

The Ohio State University

The King James Bible and Its Cultural Afterlife Conference, <<http://kingjamesbible.osu.edu/>>

Thursday, May 5, 2011 – Saturday, May 7, 2011

Panel “The Bible and Early Modern Radicals”

Organizer Angelica Duran, Associate Professor English and Comparative Literature; Director, Religious Studies; Purdue University

Schedule

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”

- “Heroism and Faith in *Samson Agonistes*: A Kierkegaardian Reading”
Matthew Gallaher matthew.gallaher@gmail.com; Clark College
- “Milton, Monarchy, David, and the Psalms”
Rob Kilgore, kilgore.rob@gmail.com; University of South Carolina Beaufort
- “Milton’s Enochic Angels: Genesis, the Book of Enoch and *Paradise Lost*”
Michael Noschka, mnoschka@asu.edu, Arizona State University
- “*Lycidas*’s St. Peter Passage and the Sermons of Richard Clerke”
Beth Sharb, bs4dr@virginia.edu; University of Virginia
- “The Tree for the Forest: Typology, Ecology and the Tree of Life in *Paradise Lost*”
Spaulding, Brad Brad.Spaulding@indwes.edu; Indiana Wesleyan University
- “The Elephant in the Room: Milton’s Negotiation of Trinitarian Christology in *Paradise Lost*”
Matthew Stallard, stallard@ohio.edu; Ohio University
- “John Milton’s Satanic Representation of the Messianic Passion in Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*”
M. Scott Stenson, mstenson@huskers.unl.edu; University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Saturday, May 7, 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; “The Bible and Radicals, Early Modern and Otherwise”

- “Early Modern British Writers on the Spanish *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*”
Angelica Duran, duran0@purdue.edu; Purdue University
- “Biblical Hermeneutics and Sociopolitical Radicalism in Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*”
Emily Griffith Jones, emilyg@bu.edu; Boston University
- “Thomas Dekker’s *Whore of Babylon* and the English Apocalypse”
Gretchen Minton, minton@english.montana.edu; Montana State University
- “Radical Calvinist Soteriology and Winstanley’s Antinomian Hermeneutic”
Aaron Pratt, aaron.pratt@yale.edu; Yale University
- “The Bible, the Book of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and the Book of Culture”
Kevin Seidel, kevin.seidel@emu.edu; Eastern Mennonite University

Abstracts and recommended secondary readings are below.

All conference-goers are encouraged to attend and participate.

To view the panelists’ position papers after April 15, please contact Angelica Duran, duran0@purdue.edu, for the 9:00-10:30 seminar, and Kevin Seidel, kevin.seidel@emu.edu for the 10:45-12:15 AM.

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”

Matthew Gallaher, “Heroism and Faith in *Samson Agonistes*: A Kierkegaardian Reading”

Keywords

- knight of faith
- religious heroism
- philosophy

Recommended secondary reading

- Quigley, Brendan. "The Distant Hero of *Samson Agonistes*." *ELH* 72.3 (2005): 529-51.
- Kierkegaard, Søren *Fear and Trembling*. Trans. and Intro. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954.

Abstract

Many prominent Milton scholars have sought to determine the final action of *Samson Agonistes*, often in hopes of pinning down the nature of the dramatic poem and more importantly, its protagonist. Is Milton's Samson essentially heroic and if so, what type of hero is he--tragic, religious, or something else entirely? Brendan Quigley recently pointed out the usefulness of interpreting *Samson Agonistes* using Walter Benjamin's conception of heroism and Soren Kierkegaard's knight of faith; however, he primarily focuses on Benjamin's theories regarding heroism and largely overlooks the striking resemblances between Kierkegaard's exegesis of Abraham's famous test of faith (Genesis 22) and Milton's radical retelling of the Samson story. Quigley sees Milton's Samson as first and foremost a tragic hero and only leaves open the possibility of his being a Kierkegaardian knight of faith. Such a thesis falls short of grasping the significance of both Milton's and Kierkegaard's radical depictions of faith.

