were they destroyed by order of some high-ranking church official offended by Dante's theology or political philosophy or by his assignment of a particular bishop, cardinal, or pope to an undesirable room in the afterlife? Did Dante's original manuscript perish in one of those fires that often consumed libraries and archives in earlier times—as happened, for instance, during the sack of Ravenna in 1512? Did Dante's sons, aware of their father's enemies and feeling the heat, entrust his personal copy of the Divine Comedy to the Franciscan friars in Ravenna? Did they think it would be safe on consecrated property, only to have it pass into oblivion with the passing of time? Did the manuscript somehow wind up in the Vatican Library, where it patiently awaits the arrival of a real-life Robert Langdon to track it down or (more likely) stumble upon it by chance? The plain truth is, we will probably never know the fate of Dante's original pages. The fate of his body is another story. <>

MAPPING THE AFTERLIFE: FROM HOMER TO DANTE by Emma Gee [Oxford University Press, 978-0190670481]

There are very few accounts of the afterlife across the period from Homer to Dante. Most traditional studies approach the classical afterlife from the point of view of its "evolution" towards the Christian afterlife. This book tries to do something different: to explore afterlife narratives in spatial terms and to situate this tradition within the ambit of a fundamental need in human psychology for the synthesis of soul (or "self") and universe.

Drawing on the works of Homer, Plato, Cicero, Virgil, and Dante, among others, as well as on modern works on psychology, cartography, and music theory, **MAPPING THE AFTERLIFE: FROM HOMER TO DANTE** argues that the topography of the afterlife in the Greek and Roman tradition, and in Dante, reflects the state of "scientific" knowledge at the time of the various contexts in which we find it. The book posits that there is a dominant spatial idiom in afterlife landscapes, a "journey-vision paradigm"--the horizontal journey of the soul across the afterlife landscape, and a synoptic vision of the universe. Many scholars have argued that the vision of the universe is out of place in the underworld landscape. However, looking across the entire tradition, we find that afterlife landscapes, almost without exception, contain these two kinds of space in one form or another. This double vision of space brings the underworld, as the landscape of the soul, into contact with the "scientific" universe; and brings humanity into line with the cosmos.

Review

"This is an inspiring and unprecedented book. The official topic is the afterlife in the ancient world and beyond, but Emma Gee clearly shows that narratives about the afterlife are ultimately about our self, and the way we perceive and understand the world around us." -- Gabriele Galluzzo, University of Exeter

"Gee's exploration of 'the shadowland where science and soul meet' is revelatory, sweeping aside modern myths and explaining ancient ones with erudition and imagination. The precision of her new readings of some of the most studied passages of classical and medieval literature is matched by the extraordinary lucidity of her prose. This is a landmark study." -- Greg Woolf, Institute of Classical Studies, University of London

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Excerpt:

The unconscious ... is universal: it not only binds individuals together into a nation or race, but unites them with the men of the past and with their psychologies. —C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*

There are, it seems to me, two contradictory phenomena in relation to death and the afterlife. On the one hand, we deny death: "We ignore the existence of a scandal that we have been unable to prevent; we act as if it did not exist, and thus mercilessly force the bereaved to say nothing." On the other, efforts to speak about, and therefore control, death surface in the flowering of scholarship on the afterlife, "eschatology." It is as though through scholarship we seek to fill a silence we otherwise impose.

A certain hesitancy might also result from the idea that the afterlife is the province of religion. As Western intellectuals, we congratulate ourselves that we have moved on. Those of us who are not theologians (and some who are) tend to regard religion from a great height, as an "area for study;" not as a thing to color our perceptions. To characterize the afterlife as a province of "religion" or "religious history" is to diminish its significance, to exploit it as a statement of our distance from societies and sects that still have an afterlife.

But we too have our eschatologies. It's just that ours are scientific and psychological ones—scientific ones such as "biocentrism"; psychological ones which allegorize the underworld as the unconscious. This is precisely the area that interests me in this book. I frame my inquiry in psychological, rather than religious, terms. At the fundamental level the afterlife is about the nature of the human entity. The afterlife speaks about the nature of the soul—what we call the Self—now: it penetrates every moment of life.

Constructing a space in which the afterlife is supposed to happen is also a way of thinking about the world. It is a space based on "reality;" but it is also an imaginative zone that can be filled as we wish. The elements in it, while connected to "reality;" can be related to one another in ways that are not possible in the "real" world, even if such relationships seem mutually contradictory.

The afterlife is the fictive space we create for the joining of things. It is the space where we imagine the distillation of many sense-impressions into one abstract truth; it is the opening of the sluice gates between the senses, the telescoping of discursive and summative visions of space, the fitting of soul to universe.

I. First Principles

(i) No Heaven or Hell

There is no "heaven" and "hell" dichotomy in the Classical afterlife: we ought to discard these Christianizing concepts at the outset. They represent "a simplistic and dangerous evaluative schema, ... a binary move which restricts both inquiry and action."⁶ There is no terminological or spatial equivalency of "Elysium" and "Tartarus" with "heaven" and "hell"; nor is there, in the Classical tradition and even after, any infallible rule by virtue of which Tartarus as a zone of punishment is

always under the ground, with Elysium as a region of happiness its opposite in the heavens above. Tartarus may be the bottom layer of a stratified universe; it may be the center of a spherical earth, the earth itself, or even the sun; Elysium may be under the ground, at the ends of the earth, or in the moon.

The categories of up and down are labile throughout the afterlife tradition. From the first chapter, we see that it's possible for Herakles in Homer's *Odyssey* to be simultaneously both "up" and "down." Even in eschatological myths such as the Myth of Er in Book 10 of Plato's *Republic*, which incautious readers may read as prefiguring a heaven-hell division, the categories of "up" and "down" have no absolute moral authority. Souls congregate first in the "meadow;" whence they are sent according to their acts in life either to a place underground or to a place in the heavens. But these places are permeable. Next time around, the same souls may go to the opposite place; good choices may be followed by bad choices in life, and this may be reflected in an eschatological interchange. In fact, it is more likely that those who've chosen a good life previously, and led a sheltered existence, will naïvely choose a bad life next time. The passage of souls between upper and lower destinations is fluid. This fluidity of movement in space is strikingly exemplified at Rep. 621b2-3, where souls dart "upwards to their birth;," "like shooting stars". Plato here creates an extraordinary metaphor of simultaneous rise and fall—the ethical "fall" involved in incarnation, the fall of a star, combined with a stratigraphic movement upward in the universe. In the afterlife, the very idea of "up" and "down" as moral and spatial absolutes is challenged.

(ii) Two Kinds of Space

If there is no heaven or hell in the ancient afterlife, there is a spatial dichotomy of a different kind. Afterlife texts contain, as a rule, not one but two kinds of space. The first is linear space—a journey through afterlife terrain, the horizontal progression of the narrative. The second is circular or bounded space, a vision of the universe placed inside such a journey, most often with its emphasis on the vertical disposition of space. The combination of these two kinds of space is what I call the "journey-vision" paradigm of afterlife space. This is a constant element in the representation afterlife space, to be found *mutatis mutandis* across our texts. It is a defining feature of the afterlife.

Scholars characteristically work on one part of the afterlife tradition. From this perspective, the presence of two different models of space in an individual text can look like an anomaly. So for instance Austin, commenting on the vision presented in the Speech of Anchises in Virgil, *Aeneid* 6, complains: "Virgil, through Anchises' exposition, has deliberately questioned, even perhaps rejected, the whole conception of the world of the dead through which Aeneas has been led by the Sibyl, making the very notion of a *katabasis*, [i.e. descent to the underworld] seem incongruous': Austin's is a standard commentary on a seminal afterlife text: his verdict gives the impression to a wide audience that the presence of different modes of space—afterlife journey, cosmological vision—is an "incongruity". Once you look across the whole tradition, however, you find that this is not the case. The combination of the two modes of spatial representation, far from being incongruous, is characteristic of the tradition. Once we have established this, we have to ask why.

(iii) The Afterlife and the Universe

The underworld is the world of the soul; the cosmos, the world of "science." In afterlife narratives, the journey represents the underworld as the space of the soul. The vision, on the other hand, appertains to the cosmos. The journey-vision paradigm of afterlife space is present throughout the tradition. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Anchises expounds the nature of the cosmos in a revelation (see chapters 2 and 4); in Claudian's *De raptu Proserpinae* (chapter 3), the vision of the universe is expressed in the form of an ekphrasis (description of a work of art). In the *Somnium Scipionis* (Dream of Scipio, chapter 5) Cicero provides us with a twofold revelation: a visual one (the zones of the earth) and an auditory one (the harmony of the spheres). We see the vision of the True Earth in

Plato's *Phaedo* (chapter 8), the vision of the Spherical Universe in Plato's *Phaedrus* (chapter 7), and the "Spindle of Necessity" in Plato's *Republic* (chapter 6). In Plutarch's *De facie in orbe lunae* (*On the Face in the Moon's Disc*, chapter 9) the vision of the moon takes the role of Plato's vision of the True Earth; and in Dante's *Paradiso* (chapter 10), we see the universe in its medieval totality, a complete but problematic vision.

The vision is not static: it absorbs "scientific" developments. Each of the visions just mentioned reflects the state of cosmological knowledge of its time. The vision is where the afterlife narrative expands to accommodate more and more ambitious and complex ways of thinking about the world.

All of these visions have a parallel function in the afterlife context. What, then, is the function of the vision? In my view it speaks to the desire to accommodate the afterlife to the universe of "science."

(iv) Psychic Harmonization

If an evolutionary model made sense when applied to afterlife space, the linear journey would have become gradually attenuated until it dwindled out of sight. It does not do this: it endures. The conceptual obsolescence of the mythical model of the universe does not mean the end of the idea of an afterlife. Why this stubborn desire to retain, in the afterlife tradition, both the epic journey of the soul and the cosmological vision of the universe? First, because it's necessary, at any point, to construct the afterlife as a plausible world. In constructing imaginative space, you have to take the known world as your starting point: "The visible and known allows the poet to frame a conception of the invisible and unknown." Scientific paradigms of the world are therefore adapted to the afterlife journey. But that's not to say the world of the afterlife should be read as "real." The afterlife is, and is not, like the world we know. It walks the line between real and imaginary. The afterlife is the shadowland where science and soul meet.

The arc of continuity across the texts studied in this book, from Homer to Dante, is the creative and ongoing process of interaction between the journey and vision in afterlife space. Looking right across the tradition, we begin to realize that what has been read as the occurrence of two disharmonious types of space in these accounts is really a harmonization, a bringing into line of the physical world as understood at any given time, with the achronological world of the soul, represented by the afterlife landscape. The afterlife journey becomes an attempt to harmonize the soul with the universe, as understood through the vision.

The need to construct the afterlife using the materials of the cosmos is not unique to a particular group of texts nor to one period, language, or culture. The afterlife is a negative or mirror image of the view of the world available in any particular context. This is because the desire for psychic harmonization is, in my view, a psychological constant. The desire to align soul and universe is a human, not just a Classical or medieval, desire. In this book, I explore the soul-universe nexus through Classical and Medieval afterlife texts; there are, potentially, many other texts that could be drawn in to the inquiry, and many other ways of conducting it.

2. Old Wineskins

Meanwhile it's time for some "bursting of old wineskins;" to borrow a phrase from a pope. The oldest, fattest, and most enduring wineskin in afterlife scholarship is Christianity. With few exceptions, from the beginning to the end of the period I will survey, afterlife scholarship is bedeviled by an approach to the subject that places it in a genealogical relationship with Christian ideas of the afterlife. Explicitly or implicitly, Classical ideas of the afterlife are read as "leading up to" Christian ideas of the afterlife that are also, in many cases, assumed to be "ours:"

The roots of the science of eschatology lie among the humus and debris of nineteenth-century philology. This was an era in which biblical studies provided a starting point for explorations of the

origins of Christianity that often ranged far outside the Christian context. Dieterich (1893) exemplifies the beginning of our tradition. Dieterich's is a study of an early Christian text, the Apocalypse of Peter, which takes the form of a Classical katabasis, or descent to Hell. He constructs a history for the Apocalypse of Peter through the compilation of earlier sources thought to have influenced it; in so doing, he writes a history of the Classical afterlife. Dieterich's history begins with the earliest Greek thought and leads up to the Apocalypse of Peter as its point of culmination. The study of Classical afterlife is in this way annexed to biblical studies: the Christian tradition becomes its telos (goal). We'll see in a moment that this has not substantially changed in the intervening century or more.

Works of scholarship reflect trends of thought current in their own time. Just as Dieterich reflected biblical studies as the accepted idiom of scholarship, so also Rohde (1925) and Cumont (1949) reflect contemporary ideas. Rohde's study of the soul in the Classical tradition covers the period from Homer to Plato. Comparative mythology, that enfant terrible of nineteenth-century ethnography, informs the thought-world of the book.¹ Rohde adheres to an evolutionary model of the cult of the soul that moves from primitivism toward a notional high point of civilization. This high point is quite specific. It is, for Rohde, only Christianity that, in the end, can salvage some of the old greatness of Greece—Christianity that becomes the repository of Hellenism: "And yet—was Greece quite extinguished and dead for ever? Much—only too much—of the philosophy of its old age lived on in the speculative system of the Christian faith. And in the whole of modern culture so far as it has built itself upon Christianity or by extension from it, in all modern science and art, not a little survives of Greek genius and Greek inspiration. The outward embodiment of Hellas is gone; its spirit is imperishable." Having largely avoided Christianizing teleology up to this point in the book, Rohde introduces it at the very end.

Similarly Cumont's *Lux perpetua* (1949). The ambit of Cumont's book is vast, stretching from the earliest Indo-European times to the Neoplatonism of late antiquity. It ends with a flight of oratory: "Beatific vision of the glory of god, simultaneous perception of all truth, mystic love of ineffable beauty: these are the sublime speculations which would be reproduced and developed indefinitely after the fall of Paganism." We look, here, to what comes after the fall of "Paganism" as the savior of these "sublime speculations": this can only be Christianity.