Milton's telling of the Samson story strays from the King James Bible's account by excluding any clear act of communication between God and his self-described “servant” (Judges 15:19). Milton carefully omits on-stage action which might demonstrate that Samson had retained God's special favor, such as in Judges 15:18-19 where Samson boldly entreats God for a solution to his thirst so “God clave[s] an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout.” Any clear and explicit sign or communication from the divine happens well before the start of the play, thus calling its credibility into question for the reader. This type of deliberate omission underscores Milton's unusual understanding of faith. Faith for Milton's Samson, as well as Kierkegaard's Abraham, does not rest on or require some clear and worldly sign, but on an intensely passionate and painfully inward commitment to the infinite.

If Samson is indeed a tragic hero as Quigley argues, then he cannot be a knight of faith. *Fear and Trembling*, the one work in Kierkegaard's oeuvre that provides the most detail about the knight, repeatedly emphasizes the unbridgeable gulf between the tragic hero and the knight. It can be fairly asserted that the main point of *Fear and Trembling* is to point out this overlooked and almost inconceivable difference. It is not enough, as Quigley does, to say that only a few tragic heroes quite reach the status of the knight of faith and even if they do, no one—not even the knight herself—would truly know. Instead, Kierkegaard attempts to expose how completely incommensurate the traditional idea of heroism and faith are, and it is the point of this paper to demonstrate how Milton attempts to do much the same in *Samson Agonistes* and what such a radical depiction of faith means for the Age of Enlightenment that separates these two important Protestant thinkers.

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”
Rob Kilgore, “Milton, Monarchy, David, and the Psalms”

Keywords

- psalms
- monarchy

Recommended secondary reading

- Hannibal Hamlin, *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- Steven Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649-1689* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Abstract

Why did Milton translate Psalms 1-8 in August 1653? And how are these translations related to his thoughts on David, poetry, and monarchy, especially in relation to the Bible? Although many critics have examined Milton’s thoughts on David, notably David Quint and Mary Ann Radzinowicz, they have focused on Milton’s three epics: *Samson Agonistes*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained*. Little noticed has been Milton’s translations from the Book of Psalms, a book, that—in Milton’s and the popular imagination—the battle for David’s legacy raged the fiercest. David was both a king and poet, after all—a fact not lost on Milton.

Critical interest in the Psalms has grown in recent years, and my work builds on the work of Rivkah Zim and Hannibal Hamlin, who have argued for the treatment of the period’s translations of the Psalms as poetry. I want to extend this analysis of the poetry of the Psalms to Milton and his political investments. Specifically, I see Milton’s Psalms of 1653 as a poetic extension of *Eikonoklastes*, Milton’s response to *Eikon Basilike*. What does it mean when Milton’s rhymed verse asserts and through aural rhyme emphasizes the idea of “darkness” in Psalm 6, and enemies “that mark” — inventive language that doesn’t appear in the 1611 King James Version or in any one source. How does this and other examples comment on the Stuart regime’s use of the Psalms, David, and the Bible? My tentative answer to these questions is that many of Milton’s works coordinate to separate David the poetically inspired singer from David the king. To do this, he must read the 1 Samuel 8 institution of the Hebrew Monarchy as a mistake (*Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, Defence of the People of England*). He must quip about Charles’ “borrow[ing] of David’s Psalms,” that “had he borrowed Davids heart, it had bin much the holier theft” (*Eikonoklastes*). And, in 1653, as Latin Secretary for the Commonwealth during the Barebones Parliament, he must re-translate the Psalms that had been the foundation for so many temporal displays of power.

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”

Michael Noschka, “Milton’s Enochic Angels: Genesis, the Book of Enoch and *Paradise Lost*”

Keywords

- intertextuality
- angelology
- Book of Enoch

Recommended secondary reading

- James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature.” In *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*. Eds. James C. VanderKam and William Adler. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. 33-101.
- Edward E. Ericson, Jr., “The Sons of God in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*,” *Milton Quarterly* 25.3 (1991): 79-89.