However—and herein lies the true value of this book for my own study—Cumont postulates another influence on the development of the afterlife: "On the other hand, this eschatology underwent the influence of scientific theories which were already current: those who subscribed to it sought to make it agree with progress in astronomy:" According to Cumont, ideas of the afterlife were uniquely mixed, in the Greek tradition, with scientific thought, to produce "une eschatologie scientifique" ("a scientific eschatology;" p. 156). In other words, the afterlife is a measure of how we see the upper world: in this sense, Cumont's study remains fundamental.

You might imagine that Christianizing readings of the Classical afterlife would have been superseded in recent scholarship. This is not so, however. Bremmer (2002) demonstrates their tenacity. Bremmer's starting point is Christianity: "Taking our start from Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ ..."; in his view, "Our ideas about the afterlife are part of the legacy of Christianity" (my emphasis). For him, "the pre-Christian era" is the "necessary background" against which his chapters on Christianity have to be seen. Likewise, Casey (2009) draws a line that extends from Homer to Virgil to Christianity; at its end point is the Christian telos: "It is with Christianity that the doctrines of heaven and hell reach their full development." Casey's agenda is apparently to rehabilitate the Christianizing approach to our Classical afterlife texts.

Christianity remains a key point of orientation in contemporary scholarship. For instance, Mihai (2015) is a relentless working out of the theory that there was a "pagan" purgatory that anticipated

the Christian one. Throughout the extensive volume, Mihai's agenda is to defend purgatory as a doctrine of the Catholic Church, by arguing that the "doctrine" of purgatory existed in antiquity. Mihai's argument is a response to Le Goff (1984). Le Goff argued that the origin of Christian purgatory lay in the twelfth century and that it was invented by the church. In Le Goff's view, the contribution made by Classical accounts of the afterlife was minimal: "The theme of the descent into the underworld is virtually the only contribution to Christian imagery of the hereafter made by the ancient Greeks and Romans." For this reason, there are only five pages in his book devoted to the Classical tradition. Mihai, on the other hand, works with a mass of Classical sources. This mass of sources obscures the fact that there isn't a "doctrine" of purgatory, as such, in antiquity. If nothing else, Mihai's book illustrates the way in which the Christianizing approach can distort one's argumentation.

Nonetheless, it is a remarkable fact that various forms of Christianizing teleology subsist even in the most recent works. For instance, the collection of Marlow, Pollmann, and van Noorden (2020) is structured around a line of succession from the ancient Near East via the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple period, the Hellenic world and the Roman world, to the late antique world.

It would be only fair to add that there are a few works that are not constructed on the Christianizing paradigm. These, however, tend toward their own methodological obsessions. The theoretical basis of Edmonds (2004), for instance, is Marcel Detienne's idea of cultural *déviante*. The roots of his book lie firmly in structural anthropology. Apart from Detienne, Edmonds has recourse to J. Z. Smith, to Mikhail Bakhtin, and to Claude Lévi-Strauss' concept of *bricolage* (*The Savage Mind*, 1966).

I'm sure that my book will not be exempt from charges of monomania or selectivity. But mine is, I hope, a nondogmatic approach to the texts. I recognize the wildly varying nature of my textual material; at the same time, I recognize that the common ideas we find in the texts may be the work of common psychology. As a rule I reject the "comes from" approach of source criticism, and above all, I deliberately eschew the Christianizing approach. I do not believe the Classical afterlife should be interpreted through the lens of Christianity, or the "Judeo-Christian tradition." My interest is the topography of the afterlife—how you conceive of it as a space, to be defined in ways that can be visual, auditory, or intellectual.

3. Route Map

From the earliest times, scholars have complained of "inconsistencies" in the constructions of the afterlife. As we've seen already, representations of afterlife space have often been seen as composed of two (or more) different kinds of space. The problem is not so much spatial inconsistency in representations of the afterlife as the desire of commentators that the afterlife should be one thing rather than a plurality of things. So in Part I, "Dualities," each chapter focuses on some kind of dichotomy connected with afterlife space.

Chapter 1 focuses the idea of dichotomy through the character of Herakles in Homer's *Odyssey*, Book 11. Herakles has a dual identity: his *eidōlon* ("image") speaks to Odysseus in the underworld, but his "self," his *autos*, he tells us, is with the gods. From the earliest times, scholars have found Herakles' dual existence hard to swallow and have activated various strategies to make it more palatable. But, you could say, Herakles is revealingly divided. His two identities rapidly and economically map the extremes of the universe.

Chapter 2 questions the dichotomy between "real" and "imaginary" in afterlife space. We discover that the idioms of mapping space that we see in Virgil, *Aeneid* 6, are common across various textual and artistic representations of space; and, more surprisingly perhaps, across representations of "real" and "imaginary" space. Chapter 3 works with further spatial dichotomies, as they are seen in

Claudian's *De raptu Proserpinae* (The Rape of Proserpina), a work of the fourth century CE. In the tapestry that the goddess Proserpina is imagined as weaving, we are faced with several simultaneous representations of space: oikoumene (inhabited world) and globe, spherical and stratified visions of the world. These ways of seeing space are not necessarily mutually harmonious. But their coexistence makes the tapestry into a nest of spatial possibilities, reflective of the afterlife narrative as a culmination and repository of all available ways of seeing space.

Part 2, "Cosmos;" begins in Chapter 4 with another problem of "inconsistency" in Virgil, *Aeneid* 6. It seems on first reckoning that the celestial afterlife which Aeneas' father Anchises expounds from *Aen.* 6.724 onward cannot be reconciled with the underworld setting that precedes it (cf. pp. 3-4). Scholars' strategy has long been to deploy allegory to reconcile the two locations. The same strategy of allegory lies behind interpretations of Dante's *Paradiso*; but in this case Dante systematically builds allegory into his own text. In Dante, it is "as though" souls are seen distributed about the heavens; when, in fact, "in reality" they are all concentrated in one part of the universe, the Empyrean, invisible and intangible. They are shown to be among the stars only for didactic purposes. For Dante, the structure of the universe is, overtly, a way of talking about the nature of soul.

In some afterlife narratives, music, rather than place, appropriately becomes the functional allegory for talking about harmony between soul and universe. The notion of the "harmony of the spheres" is an important element in the eschatological tradition. This involves the auditory "map" of the universe, the system of planetary intervals by which it makes its sound. Chapter 5 is the first of two musical chapters that together present a new reading of the harmony of the spheres as an eschatological motif.

What is this universe with which our souls strive to become harmonious? This is the question discussed in the *Intermezzo*, the theoretical nub of the *libro*. Regular circular motion is the fundamental principle of the Classical universe. Irregularity is ascribed to anything that partakes of the six rectilinear motions, back/forward, up/down, left/right. But these apparent irregularities could be shown to be regular when absorbed into longer cycles. Order ripples out to subsume larger and larger areas of disorder. The soul is implicated in this expansion of order in the universe.

Against this background, Part 3, "Plato's Soulscapes," takes three of Plato's so-called eschatological myths, those of the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Phaedo*. In each of the dialogues studied there's an interplay of journey and vision. In each case, the vision draws on a particular area of "scientific" knowledge. In each case, too, "scientific" information becomes, when pushed to its limit, a stepping-off point for speculation about the true nature of the connection between soul and universe. Chapter 6 picks up the study of the harmony of the spheres begun in Chapter 5. I suggest a radical new interpretation of the Spindle of Necessity in *Republic* 10. Chapter 7 also suggests a new interpretation, this time of Plato's *Phaedrus*. Here we see how the "scientific" model of the spherical universe has been incorporated into Plato's

account of the soul and, in addition, how the *Phaedrus* marries the "scientific" idea of the spherical universe with a mystic vision. In Plato's *Phaedo* (Chapter 8), journey and vision collapse into one another. We're all on an underworld journey, all the time, since we inhabit the "creases" of the earth; but that underworld journey at the same time takes place around a vision, that of the True Earth. In this dialogue Socrates reworks natural science from the ground up, presenting, in the end, a redefinition of harmony itself, understood in the light of the world structure.

Plutarch's second-century CE work *De facie in orbe lunae* (On the Face in the Moon's Disc), studied in Part 4, Chapter 9, takes up the blueprint of Plato's *Phaedo*. Plutarch's *De facie* takes the form of a deconditioning: Plutarch reorganizes our notion of how the cosmos is structured. Furthermore, the

human entity is now eschatologically implicated not only in the structure of the earth but in the whole cosmos.

Dante's *Commedia* (Chapter 10) gives us perhaps the ultimate deconditioning. Dante explodes the Platonic notion that there is a divine template for the universe as we perceive it. For him, the universe is not a reflection of a more perfect original, as it is in Plato's *Timaeus*, but its inverse, the inside-out

reflection of that original. Its relationship to the divine cannot be understood through perception. The vision of *Paradiso* XXVIII expresses the difficulty inherent in the human aspiration of harmony between soul and universe. True harmony, for Dante, remains unspeakable. The extended eschatology that is the *Commedia*, is, for him, a didactic vision only; the universe that forms the arena for it is an illusion produced by our inferior understanding.

Dante's poem reaches toward a truth. In this sense it's a true eschatology: a striving toward an end. Its final aspiration is, to borrow Dante's term, "transhumanization" (*Par.* I.70), transcending the human: the arrival at an ideal state of one-from-many, the complete merging of soul and universe.

You might say that this is the aspiration of all afterlife narratives. The transhuman state can be worked toward and explored in afterlife narratives—and only in afterlife narratives, since ultimately, it can never be pinned down in "real life." All afterlife narratives succeed, in their different ways, in expressing the difficulty of achieving that fundamental aspiration of harmony between soul and universe. <>

DANTE'S PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE: POLITICS AND HUMAN WISDOM IN "PURGATORIO" by Paul Stern [University of Pennsylvania Press, 978-0812250114]

When political theorists teach the history of political philosophy, they typically skip from the ancient Greeks and Cicero to Augustine in the fifth century and Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth, and then on to the origins of modernity with Machiavelli and beyond. Paul Stern aims to change this settled narrative and makes a powerful case for treating Dante Alighieri, arguably the greatest poet of medieval Christendom, as a political philosopher of the first rank.

In **DANTE'S PHILOSOPHICAL LIFE**, Stern argues that "*Purgatorio's*" depiction of the ascent to Earthly Paradise, that is, the summit of Mount Purgatory, was intended to give instruction on how to live the philosophic life, understood in its classical form as "love of wisdom." As an object of love, however, wisdom must be sought by the human soul, rather than possessed. But before the search can be undertaken, the soul needs to consider from where it begins: its nature and its good. In Stern's interpretation of *Purgatorio*, Dante's intense concern for political life follows from this need, for it is law that supplies the notions of good that shape the soul's understanding and it is law, especially its limits, that provides the most evident display of the soul's enduring hopes.

According to Stern, Dante places inquiry regarding human nature and its good at the heart of philosophic investigation, thereby rehabilitating the highest form of reasoned judgment or prudence. Philosophy thus understood is neither a body of doctrines easily situated in a Christian framework nor a set of intellectual tools best used for predetermined theological ends, but a way of life. Stern's claim that Dante was arguing for prudence against dogmatism of every kind addresses a question of contemporary concern: whether reason can guide a life.

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Politics, Poetry, and Philosophy in Purgatorio

I came to Dante's *Commedia* already well into my career.¹ Preparing to teach it in a first-year course, I, like many readers, was captivated by the poem's sheer imaginative power. As a student of classical political philosophy, I was also impressed—and puzzled—by how frequently Dante uses this power for a political end. In particular, I wondered why politics should have such prominence in a poem about the Christian afterlife, especially a conception of it that chimes so clearly and insistently with a classical understanding. This wonder motivates my study. Its primary aim is not to explicate Dante's political views, a task ably accomplished by others.² Rather, it seeks to account for the philosophic importance of politics in the poem, to explain why in an intellectual milieu shaped by Christianity and Neoplatonism, a religion and a philosophic school united in their diminishment of politics, the political realm should occupy such a significant place in the *Commedia*'s vision. My thesis is that the poem's political surface provides the key to its depths. More specifically, I argue that the prominence and meaning Dante accords politics are crucial to the vindication of rational inquiry into the human good, which, I also argue, is his poem's intent.

American Dante scholarship of the past fifty years maintains a different view. With a few notable exceptions, this scholarship understands the poem's intent as religious.³ Charles Singleton supplies this reading's principle: "Dante sees as poet and realizes as poet what is already conceptually elaborated and established in Christian doctrine." For Singleton, the poem's purpose as versified Christian doctrine is plain.

Yet, precisely the Christian character that makes Singleton's characterization credible renders anomalous the meaning and prominence the poem gives to politics. The *Commedia* repeatedly highlights a political life significantly more robust than "Christian doctrine" is at all likely to endorse. A few examples suffice to make the point: though one searches the New Testament in vain for a legal code, in Purgatorio Dante maintains that positive law, informed by but not deduced from a higher order, is essential to a well-lived life; furthermore, though Augustine insists on the gulf between Rome's pride-driven greatness and the genuine virtue of humility, it is prideful virtue, exemplified by Cato and celebrated by Virgil, that wins Dante's praise; finally, despite Aquinas's significant alteration of the place of politics in the Christian world, Purgatorio reveals an unbridgeable divide between his view and Dante's regarding the notion of natural law (XVI. 94-96; I. 48, 66; VI. 118-20).

Singleton's position could be vindicated were the status and meaning politics has in Purgatorio altered in *Paradiso*. But Dante's distinctive political concerns intrude even in heaven, disturbing its serenity in some particularly prominent locations (e.g., Par. VI. 1-142, X. 109-14, XIII. 46-49, 88-96,

XVI. 34-154, XVII. 13-142, XXX. 127-48).⁶ There, too, Dante cares deeply about politics, and his preferred brand still takes its bearings from models that clash with Christian doctrine. The question of the relationship between his religious vision and his political concerns persists beyond the poem's conclusion.

The difficulty has not gone unnoticed. Objections to the view Singleton summarizes, although never in the majority, are not all of recent vintage.⁷ In fact, doubts about Dante's orthodoxy arose contemporaneously with the poem's publication. While for some the *Commedia* quickly earned the status of sacred scripture, others were skeptical.⁸ As Anthony Cassell remarks, Dante's son Pietro felt "perpetual dread" that "his father's *Commedia* could be found heterodox."⁹ He adds that Pietro produced his commentaries on the *Commedia* "to explain away its controversial views."¹⁰ And, in 1335, the Roman province of the Dominicans forbade study of the poem. Their fear is not unfounded. One of its sources is the friction between Dante's treatment of politics, on the one hand, and established Christian doctrine, on the other, especially given the work's specific poetic form.

As Dante's treatment of his poetic predecessors in *Purgatorio* indicates, poetry, notwithstanding critiques such as Aquinas's, did have a place in Dante's world.¹¹ Thus, when Boccaccio praises Dante as "the first to open the way for the return to Italy of the banished Muses," he cannot be referring to poetry as such. Rather, Boccaccio's statement echoes what Virgil, Dante's initial guide, writes of his own political poetry: "I first, if life but remain, will return to my country, bringing the Muses with me in triumph from the Aeonian peak." In the poem that Virgil brings to his native land he addresses "Roman affairs," as does Dante in his. Both repatriate epic poetry with its nationfounding sagas of the hero who epitomizes the community's way of life—one of several precious objects Dante appropriates from the classical treasury (IX. 136-38).

But Calliope, the banished Muse of epic poetry, was particularly unwelcome in Dante's pervasively Christian world (l. 8—to). As Robert Hollander writes, "It is the sin of the poet, in Augustinian-Aquinian eyes, to claim for secular literature a license for a higher form of truth-telling that is explicitly reserved to the Bible and to the writings of its anointed interpreters."¹² The persistent worry is that a poet might not only regard himself but, through poetry's persuasive power, come to be regarded by others as a prophet (XXIX. 104-5).¹³ Yet what need is there for the prophet's new revelation and correspondingly new way of life when the true, universal, and permanent teaching has already been promulgated? A claim such as Dante's, to express a true vision of the next world, could only be, in the words of a church authority, "vainglorious heresy." "I" Nevertheless, Dante's epic provides just such a justificatory vision, and Dante insists throughout on its veracity.

As evident in his poem's novel hero, Dante adopts the epic form to new circumstances. Still, the present point is that, like Homer, "the sovereign poet," "to whom the Muses gave more milk than ever to any other," and like Virgil, Dante's "sweetest father," he too undertakes to shape a people's way of life (Inf. IV. 88;) XII. 101-2, XXX. so). Dante's poem, as do theirs, conveys a notion of good that informs the entire community, intertwining ethics and politics in a shared view of a choiceworthy life. In the epic manner, the *Commedia* makes this view compelling through vivid portrayals of the hero who founds the community and of the divinity that substantiates its goodness. Plato's Socrates vouches for this link between epic poetry and great politics when, to found Kallipolis, he reconceives Homer's gods and heroes, engaging in what he calls "theology."

Dante's definition of poetry—"verbal invention composed according to the rules of rhetoric and music"—indicates why poetry is such an effective tool with which to undertake a "reformation for the whole of humanity on earth," as John Scott characterizes Dante's political project (DVE II. iv. 2-3).²⁰ Like rhetoric, poetry aims to persuade, even if to achieve that goal it needs to "speak a truth that has the face of a lie" (Inf. XVI. 124). Like music, poetry exerts its persuasive power through an

appeal to the passions as it "attracts to itself the human spirits" (*Cony.* II. xiii. 23). As the multitude of Dante's contemporary readers attests, his epic poetry retains its compelling power.

In choosing to write an epic, and in taking Virgil as his initial guide, Dante signals his seriousness about effecting a far-reaching political change. Every proposal for such change presupposes a critique of the existing order, the more far-reaching the proposed change, the more fundamental the critique. Underlying all such critiques is a vision of how we ought to live together, some standard of justice that is not being met. Furthermore, every standard of justice appeals to a conception of a well-lived life. To answer the question about the elevation of politics by Dante requires therefore that we grasp his notion of such a life.

In this regard, it is useful to note that Augustine, for one, would find Dante's aim misguided and, most pertinent to the present purpose, Dante's seriousness misplaced. The divergence between Augustine and Dante about politics reflects, however, a still deeper divide, a difference that concerns, ultimately, the meaning of philosophy. To be more specific, it is Dante's understanding of philosophy, decisively distinct from Augustine's, that expresses Dante's view of the best life and, accordingly, provides the ultimate rationale for Dante's political concern—or so I shall argue.

For Augustine, philosophy is properly identified with metaphysics, a view that underlies the deep affinity between Christian theology and Neoplatonism. He can thus praise the Platonists for their adherence to Plato's so-called doctrine of Ideas, those immutable intelligibles that are taken to constitute the order that structures all existence, including human life. In the view of this expression of theologia, principles of human action are deducible directly from the order of the whole, a possibility perfectly captured in Aquinas's notion of natural law. But just so far as this is possible, politics must be diminished, its importance inversely proportional to the orderliness of the whole; if the order of the whole does directly structure human life, there is no reason to consider the political realm as a home for deliberation about the human good or to accord it the autonomy and significance it would thereby deserve (*XVI.* 106-8).

Yet Dante does both. He thereby signals his opposition to the identification of philosophy and metaphysics that underlies the depreciation of politics. And, with his opposition, he challenges the harmony between humanity and the whole that this identification presumes.

The absence of this presumed harmony decisively alters the character of philosophy. In particular, as a result of humanity's consequent distance from an understanding of the whole, the investigation of human nature and its good rightly occupies the heart of philosophic inquiry; if we need to seek knowledge, clarity regarding the origin of and obstacles to that search is of crucial importance. Accordingly, when Dante deems the *Commedia* a work of "philosophy," he specifies it as a work of "ethics," not metaphysics (*Ep.* XIII. 40).

With this specification, Dante rehabilitates what Aristotle, in linking the *Nicomachean Ethics* with his *Politics*, calls "the philosophy of human affairs." This philosophic consideration of ethics and politics has as its goal the self-knowledge that informs the "unequaled seeing" called prudence (*Par.* XIII. 104).²⁷ Philosophy so understood is neither a body of doctrines easily situated in a Christian framework nor a set of intellectual tools best used for predetermined theological ends. It is, instead, a way of life.²⁸ As such, philosophy requires politics: for its nurture, as its greatest spur, and as the most reliable guide for its central inquiry. Thus does the significance Dante finds in politics follow from his distinctive understanding of philosophy.

In this understanding there remains "vital nourishment" for us who "call [Dante's] time ancient" (*Par.* XVII. 131, 119-20). For to revive the "philosophy of human affairs" Dante must show that inquiry regarding human good is necessary and possible, a matter of great contemporary concern.

Currently, there is doubt on both these counts. One of the two contemporary intellectual authorities, modern science, rejects this inquiry's necessity; the other, postmodernism, its possibility. The former does so believing there to be unquestionable certitude regarding our good, the latter because we know, again with certainty, that knowledge of good is unavailable. In either case, reason's capacity to guide life is in doubt. Prior to accepting this conclusion, however, we should note that these certitudes, if only by their opposition, suggest the need for further inquiry. To the extent that Dante's vindication of rational inquiry confronts obstacles that endure, his effort, with its acute self-awareness and searching spirit, can guide our investigation. The following outline of this vindication, as it emerges in *Purgatorio*, explicates this possibility.

Purgatorio and Philosophy as a Way of Life

The influence of the Nicomachean Ethics on Dante has long been noted—and rightly so: here, the thinker whom Dante deems "the master of those who know" "put the finishing touches on moral philosophy and perfected it" (*Inf.* IV. 131; *Cony.* IV. vi. 8, 15).² Although the authority of the Ethics is more

READING DANTE IN RENAISSANCE ITALY, FLORENCE, VENICE AND THE 'DIVINE POET' by Simon Gilson [Cambridge University Press, 9781107196551]

Simon Gilson's new volume provides the first in-depth account of the critical and editorial reception in Renaissance Italy, particularly Florence, Venice and Padua, of the work of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Gilson investigates a range of textual frameworks and related contexts that influenced the way in which Dante's work was produced and circulated, from editing and translation to commentaries, criticism and public lectures. In so doing he modifies the received notion that Dante and his work were eclipsed during the Renaissance. Central themes of investigation include the contestation of Dante's authority as a 'classic' writer and the various forms of attack and defence employed by his detractors and partisans. The book pays close attention not only to the *Divine Comedy* but also to the *Convivio* and other of Dante's writings, and explores the ways in which the reception of these works was affected by contemporary developments in philology, literary theory, philosophy, theology, science and printing.

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Of all the works of Dante that were available in our period the most important remained the Comedy. In spite of the influence and importance of print, we should not forget that manuscripts of the poem continued to circulate widely. Manuscripts of the poem were still produced in the sixteenth century, and hundreds if not thousands of existing ones, dating back as far as the third decade of the fourteenth century, had a very wide circulation indeed. These manuscript copies were often heavily annotated, prized as possessions, and sought after by collectors. During the sixteenth century, as we will see, frequent recourse was made to the 'testi antichi buoni' ('good old texts') and the 'antico a penna' ('old text penned by hand') in order to establish the text of the poem and to study its language. Sixteenth-century artistic representations, such as the ones by Signorelli and Agnolo Bronzino, continue to represent Dante holding manuscripts of his poem. Scribal copies of the Comedy often contained a variety of presentational features and additional material intended to support and guide reading of the text, from rubricated headings and other types of summaries, to the inclusion of biographies (sometimes more than one), diagrams, geometrical designs, short indexes and ancillary poems in praise or defence of the poet and his orthodoxy. Such features, now commonly termed paratexts, become incorporated into print and proliferate still further in that medium. What is more, in sixteenth-century Italy, almost all the major Trecento commentators of Dante continued to circulate in manuscript and to elicit strong interest. There was, in fact, a particularly keen sixteenth-century Italian interest in the fourteenth-century commentaries by Iacomo della Lana, the *Ottimo commento*, Pietro Alighieri, Benvenuto da Imola and Francesco da Buti. Boccaccio's incomplete commentary, based on his Florentine public readings (1373-4) of the first sixteen cantos of the *Inferno*, was influential, especially in Florence. Various other sets of glosses, such as those that we now know as the *chiose anonime* and the *chiose Ambrosiane*, circulated in manuscript copies of the poem.

Several important sixteenth-century 'commentaries' upon the poem also remained in manuscript, including the oral lessons on the entire poem by the Venetian patrician and friend of Bembo, Trifone Gabriele (c. 1525-7). Another major commentary (c. 1538-1540s), that by the Florentine, Pierfrancesco Giambullari, never went beyond manuscript, and has not been traced, except for a section of *Inferno* I. What is more, sixteenth-century penned marginalia in manuscript (and print) copies provide a still relatively unexplored body of material, which is of especial interest in studying how the poem was edited."

If we continue our focus on manuscript and now examine versions of Dante's other works, we know that copies of the *Vita nova*, especially of the poetry contained in this prosimetrum, continued to circulate. There was also a strong concern with Dante's lyric production or *Rime*, and some sixteenth-century interest in producing copies of the political treatise, *Monarchia*, though the latter half of the century saw growing ecclesiastical censure of this work and its eventual prohibition in Italy. We also witness manuscript diffusion of Dante's Latin epistles, and of vernacular versions of certain letters, above all the ones known to modern readers as Epistles y and vu. The now celebrated Cangrande Epistle (Epistle)(iii) received renewed attention in mid-century Florence and in the later part of the sixteenth century.⁵⁸ The first decades of the century see the 'rediscovery' of manuscript copies of two of Dante's Latin works which lead to printings: first, the cosmographical work based on Dante's lecture at Verona (20 January 1320), the *Quaestio de aqua et terra*, and, more significantly for our purposes, the incomplete treatise on the vernacular language, the *De vulgari eloquentia*. While Dante's son Pietro may well have had access to the *Quaestio* and Boccaccio made close use of the *De vulgari*, neither text is widely known or indeed has any real tradition before the early sixteenth century. A Paduan monk and scholar, Giovanni Benedetto Moncetti, discovered a (now lost) manuscript of the *Quaestio 'in scrignis'* ('in a casket'), and used

this as the base-text for the first printed edition which was produced in Venice in 1507. Though there was a further print edition in Naples later in the century, the work appears not to have strongly influenced the reading and interpretation of the Comedy. The *De vulgari eloquentia*, by contrast, acquired remarkable saliency in discussions on the 'language question', as well as in relation to discussion of the language of the Comedy and Dante's own attitude to Florence. Two earlier manuscripts of Paduan origin were brought to light in the sixteenth century: one by Gian Giorgio Trissino (1478-1550), which is now housed in the Biblioteca comunale in Milan (MS. Trivulziano 1088); and the other by a Florentine exile, Iacopo Corbinelli, and which is today held in the Civic Library of Grenoble (Grenoble, Bibliothèque Civique, MS. 580). The latter text formed the basis of the Latin *editio princeps* which was printed in Paris in 1577 in an edition prepared by Corbinelli himself, who repackaged the work, adding his own anti-Florentine and Francophile charge to his annotations and paratexts.