Abstract

This essay considers the Book of Enoch and the body of Enochic literature disseminated by the Church Fathers and rabbinic midrash as intertexts for Milton’s treatment of the angelic fall in *Paradise Lost*. By situating its analysis in the cultural milieu of the King James translation of the Bible and its desire to provide the English people with the most accurate representation of God’s Holy Word, this paper places Milton within the larger context of translation, as well as the complex exegetical history of Genesis 6:1-4, one of the scriptures’ most enigmatic passages. This paper positions *Paradise Lost* as a hybrid Protestant-Hebraic hermeneutic, that is, as a type of midrashic gloss, first turning its attention to the poetic treatment of Genesis 6:1-4 in 11.556-627 and subsequently assessing its rejoining passage in *Paradise Regained* 2.173-181 in order to suggest that Milton actively constructs his angels within the tradition of the Watchers of Enochic literature, the fallen angels who couple with the daughters of men and beget giant progeny. If as Annette Yoshiko Reed suggests, for early Christian apologists Enochic literature “play[s] a pivotal role in the etiology of human culture and its tragic distance from the divine,” arguably Milton’s tacit purpose in *Paradise Lost*, then the use of Enochic intertexts in his epic offers a unique historio-theological perspective from which to engage the problem of evil, angelic and human sexuality, as well as divine accommodation—all of which figure prominently in Milton’s justification of God to men.

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”
Beth Sharb, “*Lycidas*’s St. Peter Passage and the Sermons of Richard Clerke”

Keywords

- Puritan sermon
- elegy
- Christ's College

Recommended reading-

- Norton, David. *A Textual History of the King James Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Barker, Arthur. *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1942.

Abstract

The subject matter of the pastoral elegy *Lycidas* is obvious enough. It is a poem about vocation and death. Clearly, Milton chooses poet over pastor, but not before he tries out his ministerial voice with the St. Peter passage (108-31). The speech is full of fire and brimstone, terrifying enough to send Alpheus underground. This begs the question: what is a passage like this doing in an elegy?

I'd like to historicize this question with the preaching of the time period, concerned particularly with the changing use of St. Peter in sermons. The rhetoric of Protestant sermons evolved considerably regarding Peter during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century; early reformers attempted to deemphasize Peter's authority in the Church and importance to Christ, whereas later reformers saw him as the ultimate example of piety. Moreover, what can the sermons of Richard Clerke, King James Bible translator and fellow of Christ's College, whose sermons were published in 1637, tell us about the style of preaching with which Milton would have been familiar?

This paper aims to address Milton's biblical allusions in the St. Peter passage (Matt. 26:31, Mark 14:27-9, 2 Peter 2:1, and John 10:1) in relation to Clerke's sermons, paying particular attention to issues of vocation, death, and their possible intersections.

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”

Brad Spaulding, “The Tree for the Forest: Typology, Ecology and the Tree of Life in *Paradise Lost*”

Keywords

- ecology
- typology

Recommended secondary reading

- Diane Kelsey McColley *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell*. Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007.

Abstract

Typology manuals and keys to reading the schemata of the Bible flourished during the century following the publication of the KJV. As a typological figure in *Paradise Lost*, the Tree of Life symbolizes the story “[o]f all things” (3.155)—the beginning of creation, the imminent Word of God to Adam and Eve, and the future coming of Christ and his millennial kingdom. From an ecocritical perspective, the Tree of Life in Milton’s epic extends the conversation from Renaissance biblical interpretation toward ecological systems represented by the language and landscapes of the text. This paper is an attempt to read the complex intertwining of scriptural typology and environmental referentiality in Milton’s conception of Paradise.

Traditional typological exegesis places Old Testament objects, people and events in terms of their New Testament or millennial fulfillment. Read against the background of a flourishing Renaissance typology, the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden is a type of Christ, and it is also representative of the millennial kingdom of Christ which is to be fulfilled in the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 22.2. Milton’s portrayal of the Tree of Life adopts these interpretive readings while also pointing toward a wealth of biblical tree imagery, such as the Root of Jesse (Isa. 11.1), Nebuchadnezzar’s Ontological Tree (Dan 4.1-37), and the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt. 13.31-32).

However, as one of the “trees of God” in the edenic ecosystem (5.390), Milton’s tree of life also presents aspects of his environmental vision. An ecological reading of the ontological tree of being in Book 5 reveals, as Diane Kelsey McColley reminds us, “[this] Tree of Life is a metaphor . . . but it also behaves like a living tree, which is one of the ‘all things’ spoken of and so an actual part of the process Raphael is describing; and his sounds and syntax imitate the manner of growth of a real plant” (122). Milton demonstrates the ecologically-embedded nature of the Tree of Life—and subsequently of all life—in Book 4 when Satan perches upon it but rejects “that life-giving plant” (4.199) and in Book 5 through Raphael’s ontological tree of being.

A close reading of these passages in which the Tree of Life functions as the typological center for the action of the poem reveals what I call an “embodied” typology—a Miltonic poetics that places the biblical Word *and* the natural world within an interpretive framework that validates the materiality of Being. I hope to show in this paper how Milton’s “embodied” typology works to revise contemporary Renaissance typology through an ecologically-centered biblical hermeneutics.

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”

Matthew Stallard, “The Elephant in the Room: Milton's Negotiation of Trinitarian Christology in *Paradise Lost*”

Keywords

- Trinitarianism
- KJV and Geneva Bibles

Recommended reading

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Abstract

One of the most hotly debated topics among Miltonists centers on the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Is Milton's christology Arian or closer to orthodoxy? This paper discusses Milton's attitude toward several KJV Trinitarian proof texts exhibited in *Paradise Lost* to suggest that Milton at times significantly deviates from its language, preferring the renderings of other Renaissance translations to assume a more ambiguous or perhaps even neutral theological stance.

A number of books and articles have addressed the issues of Milton's views on the Godhead. Milton's *loci theologic* has been labeled “Arian” by many scholars, although there is still a very vocal minority who insist that Milton is an orthodox Trinitarian. It is important to recall that the Arian controversy did not address the Holy Spirit as part of the Godhead. The fourth-century Arian debate focused upon the relationship between God and the Son only, Arius, like Athanasius conceding that the Holy Spirit was a lesser “person” (*hypostasis*) of the Divine Son and Father. Although a discussion of the Holy Spirit is absent from this controversy, literary scholars of Milton almost always discuss Milton's alleged non-trinitarianism in terms of “Arianism.” These studies tend to approach the question of whether or not Milton is a Trinitarian by mostly focusing upon the relationship between God and the Son in *Paradise Lost*; utilizing Milton's comments in the *De Doctrina Christiana* that deny the Son participating in the same *ousia* or *essentia* as a gloss for the epic poem; and virtually ignoring the third person of the trinity.

This essay examines Milton's non-Trinitarianism by zeroing in upon the activities of the Holy Spirit in *Paradise Lost*, demonstrating that at least this poem is non-Trinitarian insofar as the Holy Spirit is not treated as a *hypostasis*. Books 11 and 12 figure largely in this discussion both because they contain the most frequent references to the Holy Spirit and because they represent Milton's late theological views. Furthermore, Milton's reducing the Holy Spirit to non-personhood is entirely compatible with statements found in his body of prose and the scriptural influences (including the 1560 *Geneva Bible* marginalia) that bear upon Milton's description of the work and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This context is signally important to accounting for why scholars have overlooked the non-personal portrayals of the Holy Spirit in *Paradise Lost*: stated simply, there has been an overreliance on the KJV when tracking Milton's Bible references. From Milton's word choice it is clearly evident that in the many occasions that Milton refers to the Holy Spirit he is most often utilizing the imagery of the Geneva text and the theology of the marginalia. Certainly, I would not claim that taken as a whole the Geneva marginalia are non-Trinitarian. Hardly, but they do provide enough theological slippage for Milton to assert a non-Trinitarian theology that is supportable through the comments of some of the marginalia scholars. It is, I believe, entirely commensurate with Milton's political views that he would utilize the Calvinist Geneva Bible, which is decidedly anti-monarchialist, over the Bible authorized by James I, the first British monarch to fully articulate and assert the doctrine of Divine Right.