In spite of the significance of manuscripts and the vibrancy of scribal culture, it was nonetheless the printing press that exercised the most profound effect on the circulation and reading of Dante's works. Alongside print editions (often with accompanying commentaries and lives) of the Comedy, we find a notable interest — as the brief sketch of manuscript circulation above suggests — in printed editions of Dante's 'minor works'. The sixteenth century is especially important in this respect, and many of the works are anything but 'minor'; for that is a term that only emerges in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe. There is one late Florentine printing of the *Vita nova* (the *editio princeps* of 1576), four print editions of Dante's lyric production (two are Venetian, one Florentine and the other is published in Milan), and three Venetian printings of the *Convivio* (1521, 1529, 1531), all of which are based on the text of the earlier Florentine *editio princeps* (1490). As we have already noted, too, Dante's Latin production is also printed, some of it for the first time and some of it in translation. In addition to the first Latin editions of the *Quaestio* and the *De vulgari eloquentia*, there are two printings of an Italian translation by Trissino of the *De vulgari eloquentia* (based on Trissino's own rediscovered manuscript). The further Neapolitan print of the *Quaestio* is dated 1576 and found within a collection of scientific works by Francesco Storella, a Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Naples.⁶ There is also a vernacular print version of one genuine Latin letter and a further one of a falsified epistle which is particularly interesting for the way it frames the potentially antagonistic relationship between Venice and Florence. Outside Italy, there are two printings of the Latin treatise on world government, *Monarchia*, both in Basel in reformed Switzerland in 1559 and 1566. A German translation of the treatise is also printed in 1559. These three printings are all bound up with the instrumentalized use of Dante's political treatise, and his name, by Protestant reformers in their confrontations and polemics with the Roman papacy.

Aside from the textual tradition of Dante's own works, both in manuscript and print, exegetic diffusion of Dante's poem by means of public and private readings and related expositions was very important in sixteenth-century culture. Since the early 1370s, public readings of Dante, especially in Florence, had formed an important civic means for promulgating the poem. Such *lezioni* were important for situating his poem in relation to the latest literary discussions and against philosophical and theological currents. As we will see, sixteenth-century readings became increasingly absorbed within the activities of new institutions concerned with vernacular learning, namely, the Academies. In fact, Dante was one of the vernacular authors more widely read and discussed in a number of such Academies, both in Florence and outside.⁶⁵ Our focus will fall in particular upon the Florentine Academy, the most important such institution and one which was pivotal for its attempt to reinvigorate the status of the poet in his home city against Bembo and his Venetian and Paduan followers in the 1540s and 1550s. But we will also explore rivalries and interrelations between academies both in Florence and outside (above all in Siena, Venice and Padua), since here too we

find major critical discussions of Dante, especially as part of the so-called quarrel over Dante set off by Castravilla."

Having outlined the main forms of print, scribal and oral diffusion of Dante's texts and of readings and commentaries upon them, let us now sketch out briefly some of the main kinds of other critical writings. The tradition of commentary has already been mentioned, since this was often connected with the textual tradition of Dante's Comedy, in both manuscript and print. Commentaries, as well as public readings which drew upon the conventions and critical language of the commentary genre, will provide a major source of documentation in later chapters. Various lives of Dante are embedded in manuscript codices containing the poem, in all the reprints of Landino's *Comento*, in later print commentaries by others, and in abbreviated form in later small format printed editions. Our interest will rest with biographies in these works, though we should note that Boccaccio's celebrated *Vita di Dante* was widely diffused in manuscript copies of the poem, and it is printed separately twice, first in a 1477 Venetian print of the Comedy, and then as a separate publication by an exiled Florentine in Rome in 1544.⁶⁸ Boccaccio's life is also printed again, with its own separate title-page, as part of the 1576 Florentine *editio princeps* of the *Vita nova*.⁶⁹ We also have some evidence of lives which were composed but are now lost and documents that preserve other minor biographical notices.⁷⁰ Compared to earlier periods, however, the sixteenth century is rather less concerned to utilize biography — as Boccaccio and Brunetti had done so emblematically — in order to stake out a theory of literature, offer defences of poetry and provide full-scale introductions to Dante and his poem. All the same, interest in the poet's life continues, and it is a prominent feature in prints of the Comedy, as well as in the handling of interpretative and critical questions raised by Dante's exile and questions related to his character. Biography also at times incorporates the tradition of the so-called 'jocose' Dante, that is, a strand of storytelling in which the poet appears as an acerbic and facetious character found in tales marked by verbal rebuttals. More prominent than the biography, but often included alongside it in editions and commentaries of the poem, is the sixteenth-century preoccupation with the topography of Dante's afterlife. A rich range of writings on the site, measures and shape of Hell is also produced in independent treatises, lectures and dialogues, in both print and manuscript.

Several Dantes' were, then, recreated in the Florentine and Venetian contexts that used and transmitted his name and works. the 'jocose' and 'cosmographical' 'Dantes' take on new significance in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as do other 'Dantes' we will encounter and whose labels — 'theologian', 'philosopher' and 'poet' or fusions of these and related terms — date back to the fourteenth century. Perhaps more significant, as the opening epigraphs suggest, are the qualifying epithets applied to Dante. Such epithets, from the denigrating 'rozzo' ('rough'), 'licenzioso' (licentious'), and 'oscuro' ('obscure') to the celebratory 'divino' (divine), 'glorioso' ('glorious'), and 'eccellente' ('excellent'), take us back to the themes of critical attack and defence with which we began. As our opening paragraph suggested, a major site for critical activity on Dante throughout the century was the relationship between *res et verba*, words and things, that is, between the formal, expressive properties of his text and its 'content', its cultural and philosophical elements. The pairing may be traced back to Quintilian and Cicero, and it is already strongly implicated in Dante's own conception of his poetry, as well as in early critical responses to the Comedy. By the second half of the sixteenth century *res et verba* was the nexus for major cultural debates, both rhetorical and philosophical, and brought with it a range of disciplinary positions. Dante's Comedy offers a privileged entry-point into discussion of the topic, not least because of the ways its encyclopaedic subject-matter presents, in a 'comic' synthesis, not only natural science, philosophy, theology, history, mythology and classical literature, but also contemporary history, scandals and gossip, crime news, tales of incest, of exploitation and of political and ecclesiastical corruption. One result of Dante's original syncretism is that the Comedy offers us an astonishing diversity of languages and styles, from the lyric, elegiac and tragic to the lowest registers of black humour, street banter and

scatology It is not surprising, then, that the earliest history of criticism upon the poem shows us that Dante was often felt to be obscure, and that his poem's `scurità` ('obscurity'), both linguistic and philosophical, was a live topic for his earliest commentators. Bembo was resident in Florence as a young boy when, in the late 1470s, Poliziano had, in the name of Lorenzo de' Medici, described Dante's vernacular style as rough and harsh, utilizing critical terms derived from classical rhetoric and literary theory. Ten years later, Pico della Mirandola had adopted similar strategies, in a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici, in which he strongly separated out Dante's subject-matter from his style, and drew a comparison between Dante and Petrarch in teasingly polarized terms. For Pico, Dante is rich and profound in content but rough in style. Bembo's own intervention in the Prose reinforced still further the tendency to view Dante through the lens of such distinctions, and to create differentiations between him and Petrarch, embedding concerns that came to inform many of the later critiques and the defences in the sixteenth century. Related problems with the way Dante does not conform to existing critical categories had been experienced with the poem's title, which consciously defied prevailing medieval definitions of `comedy`, and thus made for fraught discussion of the genre to which the poem belonged. Here, too, the difficulties persisted and became more acute, especially in the second half of the sixteenth century, as intellectuals sought to establish new theories of genre and poetry in the light of the recovery and reinterpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics* and its critical categories. Even more artificially than with Bembo but just as powerfully, Dante's poem was to be swept up into such discussions.

Alongside the overarching discussions raised by *res et verba*, and neo-Aristotelian quarrels on the poem's title and generic status, this book will be concerned with four other major areas of interest in line with our earlier discussion of Dante as `criticized thing'. First, it will explore the print history of the poet across all the Renaissance Italian editions of the Comedy. The pairing of Venice and Florence will allow us to chart closely the borrowings, innovations and interactions between printing presses in both cities and their respective teams of editors and correctors. All twenty-three editions, many of which often incorporate a richly varied body of related exegesis and debate, will be examined in subsequent chapters. Second, we will examine the forms of interpretation, reading and defence offered in relation to Dante in commentaries, *lezioni*, related academic literature and other works. In-depth studies will be made of the four major commentators/readers active in this period (Trifone Gabriele, Giovan Battista Gelli, Alessandro Vellutello, and Bernardino Daniello), alongside discussion of many other readers and interpreters in the Venetian and Florentine contexts. In several cases, this will be the first attempt to offer a detailed assessment of their exegetical activity and their environments. Third, Dante's other works will receive close attention, both as printed editions in their own right and as interpretative guides to the Comedy, as ways of reading Dante in relation to his own other works. Fourth, a strand of interest that will run throughout our discussion of editorial and interpretative activity will concern the ways that Dante's texts, his name and life are re-used and often manipulated within the major cultural debates of the time. The emphasis will fall above all upon discussions related to the *questione delta lingua*, to reform of the Church and the growing atmosphere of religious control and censorship from the late 1540s, and to questions of readership at a time of remarkable growth in the number and kinds of vernacular readers.

We will, then, chart the history of the editing, expounding, contextualizing and judging of Dante, and do so in broad chronological segments in all three Parts of this book, where we will often see just how strongly interleaved between the two cities the editorial forms of presentation and critical judgements can be. Part I `Florentine Legacies and Venetian Initiatives: 1481-1540' is made up of two chapters which weave discussion between Florence and Venice. Chapter 1 examines the editorial reshaping of the Comedy, exploring all the Venetian reprints of Landino's 1481 edition and commentary, as well as other prints, both Venetian and Florentine, of the Comedy before 1540. Alongside Bembo's role as an editor of Dante's poem, Chapter 1 will also return to Bembo's Prose

and consider closely its presentation of the poet. Indeed, Bembo's judgements on Dante will be a fundamental point of reference throughout the entire book. Chapter 2 then surveys other Dantean works — his vernacular verse, the *De vulgari eloquentia* and the *Convivio* — that were printed in these cities, and it assesses some of the major critical concerns developed in relation to them. Part II and III offer more focused treatments of each city, examining respectively the Florentine and Venetian settings that under-gird the publication, reading and interpretation of Dante that developed from the late 1530s to the end of the sixteenth century. Part I 'Dante and the Florentine Academies, 1540-1595' is again made up of two chapters.

We will first explore, in Chapter 3, how Dante was promoted, utilized, edited and discussed by public readers and figures associated with the Florentine Academy. This chapter also surveys the Dantean activity of the later Academies of the *Alterati* and the *Crusca*, in the period from the early 1570s, which saw the beginnings of the 'Dante quarrel', as well as the publication of two further Florentine editions of the poem and the first printing of the *Vita nova*. Chapter 4 returns to the 1550s and 1560s and is devoted to a focused assessment of the decade-long set of public lectures (1553-63) on Dante delivered by one of his most fervent defenders, Gelli, the Florentine Academy's official public reader of the *Comedy*. The two chapters that make up Part II 'Venetian Dantes: 1544-1596' are concerned primarily with Venice and Padua. Chapter 5 considers the two new editions and commentaries or *Espositioni* by Vellutello and Daniello which were both printed in Venice. This chapter provides a close analysis of their exegetical styles and approaches to Dante, placing them in the context of their other production and the critical and editorial environments in which they worked. Chapter 6 then examines the printings, both smaller format and folio, of Dante produced in the Venice in editions prepared by the professional men of letters, Lodovico Dolce and Francesco Sansovino, in the 1550s and 1560s. At the same time, this chapter explores how Dante is handled in the work of other editors, translators and professional writers who were responsible for the increased vernacular output of the city's print-shops from the 1530s onwards. In both Parts II and III, the discussion will shift between the cities, highlighting not only aspects of polemic and rivalry, but also continuities and borrowings. All three Parts of the book will offer more focused profiles, both of major thematic strands and of particular readers, commentators and writers who are especially important in adapting Dante to the demands of new vernacular reading publics and are relevant to the Florentine—Venetian axis of nuanced interaction and borrowing, of rivalry and competition. <>

LIFE-WORLD AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE: HUSSERL, SCHUTZ, AND WALDENFELS by Chung-Chi Yu [Königshausen & Neumann, 9783826064517]

The fact that there are different cultures in the world is too obvious for words. Considering thus cultural differences in the light of the phenomenological concept of life-world may raise the following questions: Do we live in the same life-world regardless of such cultural differences? Or do we live in different life-worlds because of cultural differences? The first question presupposes a singular life-world, whereas the second question entails a plurality of life-worlds. In any case, how is the notion of cultural difference related to that of the life-world? Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the founder of phenomenology seems to conceive the life-world as the bare ground of the natural sciences. The life-world therefore acquires a universal validity regardless of cultural differences. In contrast, for Alfred Schutz (1899-1959), who is more concerned with the foundation of human and social sciences than that of natural sciences, the life-world understood as field of praxis with social and cultural characteristics unavoidably assumes cultural differences. Besides critically discussing these two radically diverging positions, the book also discusses what Bernhard Waldenfels sees as a

common denominator: the idea of grounding (Grundlegungs-idee). Both Husserl and Schutz develop in their own ways a foundationalist interpretation of the life-world. In whatever case, the book seeks to overcome any foundationalism whether in the form of universalism or culturalism by suggesting to refocus and inquire into the status of cultural objects. Universals are ill-suited for cultural matters. Correlatively, considering cultural objects from alien cultures requires acknowledging difference with a sense of humility that does not preclude the possibility of understanding.

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Both cultural universalism and cultural particularism can be found in the phenomenological movement which relates cultural difference to the phenomenological notion of the life-world. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) are typical representatives of the cultural universalistic and cultural particularistic outlooks, respectively. This book aims to elaborate these two positions in the frameworks of Husserl and Schutz. After elaborating their two positions, I will then introduce the critical perspective of Bernhard Waldenfels.

Husserl has dealt with the problem of cultural difference and cultivated the position of cultural universalism in his phenomenological thinking. He insists on the idea of universalism that originates in ancient Greek and he demonstrates this idea of universalism through the discourse of the life-world. Even though Husserl does not deny the fact that there are particular cultures which exist side by side to each other, his phenomenology, in particular his transcendental phenomenology, aims at describing the universal structure of the life-world. Husserl is convinced of an underlying commonality between all these particular cultural worlds. His conviction results from his confirmation of a universally valid truth. In this regard we may raise the question: from whence comes such a life-world that is treated as universal? How does Husserl come to this conclusion?