Saturday, May 7, 9:00-10:30 a.m.; “The Bible and that Radical, Milton”

Matthew Scott Stenson, “John Milton’s Satanic Representation of the Messianic Passion in Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*”

Keywords

- intertextuality
- The Passion

Recommended secondary reading

- Lewalski, Barbara. “Argument Heroic Deem’d’: The Genres of the Satanic Heroic Mode.” *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms*. Princeton, New Jersey: UP, 1985.
- Henriksen, Erin. *Milton and the Reformation Aesthetics of the Passion*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2010.

Abstract

I develop an important distinction between Barbara Lewalski’s work on the Satanic heroic and Erin Henriksen’s work on Protestant Reformation passion poetics, and my own work on the Satanic representation of the messianic Passion in *Paradise Lost*. Instead of measuring Satan against classical and Elizabethan heroes as Lewalski does, I claim that Milton has Satan unwittingly, ironically, and dramatically enact the Messiah’s Passion, a passion that is described in biblical atonement language but otherwise never dramatized in the epic. My argument demonstrates the textual and narrative influence of the KJV of the Bible, and the Bible in general, on Milton and his willingness as a religious epic poet of the seventeenth-century to employ its sacred material in artistically daring ways in dangerous times for a redemptive and political purpose.

I focus on Book 4 and compare it to select passages from the Old and New Testaments to suggest that Milton deploys the Passion of Christ pattern to develop the progress of his character Satan through Eden. My position paper can be divided into five principal parts. In section one, I briefly review the critical debate over how to read Milton’s long epic and the Satanic character in particular before using language from Book 4’s prefatory Argument to summarize Book 4’s basic material. I then briefly examine how Milton’s complex representation of the Garden of Eden, a poetic amplification of what is described more concisely in the Bible in Genesis 2-3, may be understood as a metaphor for a difficult messianic text, or for the epic itself. To demonstrate the messianic nature of the text, I closely read Satan’s opening soliloquy (4.32-113) in its immediate narrative context, taking special note of points of contact, direct and indirect, between his passionate speech and certain language and motifs from the Bible. For instance, I compare several lines from the soliloquy (4.42-57) with the KJV’s version of Jesus’ parable on forgiveness, and atonement (Matthew 18:23-35). After analyzing the initial part of Satan’s attempt, patterned after Gethsemane, I connect Milton’s narrative to the last night of Jesus’ life as recorded in the Gospels. I assert that Satan’s arrest and trial by night may be patterned after Christ’s arrest and trial. Lastly, as the final part of the Passion pattern, I argue that the imagery of the Cross, a strangely sympathetic Satan on the Tree of Life, may have important epistemological implications for the reader going forward, including interpretive implications that make the semi-allegorical epic’s Idea both paradoxically orthodox and romantic in quality.

Saturday, May 7, 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; “The Bible and Radicals, Early Modern and Otherwise”
Angelica Duran, “English Bibles and the KJV Translators on the Spanish *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*”

Keywords

- Spanish Catholic Inquisition
- *sola fides* and *sola scriptura*
- translation

Recommended secondary reading

- McGrath, Alister E. *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.
- Moynahan, Brian. *The Faith: A History of Christianity*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.

Abstract

I explore two sets of early modern materials that wrestle with the authorized publication of vernacular Biblical translations and on the KJV translators: 1) the well-known (by KJV scholars), early seventeenth-century British sources, Thomas Fuller’s *Church History of Britain* as well as the KJV’s prefatory “Translators to the Reader” and dedicatory epistle to King James I; and the much-less investigated but often inveighed texts that enter discussions of early modern vernacular editions of the Bible, the Spanish Catholic Inquisition’s lists of heretical authors and works, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. My focus is on the verbal arguments deployed and the historically-attendant textual practices (i.e. actual vernacular Bible translations) in Spain and England, not their social and political repercussions.

I outline key similarities and differences in the categories and refutations of British arguments for Anglophone translations, on the one hand, and those of the Spanish Catholic Inquisition’s in terms of both Hispanophone translations and indeed any vernacular translations, on the other. The Inquisition’s arguments take the lion’s share of attention in the prefaces to the indexes; and they of course change over time, albeit at a much slower pace than those of England.