Answering to these questions necessitates a way of handling the life-world. How can we approach the life-world scientifically anyway? Methodologically speaking, Husserl suggests disregarding influences from the objective sciences that are characterized as objectivistic and naturalistic. In other words, Husserl proposes an epoché of the objective sciences, in order to avoid being affected by these sciences. Husserl's confirmation of the life-world is philosophical, which means, the universality of the life-world is not already what it is, but what it should be. Conceived empirically, every culture is different from one another, yet culture should not be regarded only from an empirical perspective, but also from the ideal perspective. Only from the latter perspective, can we speak of universality.

Namely, universality is not a result of induction; it is, instead, the goal or ideal that we aspire to achieve.

Husserl claims that the idea of one universal world was born in ancient Greece. The European culture that inherits this ideal is thus unique in the sense that no other culture, except that of the Greeks, has ever given birth to this idea of universalism. For this reason, Husserl suggests that all other cultures should learn from Europe. Thus, Husserl's cultural discourse harbors undertones of Eurocentrism, which gives rise to many criticisms.

Waldenfels, with help of the Husserlian notions of the homeworld (Heimwelt) and alienworld (Fremdwelt), poses the following question: how do the homeworld and the alienworld relate to each other? Husserl, on the one hand, recognizes the essential difference between the homeworld and the alienworld, but on the other hand he eschews this difference by introducing the idea of "one world for all." Such a world is common to homeworld and alienworld and gives all experiences a first ground (erster Grund) and a last horizon (letzter Horizon). The instrument for setting up this grounding level of meaning is reason (Vernunft). For Husserl, Europe is a geographical name for a comprehensive form of rationality. Europe understands itself as "the guardian of the common world" (Vorhut einer Gemeinwelt) that is to be characterized by universality. Europeans have created the standards and ideals for all cultures, and their right belief and right reason derives from these standards. Measured by these European standards, all the accomplishments of other cultures are seen to be pre-rational or even primitive. The non-European should learn from the European and become European so their accomplishments are not eliminated in the history of reason (Vernunftgeschichte).

Through such a rational overcoming of otherness (Fremdheit), an otherness that is presumed to characterize non-European cultures, the Europeans, paradoxically, lose sight of otherness. Waldenfels takes this blindness of otherness to be a considerable deficiency in European culture. He questions whether it is fair to treat the European order as the only order and suggests, instead, that other cultures could construct their own standards and ideals and integrate the accomplishments of the European into their own orders. This so-called European culture's neglect of otherness is, indeed, inherent in Husserl's discourse of culture.

The theory of the life-world, as Schutz conceives of it, entails cultural difference. He assumes the life-worldly experience of the human being includes culture automatically. For Schutz, people who share the same system of "appresentational references" make up a certain "in-group" and all other people are considered strangers. Inside the familiar milieu of the in-group, everyone can act and perceive naturally according to their standard shared system of appresentational references and embrace the value and significance of their shared system. When a person leaves this familiar environment and enters a different cultural world, the relevant system stops functioning and things surrounding him are bereft of cultural meanings.

Appresentational references reside in all these culturally significant objects. They may originate in the invention of a particular person or various people in a certain epoch, yet so long as they are commonly accepted by a group of people over time, they help constitute a particular socio-cultural group. In other words, they constitute what people take to be normal. Such normality is basically inaccessible to those who do not belong to this group. In particular, those who refuse to accept that normality will be treated as stranger to this society. Thus, for insiders, the value or significance is inherent in the objects, whereas for outsiders, it is added to these objects. Schutz calls the experience of outsiders the "pure" experience of the life-world. It comes up automatically when one is unable to catch the meaning of cultural objects. For example, if someone cannot grasp the meaning of an abstract painting, all that he perceives is nothing but some lines, colors and shapes. This situation demonstrates that the appresentative references fail to function at this moment.

Although Schutz's notion of the life-world is basically characterized by cultural difference, he shares with Husserl the idea of universalism when referring to "universal symbolism." Schutz argues that

certain features are common to all social worlds since they are rooted in the human condition. It is the task of philosophical anthropology to work out the basic and universal dimensions of the human condition. Schutz's understanding of cultural difference is thus ambivalent. If we take cultural difference to be a consequent interpretation of the life-world, then how can the idea of universalism be integrated into his understanding of cultural difference? Does Schutz want to argue that a grounding layer of a single life-world exists instead of many concrete life-worlds? Schutz's idea of universality is similar to that of Husserl's. Although Schutz clearly rejects the notion that the pure experience of perception is the essential life-world experience, he does seem to share with Husserl the idea of grounding (Grundlegungsidee) — an idea which Waldenfels, later, highlights.

Is there a cultural universalism that can plausibly incorporate cultural difference? This should be a perpetual question that remains to be answered from epoch to epoch. This book ventures to deal with this question by reflecting on the problem of cultural objects. How do we encounter cultural objects in a culture different from our own? The answers given by Husserl and Schutz are not satisfying so long as they rely on the natural or pure aspect of those cultural objects. They fail to see that the experience of encountering cultural objects from different cultures may call on us to learn from others and broaden our own horizon. Universals are ill-suited for cultural matters, after all. Correlatively, considering cultural objects from alien cultures requires acknowledging difference with a sense of humility that does not preclude the possibility of understanding. <>

RELIGION AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE by Gavin Flood [Oxford University Press, 9780198836124]

RELIGION AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE considers how religion as the source of civilization transforms the fundamental bio-sociology of humans through language and the somatic exploration of religious ritual and prayer. Gavin Flood offers an integrative account of the nature of the human, based on what contemporary scientists tell us, especially evolutionary science and social neuroscience, as well as through the history of civilizations. Part one contemplates fundamental questions and assumptions: what the current state of knowledge is concerning life itself; what the philosophical issues are in that understanding; and how we can explain religion as the driving force of civilizations in the context of human development within an evolutionary perspective. It also addresses the question of the emergence of religion and presents a related study of sacrifice as fundamental to religions' views about life and its transformation. Part two offers a reading of religions in three civilizational blocks--India, China, and Europe/the Middle East--particularly as they came to formation in the medieval period. It traces the history of how these civilizations have thematised the idea of life itself. Part three then takes up the idea of a life force in part three and traces the theme of the philosophy of life through to modern times. On the one hand, the book presents a narrative account of life itself through the history of civilizations, and on the other presents an explanation of that narrative in terms of life.

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In William Golding's novel *The Spire*, the protagonist, the Dean Jocelyn, sets out to build the tallest spire of any cathedral hitherto constructed, but there are grave concerns that the foundations will not be deep enough, and the spire will topple. Jocelyn's vision for a new architecture in a new age and his aspiration at the edge of human imagination seems an appropriate image for current human aspiration for a better future realized through technology; we are living through a period of rapid change in understanding the nature of the human and in shaping the future in response to challenges from the environment, from new technology, from population density, and from global economic remodelling; and all this set within the ongoing complexity of, as always, lamentable human politics. In this new context, there is a reshaping of the intellectual landscape with rapid progress in the hard sciences that to some extent is influencing the humanities, with scientists reflecting on their work in the light of humanistic concerns. While each has its distinct sphere of operation, there is a case for humanist disciplines themselves, including the social sciences, to move beyond what we might call the linguistic paradigm and social constructivism towards building models and accounts of the human based on knowledge gleaned from the hard sciences but read through the lens of humanism, in the broad sense, or the *humanum*. This is not to give way to any kind of hegemony of natural science over the humanities, but rather to use knowledge in the service of understanding (and we might even say in the service of *phronesis*).

With this background in mind, this book seeks both to address a problem and to tell a story. The problem is the relation of life to religion, or the explanation of religion as it has developed in the history of civilizations, within the framework of understanding life itself. This is a problem, first, because the nature of religion is much contested, with some scholars even questioning whether it is a viable category; and second, because the nature of life, its place in the universe, and whether we can even speak of life itself are much contested. There are many stakeholders in these debates from those who wish to make claims about a particular religious perspective and see value in religion, to those who wish to see the demise of religion as a human good on ethical and political grounds. This book addresses the issue of religion by offering an explanatory account grounded in the nature of the kind of beings that we are, in our biology and specifically in the idea of life itself, while at the same time recognizing complexity and the necessity of a humanistic account. The story the book tells is the way life itself has been conceptualized and understood in the history of religions and the philosophies of life that have driven civilizations. The double nature of this project is intimately connected, as 'explanation' shows us that human beings have an innate pro-sociality that can be traced deep into our hominin past, while the 'narrative' of religions shows us that human beings have developed institutions and forms of inwardness that support human pro-sociality. I present a combination of explanation and narrative because of the necessary acceptance of the complexity of human reality and of life itself, and as such this work is not an eliminative reductionism. Philosophies of life have developed within civilizations to account for such complexity, in particular advancing the theme of life itself as the foundation of human reality.

The book considers how religion as the source of civilization transforms human bio-sociology through language and through the somatic exploration of ritual, meditation, and prayer. After outlining an account of current ideas about the theory of life (biology) and the philosophy of life, the

book goes on to present a narrative of the ways in which life itself has been understood in the histories of three civilizational blocks—India, China, and Europe/the Middle East—particularly as they came to formation in the medieval period. It then develops the story into secular philosophy up to the present, integrating this with an argument for the explanation of religion in terms of life itself, rooted in the bio-sociology of human life: an integration of classical, religious worldviews with modern natural science. This is important because religions remain central to human life in much of the world and have been the creative resources for civilizations, as well as destructive powers that have threatened the human future.

Writing this book has necessitated that I venture into areas where I have relied entirely on the scholarship of others—such as Chinese civilization—but in all of these fields, I have presented a narrative and offered description in the service of my argument about life itself as the wellspring and resource for these histories. While I regard this project as a humanistic account of religion and its place in human life, I wish to absorb what current science tells us about the world and what current knowledge shows us about ourselves. Such an account accepts the integrity and relevance of personal and interpersonal understandings of meaning as well as impersonal or third-person explanations of reality. As such, some may regard it as too conciliatory to religious understandings of person and world, while for others it may be regarded as too conciliatory to scientific accounts, thereby missing the importance of theological understanding. But I regard this position to be a strength, as understanding the meanings of human life must continue to absorb current knowledge, while still operating within a humanistic discourse. The existential primacy of human freedom as one frame for understanding life itself needs to be integrated with the frame provided by the sciences: life in the singular seen in two ways. Such a view is not antithetical to theology, although the theologies of religions will need to absorb current knowledge of person and world if they are to remain relevant. Indeed, although not my task, this is imperative in order to avoid destructive fundamentalisms (both religious and secular) that denude human life.

The opening quotations reflect the assertion of life, as articulated by Blake, that must be balanced by the reality of death, as articulated in the responsory of John Sheppard. That life entails death and vice versa is a startlingly simple truth that must always govern what we say about life itself.

At one level, the book presents a methodological agnosticism regarding the referents of the traditions it discusses, the gods and supernatural forces of the religions, while at another level it implicitly takes the view that the contemporary sciences offer descriptions of the universe more adequate to the data. Furthermore, the book wishes to develop a kind of abductive argument concerning life itself as the animating force of civilizations. We know more now about the universe we live in than our ancestors, but perhaps we don't know much more than they about how to conduct our lives, and, as they have always been, the metaphysical structures we inhabit are tenuous and subject to revision.

This book therefore offers an interdisciplinary link between religion, science, and philosophy. It is intended to speak to a number of audiences: to those within the religion and science debate, including theologians; to those in the study of religions, including scholars involved in the comparative history of traditions; and to philosophers and intellectual historians of life. This is a broad range of people and I hope that those involved in these disciplines will find some contribution to debate in the book's pages. At the end of the day, we are creatures orientated towards a future that always exceeds us, constrained by the limitations of time and place, while, like Jocelyn's spire, defying gravity.

Philosophical Implications

The general thesis that religions are the transformation of the bio-energy of face-to-face social cognition is, as we have seen, an empirical/historical claim about bio-sociology, but also a philosophical claim insofar as we can begin to articulate its implications for the way we understand the human; there is an implicit philosophy of humanity here which is also a philosophy of life. The data of social cognition and its transformation in religion implies a realist ontology that we can understand in terms of a non-dualist vitalism. The idea that religions function to provide social bonding is, of course, close to Durkheim, but differs from Durkheim in drawing the claim from recent scientific knowledge of social cognition and wishing to emphasize not only sociology and the group function of religion but also phenomenology and the individual experience of religion. Similarly, the position is close to Luhmann insofar as religions can be seen as autopoietic communication systems that are self-regulating and rooted in human biology, but again wishing to bring religion back from a purely systems theory approach to an emphasis on the person (Luhmann's 'psychic systems') and the second-person relationality thereby entailed. We must necessarily bring explanation into the realm of phenomenology, but a hermeneutical phenomenology that recognizes the particularity of location in space and time and the particularity of the interpersonal.

There is then a symbiosis between religion as system, as a higher-level communication-generating and bonding process, and religion as personal experience, although always historical, that enacts or performs the practice of religion, transforming bio-energy into action. Because of the necessity of historical location, the need to begin the study of religion with the historical as Heidegger insightfully observed, experience is always necessarily interpreted.

If the face-to-face encounter is the primary human experience biologically rooted in mother-child connection, then this is always mediated through language (as Ricoeur teaches us) and through the mechanism of the higherorder system (such as religion). There are a number of philosophical implications here, perhaps first the phenomenological and post-phenomenological understanding that we are embodied, both mind and body in world (as many philosophers and cultural theorists have now emphasized, particularly Merleau-Ponty, Streets-Johnson, Varela, and Csordas). Second, in an embodied understanding of religion, language is central as the medium of communication, particularly the mechanism of identification between person and system. Third, religion as the transformation of bio-energy entails a realism and a materialism that articulates with contemporary science but that maintains continuities with the cultural philosophies. Religion as social cognition is in sympathy with new realist philosophies now emerging and re-establishes seeing religion in terms of process, in terms of life itself, and in terms of human transformation. I need to say something about them here.