This alignment raises a nexus of questions regarding reception, to put it broadly. What were the major fears and hopes attendant on vernacular translations of the Bible, especially in terms of the disintegration or redefinition of “Christendom”? The English Church’s break from the Roman Catholic Church effected changes that were decidedly overt and provocative, the KJV being a chief example. But no less powerful was the role of the nationally-formulated Spanish Catholic Inquisition, a related but separate entity from the Roman Catholic Inquisition. How do Anglophone arguments about and Hispanophone definitions of Bible translators contribute to our understanding of the influence of institutional controls on the reception of vernacular the concept of the author and the reception of Bibles as literature? And how are non-native works represented as contributing to the cultural formation and literary heritage of the homeland?

Saturday, May 7, 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; “The Bible and Radicals, Early Modern and Otherwise”
Emily Griffith Jones, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Sociopolitical Radicalism in Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*”

Keywords

- cultural studies
- gender

Recommended secondary reading

- Ng, Su Fang. “Aemilia Lanyer and the Politics of Praise.” *ELH* 67.2 (2000), 433-451.
- Longfellow, Erica. “Ecce Homo: The Spectacle of Christ’s Passion in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*.” In *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 59-91.

Abstract

The year 1611 witnessed the publication not only of the King James Bible, but also Aemilia Lanyer’s poem on the Passion of Christ, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Lanyer bases her account of the Passion, her description of Christ, and her representation of his love-relationship with his followers on vernacular translations of scripture, particularly the Gospels and the Song of Songs. Moreover, Lanyer’s book is aligned with the King James Bible through Lanyer’s emphasis on both its status as a sacred vessel and its universal accessibility. She proposes that Christ himself, as the Word of God, dwells within her text and that her readers may therefore receive him through her, and she dedicates the poem not only to specific noblewomen, but also to “all virtuous Ladies and Gentlewomen of this kingdome,” and finally to “all good Christians and honourable minded men” and “all virtuous and good women.”

Much scholarship on *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* has emphasized Lanyer’s gestures toward radical feminism. The text famously defends Eve and exalts the women of Jerusalem who wept for Christ’s suffering above the male disciples who deserted him; furthermore, Lanyer envisions an elect community of Englishwomen whose lowly service as Christ’s faithful lovers grants them elite status, and imagines her patroness, the Countess of Cumberland, as a female priest with the power to forgive sins and administer the sacraments. Such gendered radicalism is indeed a strong presence in the poem and must not be discounted. Lanyer’s Biblical hermeneutics, however, also lead her to intricately related positions on class, land ownership, and forms of governance.

My paper will examine the web of subversive ideologies that runs throughout *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, with particular emphasis on the poem’s multivalent stance on the ideal form of Christian government for the English state. Lanyer’s text seems at times to anticipate the more conservative forms of republicanism that would take hold later in the seventeenth century, though the poem’s lukewarm attitude toward centralized monarchy in favor of regional rule by a devout and generous aristocracy is politically subversive in its own right. At other times, Lanyer’s language resembles that of the most radical forms of republicanism: acknowledging that she thus digresses from her praise of her patroness (145), Lanyer nevertheless anticipates providential progress toward an egalitarian Christian utopia in which class distinction is razed and celebrates Christ as the quintessential leveler (see especially 123-124, 75-77). In a move similar to her dedicatory presentation of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* as a holy vernacular text first to specific aristocratic ladies and finally to both sexes of any class, Lanyer’s interpretation of the Bible allows her simultaneously to value socially-conscious (feminine) aristocratic government above self-aggrandizing (masculine) centralized monarchy, and ultimately (ungendered) radical egalitarianism above all.

Saturday, May 7, 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; “The Bible and Radicals, Early Modern and Otherwise”
Gretchen Minton, “Thomas Dekker’s *Whore of Babylon* and the English Apocalypse”

Keywords

- apocalypse
- Gunpowder Plot

Recommended secondary reading

- Gasper, Julia. *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.
- Bauckham, Richard. *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth-century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation*. Appleford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978.

Abstract

The Apocalypse was central to reformist thought. During the Henrician period the preacher, playwright, and polemicist John Bale wrote the first English commentary on the Book of Revelation, *The Image of both Churches* (c. 1545), which was the most comprehensive articulation of an English Protestant apocalyptic. These ideas were popularized through marginal references in the Matthew’s Bible and in the works of John Foxe, both *Acts and Monuments* (1563) and his apocalyptic comedy *Christus Triumphans* (1556).