(I) That mind and body are integrated within a single system or person is widely, although not universally, accepted in philosophy and neurobiology. The structure of human neurobiology is reflected in consciousness and consciousness reflected in our neurobiology. This is hardly surprising but important insofar as the integration of mind and body in relation to religion points to the importance of practice; that action affects mind or rather action and cognition form an inseparable unity. In his later thoughts Husserl recognized the importance of the lifeworld that consciousness was part of, but that could reflexively stand outside and inquire into its origins. The possibility of such true distancing was questioned by later phenomenologists, particularly Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, although even their thinking has come under critical scrutiny for remaining theoretical and not pragmatic enough in their understanding because reflection, for Varela and his colleagues, is itself experience. This view is in consonance with Deleuze's field of immanence previously discussed, where each particularity, being integrated into a system, speaks with a single voice, a univocity. Within this cluster of philosophical views—integrationist and immanentist philosophies of life—there is generally a strong non-dualist claim about the integration of consciousness and neurobiology as embodied act. This is important for understanding religion as

primarily focused on practice that is considered transformative of person and community. Through liturgical movement, through prayer, fasting, and meditation, through pilgrimage, and through social action people enact religion and integrate themselves into religion as system.

(2) Second, in the integration of embodied person into system—another way of putting this would be the appropriation of system by person—language forms a crucial dimension. Through language the integrated mind-body system establishes a deep connection to tradition. Language is shared by everyone: it is an objective system (langue) that is also my own (parole), as the Structuralists long ago observed. One of the important ways to understand this is through pragmatics, the inquiry of the ways in which language functions in the world. Of particular importance is indexicality and the way the first-person pronoun brings with it the identification of person with tradition, which is crucial to identity formation. Urban has convincingly argued for the importance of the 'indexical-I', the first-person pronoun used by all human beings, that in different social circumstances comes to be identified with the 'I of discourse', the 'I' implicit within text or tradition. In Urban's account there is a spectrum of use of the first person from ordinary indexicality indicating, for example, desire ('I want that') to possession by a god in which indexicality is overwhelmed by another presence, by another 'I'.⁴⁹ Between the indexical-I and possession are various degrees of identification of the first person with the I of discourse, thus we have theatre in which the indexical-I is partially subsumed by the I of discourse (the actor takes on the role) or poetry in which the indexical-I identifies with the poem. In one sense we are seldom ourselves, much of the time being identified with an I of discourse. This is important because it shows the mechanism whereby identities are formed. Strong identification of the I with tradition can lead to a person, perhaps, undertaking roles that they would not in other circumstances. The overwhelming of the indexical-I by a narrative of martyrdom might lead someone to become a suicide bomber, for example.

(3) The orientation presented here thirdly implies a realism and philosophical materialism that is not positivism but nevertheless takes seriously materiality and responds to cultural philosophies of postmodernity of a previous generation. The realism of understanding religion in terms of social cognition is not a crude materialism. Rather, it implies that the bio-energy of life itself is articulated through human social cognition. This is a position that seeks to meet religion and explain religion on its own level through maintaining that this understanding cannot be reduced to biology, but neither can it be reduced to consciousness. The true understanding of religion lies in this realm of embodied cognition that exceeds both genetics and consciousness because it operates at a higher level of system. The bio-energy of life is a force that cannot be explained purely biologically, but nor can it be accounted for in consciousness because it clearly exceeds it. Religion as the transformation of bio-energy entails a new mode of explanation that draws on both the natural and human sciences. Indeed, there could even be theologies of embodied action that assume the transformation of bio-energy that we are discussing. We might say religion is a way that life thinks itself, a reflection not restricted to consciousness but articulated through action and practice in a process that is open because enacted through time. Terry Pinkard makes a point from Hegel, that religions are forms of self-reflection through symbols and stories, through which, for Hegel, the spirit knows itself as spirit. The form that religious reflection takes, its representation (Vorstellung), which includes religious practice, is a way of moving 'individual agents out of their natural, egoistic state (their merely personal point of view) into a communal state in which they accept reasons, obligations and proscriptions that for them place objective limits on belief and action'. In modernity this, for Hegel, is a move from the 'unhappy consciousness' of the pre-modern world that has lost faith in itself to the modern secularity of a religion of morality, an insight that reflects the shift to a regnant disenchantment in the modern North Atlantic, along with the possibility of a transformed sociality in the future. If religions contain closed eschatologies (and arguably they do), then understanding religion as the articulation of life itself entails a challenge to traditional religions in implying an open

eschatological explanation of religion. An infinitely open universe, as contemporary physics claims, requires an infinitely open notion of life that can account for the eschatological structures that have transformed that bio-energy of life and that have been necessary structures in the development of the human experiment.

In sum, to return to our opening question of how we can account for the persistence of religion, we can say that religions are still forms of life that give meaning to human communities and provide ways of living and dying. They form and influence life in the unrepeatable nature of the ethical act—they constrain people's choices—and in the non-identical repetition of the ritual act—they lay claim to the social space enacted in repeated acts of worship and meditation. That the churches are emptying in much of northern Europe does not indicate the demise of religion; indeed analogous forms of culture will inevitably develop that lay claim to the face-to-face and attempt to control social cognition. Of course, other societal patterns can do this—even secular practices of socialization such as sport or the shared experience of plastic art or music—but only religions are cultural forms with historical depth and semantic density that to date have successfully negotiated and developed the primacy of the human encounter. It seems to be the case that other forms of cultural life are developing in which people choose different aspects of religion to engage with and people might participate in more than one religion in the modern world.⁵³ If religions are central to human communities because they stem from life itself and reflexively control social cognition, then religious studies as a critical discipline is crucial for understanding these cultural forms, both in terms of cognition and the processes in the brain that accompany religious activity, and in terms of cultural production and the representation of communities and people.

Modernity and the Life of Holiness

I have told a long story about the category of life itself, of the human desire for life, of human longing, of the need for repair, and of how civilizations have sought to address this need through the religions that have driven them and the philosophies that have guided them. The endpoint we have arrived at, although not the end of the story, is an ending in which life itself articulated through civilizations can be understood in terms of repair that can be envisaged as a kind of holiness of life, a bringing of human reality into an intensity of life, and a repairing of shattered communication. This intensity is human integration of life itself into modes of culture at the level of linguistic consciousness. We might say that civilization and the religion that drives it have bridged the evolutionary gap between a pre-linguistic mode of being human and the linguistic one facilitated through the neo-cortex articulated in the structures of civilization. Reflecting this distinction, I have attempted to integrate two modern accounts of human life into a coherence: on the one hand, a tradition of humanist, particularly philological, scholarship on traditions within the broad parameters of Indic, Chinese, and European/Middle Eastern civilizations, and on the other, a tradition of scientific, particularly evolutionary discourse about human life. It seems to me that we need both humanism and science to offer descriptions adequate to the complexity of life in human history and the ways in which civilizations have attempted to repair the human condition. These are distinct modes of description within which to frame both the constraints on human reality along with its freedom. Throughout this story we have seen how the human desire for life has been commonly recognized as a deep human trait and how this desire is transposed as a longing for completion, fulfilment, or even redemption. The religions directly address this desire that is related to a desire for meaning in life. But what are we to do once religions are no more? What cultural forms address the desire for life and the need for repair? What is the human future without religions?

It seems to be certain that in what Charles Taylor has called the North Atlantic region, traditional religions, particularly Christianity, are in rapid decline and the churches are emptying.¹ This is not the case, however, outside of this world in Asia, South America, and Africa where Christianity and Islam in particular are growing. Nor must we forget the individualistic spirituality in the North

Atlantic world developing in the wake of Christianity's decline.' I have argued in this book that civilizations have sought repair of the human through the great edifices of religion and have claimed that an important explanation of this is rooted in our evolutionary history and human niche construction. Civilizations have developed as a kind of niche for the protection not so much of the genotype as the phenotype as the driver of evolutionary change. The linguistic creatures that we are, allowed by the development of the language-bearing neocortex, has been at odds with the deeper and older social cognition that takes us more immediately into life. The repair that civilizations seek is also to address the desire for life itself and to bring linguistic consciousness into harmony with social cognition. Once religions cease, there is nevertheless still the need for repair and human fulfilment, the human longing for meaning and place. In a thought-provoking book Marcel Gauchet sees religion in terms of a negation of an established order that has allowed freedom to critique the political and has developed a strong notion of the individual. But even for him, 'the religious after religion' will still have a place within human subjectivity where it functions to provide meaning in the face of the discontinuity of religion's social function. This will be 'a major source for cultural innovation'.³ But it is not clear how the post-religion world will address deeper questions of human meaning and belonging; the human desire for life in the face of death that erases any trace of our presence. The life of holiness that all religions have conceptualized in some form as something to be cultivated will remain, although traditional lives of holiness will be lived through individual choice in the secularized world rather than as an institutionalized goal.

The question of life itself in relation to the living along with the human desire for life has shifted in modernity from the imaginal realm of mediation between human and divine fostered in religions, in the Religious Cosmic Model (RCM), to a contraction of imagination or rather a re-configuring of the imaginal through technology, and a dominance of 'the screen' as a primary mode of human interaction with the world and fellow humans (in the Galilean Mathematical Model (GMM)). The contemporary, disenchanted citizen of the globe is a buffered self that has largely replaced the cosmological, porous self of pre-modernity.' Certainly rapid developments in technological innovation have led some thinkers to envisage a post-human future encapsulated by one of the founders of this ideal, Donna Haraway's concept of the human as cyborg in which the organic and the mechanistic are fused,' and in a condition almost in which questions of meaning are redundant. This vision of the future is itself a proposal for human self-repair. More immediately and more practically, developments in science raise questions about human meaning through new possibilities in biomedicine. Helga Nowotny raises important questions about reinventing the human in the molecular age and about human value in relation to bioethical questions. In contemporary research, life has a 'new visibility' through molecular biology that allows interventions into life processes, such as cloning or the transfer of cell nuclei, which would not have been possible, or thinkable, in the past. In the new world of the molecular, old distinctions between knowledge and application, science and technology, are outdated: 'Under the hegemony of the molecular glance, knowledge has become action. Today the fact is that understanding life means changing life.

It is possible, thinks Nowotny, that we stand on the brink 'of an epochal rupture in the history of humankind' in that the rapid developments in assisted reproductive technologies mean that for the first time humans have control over their future genetic inheritance, and drugs are developed to increase happiness and achievement, from cognitive enhancers such as Modafinil and Ritalin to modifiers of somatic states such as Viagra and Prozac. These developments that offer a biochemical route to a better life are parallel in many ways to the goal of human self-repair. Perhaps with the demise of traditional religions in the secularized North Atlantic, new technologies (other than prayer, fasting, and liturgy) seek to enhance life and to bring us into deeper contact with life. The distinction between vitalism and mechanism breaks down in the molecular age. These new technologies challenge traditional religions' solutions to the need for self-repair through re-

conceptualizing what a person is and through new imaginings of the universe at a molecular level. The universe that science took over from the cosmos of religion, beginning in the seventeenth century, has now reached a point of modelling reality and changing reality in radically new ways that undermine old certainties and dualities (such as culture vs. nature, male vs. female, human vs. animal). Bioethical discourse has become a political process that 'undermines the cultural plausibility of the code of meaning that religions can offer'.⁹ The emergent new meanings generated by new research inform a public that in a globalizing world people can become citizens who imagine life in new ways and whose desire for life is transformed into specific wants for life enhancement. New technology allows us to be 'somatic individuals' in a world in which traditional eschatologies have been abandoned by the educated elites and freedom of choice—and choices that are not trivial but potentially significant in life enhancement—is privileged over conformity to normative, religious regulation.

Nikolas Rose has called the contemporary potential for transformation of the human condition 'ethopolitics', 'the self-techniques by which human beings should judge and act upon themselves to make themselves better than they are.' That is, ethopolitics aspires to human self-repair perhaps as the latest development in civilization to address this need. Although traditional religions may pass away—and religion itself could be a purely historical phenomenon with a beginning and an end, as Gauchet thinks—then there still remains the need to address the question of satisfying the desire for life or healing the broken consciousness of human lives. Ethopolitics has developed to address these questions of the meaning of life, and coalesces around a new vitalism that sees value in life itself. Rose expresses the issue quite well when he writes:

While ethopolitical concerns range from those of life-style to community, they coalesce around a kind of vitalism, disputes over the value accorded to life itself: 'quality of life,' 'the right to life,' or 'the right to choose,' euthanasia, gene therapy, human cloning and the like. This biological ethopolitics—the politics of how we should conduct ourselves appropriately in relation to ourselves, and in our responsibilities for the future—forms the milieu within which novel forms of authority are taking shape.

These novel forms of authority are not the traditional authority of religions but experts in various scientific technologies and a range of 'somatic experts' keen to offer advice on living life to the full. Developments in expertise that has been emerging over the last half-century in the West are sometimes linked to new forms of religion and spirituality, such as what Paul Heelas has called 'the self-religions' and the New Age focus on self-actualization," in which the orientation is to the individual over the collective, to ease of life over ascetic striving, to experience over conceptualization.

Such new forms of authority, de-centred and individualistic, assume a new kind of political order and perhaps an emergent global community or global civilization that is probably moving forward inexorably, in spite of counter-globalization forces and a politics of retrenchment that is a worldwide phenomenon at the time of writing. If we can analyse political orders into ideal types, then we might argue that there are two axes or lines of demarcation along which political systems can be plotted. A horizontal axis of political power or political system that denotes the degree of the centralization of power such that there could be strong or weak centralization, and a vertical axis of the law or legislative system that denotes the degree and strength of legislation. There is sometimes conflict or tension between the two axes of power. Thus, according to such a grid, where there is a system of strong centralization and strong legislature we might call an autocracy—or a theocracy—in contrast to a system of weak or no centralization and weak legislature that is really an anarchy. Peter Kropotkin's optimistic view of human nature saw this eradication of the state and of law to be the ideal utopian community, whereas in reality we have dysfunctional states where the law of the strongest rules. Strong centralization and weak legislature likewise results in a somewhat

dysfunctional state as centralized power, as in a tyrant or dictator, is not regulated or controlled by law. The opposite here would be a strong legislature combined with weak centralization in which power is distributed across a field of local networks. This is democracy in varying degrees.

It seems to me that weak centralization along with a fairly robust legislature is conducive to pluralism and the kind of de-centralized authority that Rose implies. The emergent global civilization would need strong legislation to regulate excesses of free market capitalism, but would also need to be de-centralized to allow power for local communities to make decisions about cultural values and ways of living. Such a system might augur contraction of the importance of the nation state and a re-affirmation of the importance of the city, as Aristotle thought. In terms of the theme of life itself and the repair of human life, it could be that weak centralization and strong legislation allow for human enhancement within a legal framework that protects human rights. Problems emerge, of course, over who decides the legislation within a particular state and what controls the legislation. In the realm of biotechnology, religious constraints are clearly an important issue and religions are important stakeholders in the formation of legislation that affects people's lives, from legislature about stem cell research to abortion laws.

Living a life of holiness to facilitate human repair within this context is a challenge for those committed to particular religious views, but the broader idea that human beings seek self-repair through the structures that have developed to nurture their communities is salient. Religions are systems that unify, yet they are exclusive; but the social cognition system that religions access is universally inclusive. Indeed, I have made a case for seeing civilizations as human niche constructions for human self-repair that have evolved from our biology, but that exceed that biology. The affirmation of life as more than simply survival, or even as more than simply pleasure, has been a constant struggle through history, and we have seen how this struggle has played out in the histories of three civilizations and has also been articulated in secular philosophies of life. Religions as the drivers of civilizations in earlier eras have offered philosophies of life to articulate and even explain human alienation and prescribe practices of life to offer repair and cultivate holiness. The holiness of life that religions have developed, while being specific to each, shares a sense of compassion and openness to future possibility. While religions, as we have seen, are not all the same, they do share ways of addressing the desire for life and bringing people into the fullness of life which, I have argued, is partly explained through the integration of our linguistic apparatus with social cognition. The Dalai Lama and the Pope are revered by their followers as holy men, and exemplify modes of existence whereby the universality of their philosophies of life comes to articulation in the specificity of their action. Both have completely different understandings of the cosmos, but both share a common vision of humanity as having a potential fullness of life that militates against destruction. It is not an issue of particular persons—whether the Pope or the Dalai Lama really are exemplars of true holiness—but rather a structural claim that religions at their best function to intensify life. At their worst they destroy life and contract human reality to a shadow of what it could be. The holiness of life is, I think, what Derrida meant by the politics of love that I referred to earlier, as a necessity for modern civilization and a necessary condition for any far distant future in which self-repair is achieved as 'A condition of complete simplicity', where 'all shall be well and / All manner of things shall be well', 'with the drawing of the Love and the voice of this calling'. <>

HOW REASON CAN LEAD TO GOD: A PHILOSOPHER'S BRIDGE TO FAITH by Joshua Rasmussen [IVP Academic, 9780830852529]

Do you seek the truth? Do you value reason, science, and independent thinking? Are you skeptical of beliefs that people maintain merely "on faith," yet you remain interested in the big questions of life? Do you hope there could be a greater purpose to the universe, if only that were realistic? If so, then philosopher Joshua Rasmussen can encourage you in your journey. Beginning with his own story of losing faith and the belief in any ultimate purpose in life, he then builds a bridge to a series of universal truths about ultimate reality. Using only the instruments of reason and common experience, Rasmussen constructs a pathway—step by step, brick by brick—that he argues can lead to meaning and, ultimately, a vision of God.

Reviews

"Rasmussen's book is destined to be a modern classic. Rasmussen combines simplicity, clarity, and depth to an extraordinary degree, resulting in a book that makes some of the most advanced work in contemporary philosophical theology accessible to the general reader, without sacrificing any logical precision. Rasmussen's style is winsome and engaging, drawing the reader into a thrilling adventure of metaphysical investigation of the existence and nature of reality's ultimate foundation." — (Robert Koons, professor of philosophy, University of Texas at Austin)

"This short book contains a bold, original, and provocative argument that shows how reason can lead a person who is genuinely seeking truth to God. It is written in simple, ordinary language and makes no appeal to authority. Although Rasmussen appeals only to truths that he thinks should be universally accepted, a good deal of the force of the book stems from the personal story of Rasmussen himself; his courage and honesty draw the reader into a similar journey." — (C. Stephen Evans, university professor of philosophy and humanities, Baylor University)

"**HOW REASON CAN LEAD TO GOD: A PHILOSOPHER'S BRIDGE TO FAITH** is beautifully written. It is truly exceptional in its clarity and simplicity of prose. While some concepts and arguments may be difficult to digest, the interested reader, up for a rigorous, intellectual workout, will be very richly rewarded. Engaging. Humble. Winsome. Rasmussen strikes just the right tone given the aim(s) of the book. A real gem!" — (Kevin Corcoran, professor of philosophy, Calvin College)

"Rasmussen provides a masterpiece argument for God. He delivers every step in a clear and engaging style. Powerful. Beautiful. Transformative." — (William Lane Craig, professor of philosophy, Talbot School of Theology and Houston Baptist University, coauthor of *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*)

"Rasmussen's superb and unique book provides arguments that are deep, convincing, expressed with admirable clarity, and informed by the very latest in philosophical thought." — (Alexander R. Pruss, director of graduate studies and professor, department of philosophy, Baylor University)

"Professor Rasmussen is a top Christian philosopher, a deeply devoted believer, and a longtime personal friend. He identifies his primary audience as a skeptic who cares about truth, is interested in life's big questions, and believes only what can be supported by reason. And Rasmussen hits the bull's-eye. Along with *Mere Christianity*, *How Reason Can Lead to God* is the book to give to such a person. But don't let this aim fool you. This book is a must-read for believers who love philosophy

or apologetics. You will learn a ton by reading this book, and by reading it your ability to think will be vastly increased. The flow of Rasmussen's argument for God is developed with such precision and care that, quite frankly, it could not be improved. I am so excited about *How Reason Can Lead to God* and can't wait to see its impact. So put on your thinking hat, buy it, and study it carefully." — (J. P. Moreland, distinguished professor of philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, author of *Scientism and Secularism*)

"HOW REASON CAN LEAD TO GOD: A PHILOSOPHER'S BRIDGE TO FAITH is an extraordinary book. Rasmussen builds, piece by piece, a bridge from the basic structures of reality to God. This work is meticulously structured. Rasmussen's writing style fits perfectly with the project. He is clear, careful, and patient. He never jumps to a conclusion. He considers objections fairly and engages them thoughtfully. This is simply the best philosophical defense of theism I have read in a long while. But, it is more than a defense of theism. It is a guided tour through the foundations of metaphysics." — (Gregory E. Ganssle, professor of philosophy at Biola University, author of *Our Deepest Desires: How the Christian Story Fulfills Human Aspiration*)

"A magnificent and prodigious talent as deft in analytic skill as he is adept at uncommon common sense, Joshua Rasmussen has produced a disarming, brilliant, bridge-building book that renders the recondite accessible. It takes readers on a fascinating journey, inviting them to think for themselves, try out his arguments, and come to their own conclusions. He is a remarkable philosopher in the best and old-fashioned sense: respecting his readers; asking vitally important, existentially central questions; rigorously following the evidence where it leads; animated by deep confidence in the revelatory power of reason to show the way. Any genuine seeker of wisdom and truth will find in these pages an eminent kindred spirit and faithful fellow traveler." — (David Baggett, coauthor of *The Morals of the Story: Good News About a Good God*)

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You value reason, science, and independent thinking. You question beliefs propped up by "faith" without sufficient evidence. Maybe you would like your life to have a deeper purpose, but you cannot believe something based on a mere wish. Whether you are a student, an academic, or just a curious person, you want one thing: the truth. If you can relate, this book is for you.

You might worry that this book is not about truth, not really. From the title, you might wonder whether I might be trying to use reason to rationalize a prior conclusion. Am I trying to contort

"truth" to fit with my convictions? Am I interested in facing reality, even if it contradicts my desires or existing framework? Am I willing to be wrong? If you have these questions, this book is especially for you. I want you to ask these questions. They are the mark of an explorer. They are the questions that sparked my own journey, which ultimately led me to write this book.

I want this book to serve you no matter what perspective you come from. My purpose is not to knock you over with arguments or to suggest that you can only be rational if you agree with my viewpoint. Instead, I want to share with you some of the steps in my own journey in the hope that those steps may encourage you in yours.

My reason for writing this book is to mark out a pathway, step by step, that can inspire a greater vision of the ultimate foundation of everything.

I begin with a story of my own journey. Then I begin the project of constructing a bridge of reason for your examination and exploration.

In the final chapters, I examine common questions about evil and suffering that can present obstacles to the destination.

While our inquiry will reach to the deepest layer of reality, I aim to make this book as readable as I can. Thus, I seek to replace all technical jargon with commonsense definitions in ordinary language. I never rest an argument on scholarly authority. Instead, I use the instruments of reason and common experience to serve you in your quest.

In my effort to maximize the value of this bridge, I follow three construction rules:

- Rule 1. Make it inclusive: use materials—reason and experience—that are accessible to a wide audience, so you can check each piece.
- Rule 2. No guessing: build each part on principles that you can see to be true.
- Rule 3. Aim to serve: make a bridge that you can make your own—to analyze, reorganize, and build upon further.

Enjoy the journey. <>

<>

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Connectedness: An Incomplete Encyclopedia of the Anthropocene edited by Marianne Krogh, some contributing authors: Greta Thunberg, Diana Coole, Kirsten Halsnaes, Dehlia Hannah, Connie Hedegaard, Bill McKibben, Timothy Morton, Minik Rosing, Darren Sharpe, Superflex, Marianne Krogh [Strandberg Publishing, 9788793604865]

Surveying humanity's impact on the planet, with contributions from Donna Haraway, Bill McKibben, Greta Thunberg, Bruno Latour, Alice Waters and others

This timely book, in the form of an encyclopedia, considers the totality of issues surrounding the Anthropocene, that geologic era characterized by humanity's vast impact on the Earth.

Connectedness acknowledges the incomplete nature of its project seeing as how this riotous era is not yet finished. With contributions by Greta Thunberg, Bill McKibben, Alice Waters, Tomás Saraceno, Björk and many others, this publication consists of approximately 100 entries, arranged alphabetically, each reflecting on questions, phenomena, terms, possibilities and theories associated with the Anthropocene. Examples of entries include Air, Borders and Coexistence, as well as more complex subjects such as Donna Haraway on the Chthulucene or Anders Blok on Climate Risk Communities. The content ranges from scientific to cultural-theoretical and artistic contributions featuring a wide span of scholars, philosophers, anthropologists, scientists, authors, artists and others. The book accompanies the exhibition at the Danish Pavilion at the 2020 Venice Architectural Biennale. <>

Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures by Merlin Sheldrake [Random House; Illustrated Edition, 9780525510314]

A mind-bending journey into the hidden universe of fungi, “one of those rare books that can truly change the way you see the world around you” (Helen Macdonald, author of *H Is for Hawk*).

“Dazzling, vibrant, vision-changing . . . a remarkable work by a remarkable writer, which succeeds in springing life into strangeness again.”—Robert Macfarlane, author of *Underland*

When we think of fungi, we likely think of mushrooms. But mushrooms are only fruiting bodies, analogous to apples on a tree. Most fungi live out of sight, yet make up a massively diverse kingdom of organisms that supports and sustains nearly all living systems. Fungi provide a key to understanding the planet on which we live, and the ways we think, feel, and behave.

In **Entangled Life**, the brilliant young biologist Merlin Sheldrake shows us the world from a fungal point of view, providing an exhilarating change of perspective. Sheldrake’s vivid exploration takes us from yeast to psychedelics, to the fungi that range for miles underground and are the largest organisms on the planet, to those that link plants together in complex networks known as the “Wood Wide Web,” to those that infiltrate and manipulate insect bodies with devastating precision.

Fungi throw our concepts of individuality and even intelligence into question. They are metabolic masters, earth makers, and key players in most of life’s processes. They can change our minds, heal our bodies, and even help us remediate environmental disaster. By examining fungi on their own terms, Sheldrake reveals how these extraordinary organisms—and our relationships with them—are changing our understanding of how life works.

Religious Pluralism and the City: Inquiries into Postsecular Urbanism edited by Helmuth Berking, Silke Steets, and Jochen Schwenk [Bloomsbury Studies in Religion, Space and Place, Bloomsbury Academic, 9781350037687]

Religious Pluralism and the City: Inquiries into Postsecular Urbanism challenges the notion that the city is a secular place, and calls for an analysis of how religion and the city are intertwined. It is the first book to analyze the explanatory value of a number of typologies already in

use around this topic – from "holy city" to "secular city", from "fundamentalist" to "postsecular city". By intertwining the city and religion, urban theory and theories of religion, this is the first book to provide an international and interdisciplinary analysis of post-secular urbanism.

The book argues that, given the rise of religiously inspired violence and the increasing significance of charismatic Christianity, Islam and other spiritual traditions, the master narrative that modern societies are secular societies has lost its empirical plausibility. Instead, we are seeing the pluralization of religion, the co-existence of different religious worldviews, and the simultaneity of secular and religious institutions that shape everyday life. These particular constellations of "religious pluralism" are, above all, played out in cities.

Including contributions from Peter L. Berger and Nezar Alsayyad, this book conceptually and empirically revokes the dissolution between city and religion to unveil its intimate relationship, and offers an alternative view on the quotidian state of the global urban condition. <>

RADICAL WORDSWORTH: THE POET WHO CHANGED THE WORLD by Jonathan Bate [Yale University Press, 9780300169645]

On the 250th anniversary of Wordsworth's birth comes an "appealing new biography . . . [that] illuminates Wordsworth's poetic originality." (Brad Leithauser, *Wall Street Journal*) Published in time for the 250th anniversary of William Wordsworth's birth, this is the biography of a great poetic genius, a revolutionary who changed the world. Wordsworth rejoiced in the French Revolution and played a central role in the cultural upheaval that we call the Romantic Revolution.

He and his fellow Romantics changed forever the way we think about childhood, the sense of the self, our connection to the natural environment, and the purpose of poetry. But his was also a revolutionary life in the old sense of the word, insofar as his art was of memory, the return of the past, the circling back to childhood and youth. This beautifully written biography is purposefully fragmentary, momentary, and selective, opening up what Wordsworth called "the hiding-places of my power." <>

Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace: Transnational Circulations, Volume I by Ariane Mildenberg, Patricia Novillo-Corvalán, [Woolf Selected Papers LUP, Clemson University Press, 9781949979350]

Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace: Transnational Circulations enlarges our understanding of Virginia Woolf's pacifist ideology and aesthetic response to the World Wars by re-examining her writings and cultural contexts transnationally and comparatively through the complex interplay between modernism, politics, and aesthetics. The "transnational" paradigm that undergirds this collection revolves around the idea of transnational cultural communities of writers, artists, and musicians worldwide who were intellectually involved in the war effort through the forging of pacifist cultural networks that arose as a form of resistance to war, militarism, and the rise of fascism. The book also offers philosophical approaches to notions of transnational pacifism, anti-war ethics, and decolonization, examining how Woolf's prose undermines center/edge or self/other bifurcations. Breathing new life into Woolf's anti-war writings through a transnational lens and presenting us with the voices and perspectives of a range of significant scholars and critics, the chapters in this volume engage with mobile and circulatory pacifisms, calling attention to the intersections of modernist inquiries across the arts (art, music, literature, and performance) and transnational critical spaces (Asia, Europe, and the Americas) to show how the convergence of different cultural and linguistic horizons can significantly expand and enrich our understanding of Woolf's modernist legacy. <>

Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace: Vol. 2 Aesthetics and Theory by Peter Adkins and Derek Ryan [Woolf Selected Papers LUP, Clemson University Press, 9781949979374]

From the "prying," "insidious" "fingers of the European War" that Septimus Warren Smith would never be free of in *Mrs Dalloway* to the call to "think peace into existence" during the Blitz in "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," questions of war and peace pervade the writings of Virginia Woolf. This volume asks how Woolf conceptualised peace by exploring the various experimental forms she created in response to war and violence. Comprised of fifteen chapters by an international array of leading and emerging scholars, this book both draws out theoretical dimensions of Woolf's modernist aesthetic and draws on various critical frameworks for reading her work, in order to deepen our understanding of her writing about the politics of war, ethics, feminism, class, animality, and European culture.

The chapters collected here look at how we might re-read Woolf and her contemporaries in the light of new theoretical and aesthetical innovations, such as peace studies, post-critique, queer theory, and animal studies. It also asks how we might historicise these frameworks through Woolf's own engagement with the First and Second World Wars, while also bringing her writings on peace into dialogue with those of others in the Bloomsbury Group. In doing so, this volume reassesses the role of Europe and peace in Woolf's work and opens up new ways of reading her oeuvre. [Book not seen] <>

Fanfiction and the Author: How Fanfic Changes Popular Cultural Texts by Judith May Fathallah [Transmedia: Participatory Culture and Media Convergence, Amsterdam University Press, 9789089649959] [Open Source]

The production, reception and discussion of fanfiction is a major aspect of contemporary global media. Thus far, however, the genre has been subject to relatively little rigorous qualitative or quantitative study—a problem that Judith M. Fathallah remedies here through close analysis of fanfiction related to *Sherlock*, *Supernatural*, and *Game of Thrones*. Her large-scale study of the sites, reception, and fan rejections of fanfic demonstrate how the genre works to legitimate itself through traditional notions of authorship, even as it deconstructs the author figure and contests traditional discourses of authority. Through a process she identifies as the 'legitimation paradox', Fathallah demonstrates how fanfic hooks into and modifies the discourse of authority, and so opens new spaces for writing that challenges the authority of media professionals. <>

Comparative Mysticism: An Anthology of Original Sources edited by Steven T. Katz [Oxford University Press, 9780195143799]

This collection of primary texts introduces readers to the mystical literature of the world's great religious traditions. Beginning with an introduction by Steven T. Katz, a leading scholar of mysticism, the anthology comprises poetry, prayer, narrative, and other writings from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist, and Native American traditions.

This collection provides readers not only with the primary mystical texts from each religious tradition, but with an explanation of the context of the source and tradition. *Comparative Mysticism* shows how the great mystical traditions of the world are deeply rooted in the religious traditions from which they originated. The contextual methodological approach taken throughout the anthology also addresses the critical question of what these mystical traditions, at their highest level, have in common. Despite the prevailing view that mystical traditions throughout the world are essentially similar, the presentation of the sources in this volume suggests that, in fact, the various traditions have distinct teachings and different metaphysical goals. <>

The Routledge History of Medieval Magic edited by Sophie Page and Catherine Rider
[Routledge Histories, Routledge, 9781472447302]

The Routledge History of Medieval Magic brings together the work of scholars from across Europe and North America to provide extensive insights into recent developments in the study of medieval magic between c.1100 and c.1500.

This book covers a wide range of topics, including the magical texts which circulated in medieval Europe, the attitudes of intellectuals and churchmen to magic, the ways in which magic intersected with other aspects of medieval culture, and the early witch trials of the fifteenth century. In doing so, it offers the reader a detailed look at the impact that magic had within medieval society, such as its relationship to gender roles, natural philosophy, and courtly culture. This is furthered by the book's interdisciplinary approach, containing chapters dedicated to archaeology, literature, music, and visual culture, as well as texts and manuscripts.

The Routledge History of Medieval Magic also outlines how research on this subject could develop in the future, highlighting under-explored subjects, unpublished sources, and new approaches to the topic. It is the ideal book for both established scholars and students of medieval magic. <>

The Greater & Lesser Worlds of Robert Fludd: Macrocosm, Microcosm & Medicine by Joscelyn Godwin [Inner Traditions, 9781620559499]

An illustrated reference book on a seminal figure of occult philosophy and Renaissance thought

- Explains Fludd's thoughts on cosmic harmonies, divination, the kabbalah, astrology, geomancy, alchemy, the Rosicrucians, and multiple levels of existence
- Includes more than 200 of Fludd's illustrations, representing the whole corpus of Fludd's iconography, each one accompanied by Godwin's expert commentary
- Explores Fludd's medical work as an esoteric Paracelsian physician and his theories on the macrocosm of elements, planets, stars, and subtle and divine beings and the microcosm of the human being and its creative activities, including material never before translated

One of the last Renaissance men, Robert Fludd (1574-1637) was one of the great minds of the early modern period. A physician by profession, he was also a Christian Hermetist, a Rosicrucian, an alchemist, astrologer, musician, and inventor. His drive to encompass the whole of human knowledge--from music to alchemy, from palmistry to fortification--resulted in a series of books remarkable for their hundreds of engravings, a body of work recognized as the first example of a fully-illustrated encyclopedia.

In this in-depth, highly illustrated reference, scholar and linguist Joscelyn Godwin explains Fludd's theories on the correspondence between the macrocosm of elements, planets, stars, and subtle and divine beings and the microcosm of the human being and its creative activities. He shows how Fludd's two worlds--the macrocosm and the microcosm--along with Paracelsus's medical principles and the works of Hermes Trismegistus provided the foundation for his search for the cause and cure of all diseases. The more than 200 illustrations in the book represent the whole corpus of Fludd's iconography, each one accompanied by Godwin's expert commentary and explanation. Sharing many passages translated for the first time from Fludd's Latin, allowing him to speak for himself, Godwin explores Fludd's thoughts on cosmic harmonies, divination, the kabbalah, astrology, geomancy, and the rapport between the multiple levels of existence. He also analyzes Fludd's writings in defense of alchemy and the Rosicrucians. <>

Dante's Bones: How a Poet Invented Italy by Guy P. Raffa [Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 9780674980839]

A richly detailed graveyard history of the Florentine poet whose dead body shaped Italy from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the Risorgimento, World War I, and Mussolini's fascist dictatorship.

Dante, whose *Divine Comedy* gave the world its most vividly imagined story of the afterlife, endured an extraordinary afterlife of his own. Exiled in death as in life, the Florentine poet has hardly rested in peace over the centuries. Like a saint's relics, his bones have been stolen, recovered, reburied, exhumed, examined, and, above all, worshiped. Actors in this graveyard history range from Lorenzo de' Medici, Michelangelo, and Pope Leo X to the Franciscan friar who hid the bones, the stone mason who accidentally discovered them, and the opportunistic sculptor who accomplished what princes, popes, and politicians could not: delivering to Florence a precious relic of the native son it had banished. <>

Mapping the Afterlife: From Homer to Dante by Emma Gee [Oxford University Press, 978-0190670481]

There are very few accounts of the afterlife across the period from Homer to Dante. Most traditional studies approach the classical afterlife from the point of view of its "evolution" towards the Christian afterlife. This book tries to do something different: to explore afterlife narratives in spatial terms and to situate this tradition within the ambit of a fundamental need in human psychology for the synthesis of soul (or "self") and universe. <>

Dante's Philosophical Life: Politics and Human Wisdom in "Purgatorio" by Paul Stern [University of Pennsylvania Press, 978-0812250114]

When political theorists teach the history of political philosophy, they typically skip from the ancient Greeks and Cicero to Augustine in the fifth century and Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth, and then on to the origins of modernity with Machiavelli and beyond. Paul Stern aims to change this settled narrative and makes a powerful case for treating Dante Alighieri, arguably the greatest poet of medieval Christendom, as a political philosopher of the first rank. <>

Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy, Florence, Venice and the 'Divine Poet' by Simon Gilson [Cambridge University Press, 9781107196551]

Simon Gilson's new volume provides the first in-depth account of the critical and editorial reception in Renaissance Italy, particularly Florence, Venice and Padua, of the work of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Gilson investigates a range of textual frameworks and related contexts that influenced the way in which Dante's work was produced and circulated, from editing and translation to commentaries, criticism and public lectures. In so doing he modifies the received notion that Dante and his work were eclipsed during the Renaissance. Central themes of investigation include the contestation of Dante's authority as a 'classic' writer and the various forms of attack and defence employed by his detractors and partisans. The book pays close attention not only to the *Divine Comedy* but also to the *Convivio* and other of Dante's writings, and explores the ways in which the reception of these works was affected by contemporary developments in philology, literary theory, philosophy, theology, science and printing. <>

Life-World and Cultural Difference: Husserl, Schutz, and Waldenfels by Chung-Chi Yu [Königshausen & Neumann, 9783826064517]

The fact that there are different cultures in the world is too obvious for words. Considering thus cultural differences in the light of the phenomenological concept of life-world may raise the following

questions: Do we live in the same life-world regardless of such cultural differences? Or do we live in different life-worlds because of cultural differences? The first question presupposes a singular life-world, whereas the second question entails a plurality of life-worlds. IN any case, how is the notion of cultural difference related to that of the life-world? Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the founder of phenomenology seems to conceive the life-world as the bare ground of the natural sciences. The life-world therefore acquires a universal validity regardless of cultural differences. IN contrast, for Alfred Schutz (1899-1959), who is more concerned with the foundation of human and social sciences than that of natural sciences, the life-world understood as field of praxis with social and cultural characteristics unavoidably assumes cultural differences. Besides critically discussing these two radically diverging positions, the book also discusses what Bernhard Waldenfels sees as a common denominator: the idea of grounding (Grundlegungsidee). Both Husserl and Schutz develop in their own ways a foundationalist interpretation of the life-world. In whatever case, the book seeks to overcome any foundationalism whether in the form of universalism or culturalism by suggesting to refocus and inquire into the status of cultural objects. Universals are ill-suited for cultural matters. Correlatively, considering cultural objects from alien cultures requires acknowledging difference with a sense of humility that does not preclude the possibility of understanding. <>

RELIGION AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE by Gavin Flood [Oxford University Press, 9780198836124]

RELIGION AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE considers how religion as the source of civilization transforms the fundamental bio-sociology of humans through language and the somatic exploration of religious ritual and prayer. Gavin Flood offers an integrative account of the nature of the human, based on what contemporary scientists tell us, especially evolutionary science and social neuroscience, as well as through the history of civilizations. Part one contemplates fundamental questions and assumptions: what the current state of knowledge is concerning life itself; what the philosophical issues are in that understanding; and how we can explain religion as the driving force of civilizations in the context of human development within an evolutionary perspective. It also addresses the question of the emergence of religion and presents a related study of sacrifice as fundamental to religions' views about life and its transformation. Part two offers a reading of religions in three civilizational blocks--India, China, and Europe/the Middle East--particularly as they came to formation in the medieval period. It traces the history of how these civilizations have thematised the idea of life itself. Part three then takes up the idea of a life force in part three and traces the theme of the philosophy of life through to modern times. On the one hand, the book presents a narrative account of life itself through the history of civilizations, and on the other presents an explanation of that narrative in terms of life. <>

How Reason Can Lead to God: A Philosopher's Bridge to Faith by Joshua Rasmussen [IVP Academic, 9780830852529]

Do you seek the truth? Do you value reason, science, and independent thinking? Are you skeptical of beliefs that people maintain merely "on faith," yet you remain interested in the big questions of life? Do you hope there could be a greater purpose to the universe, if only that were realistic? If so, then philosopher Joshua Rasmussen can encourage you in your journey. Beginning with his own story of losing faith and the belief in any ultimate purpose in life, he then builds a bridge to a series of universal truths about ultimate reality. Using only the instruments of reason and common experience, Rasmussen constructs a pathway—step by step, brick by brick—that he argues can lead to meaning and, ultimately, a vision of God. <>