Writers of the late Elizabethan period often interpreted political events through the lens of Revelation, especially because the crisis of the Spanish Armada gave an impressive apocalyptic context. Such influences are evident, for example, in Book 1 of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* (1590). However, two decades after this event the struggle between England and Rome was once again on stage, this time in the form of an “apocalyptic comedy” by Thomas Dekker entitled *The Whore of Babylon* (1608). The pattern of history outlined in *The Whore of Babylon* is typical of apocalyptic comedy because it traces a view of sacred history that follows the battle between the true church and the false until the faithful are victorious at the end of time. The main players on this stage are two diametrically opposed female figures of the Book of Revelation: the Whore of Babylon and the Woman in the Wilderness. The victor is the triumphant Elizabeth, whom Dekker allows to represent both the Woman in the Wilderness and Titania, Queen of the Fairies.

Despite the fact that *The Whore of Babylon* seems in some sense like a return to Elizabethan apocalypticism, Dekker was also in dialogue with Jacobean apocalypticism. The King himself had shown a keen interest in apocalyptic symbolism when he wrote his own commentary on Revelation 20, *A Fruitful Mediation* (1588). In the wake of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, Dekker drew upon James I’s own articulation of the papacy as the antichrist and placed the blame for all plots against British monarchs’ lives at the feet of the papacy, who were acting as agents of the unloosed Satan as described in Revelation 20. In this paper I will show how Dekker relies upon some of the most distinguishing features of English Protestant apocalyptic in order to replay the glory of the Elizabethan era while also obliquely warning James I about the dangers of Catholics still active in his realm.

Saturday, May 7, 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; “The Bible and Radicals, Early Modern and Otherwise”
Aaron T. Pratt, “Radical Calvinist Soteriology and Winstanley’s Antinomian Hermeneutic”

Keywords

- soteriology
- Gerrard Winstanley

Recommended secondary reading

- “Introduction: Winstanley and the Bible.” Vol. 1 of *The Complete Works of Gerrard Winstanley*. Ed. Thomas N. Corns, Ann Hughes, and David Loewenstein, 59-65. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Abstract

This paper examines Gerrard Winstanley’s idiosyncratic mode of scriptural exegesis in the context of the soteriological theologies that were developing within mid-seventeenth-century radical Calvinist circles. While, as scholars of English literature almost invariably observe, Calvinist belief does include the doctrine of predestination, it nevertheless consistently emphasizes the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit from its initial formulation by Calvin. Indeed, discussions concerning sanctification are far more prominent than those addressing predestination in extant sermons and printed literature, from erudite theological treatises to popular bestsellers, from the sixteenth to seventeenth century. For almost all Christians, but especially Calvinists, the operation of grace meant that the Holy Spirit would bring an individual’s spirit in line with the image of God during the course of their life; in a peculiar though very real way, it accorded value to life on earth. By the mid-seventeenth century, a radical strain of Calvinism had developed, a strain that foregrounded the Holy Spirit as the force of sanctification within each Christian. Groups including the Adamites, Diggers, Familists, Ranters, and, later, the Quakers (the group to which Winstanley himself would gravitate toward the end of his life) took this, what had been orthodox soteriology, to justify behavior beyond the pale of what most at the time would have accepted as Christian: if divine authorization in the form of the Holy Spirit underwrites Christian action, what need is there to comply with any external authority?

Whereas many of these antinomian radicals, using this logic, rejected scripture as subordinate to the inner workings of the Holy Spirit, Winstanley only did so in a very peculiar, I argue that he retained the Bible as a repository of imagery for reinterpretation and imaginative re- appropriation. I argue that this specific soteriological context provides a way—probably as best as can exist—in which we can understand his otherwise idiosyncratic relationship to scripture. Though he does not seem to have been at all widely read (he refers only to Foxe’s *Actes and monuments* directly), Winstanley did know the Bible very well, often quoting directly from the King James translation. Unlike traditional exegetes from the period, who built upon or otherwise responded to available commentaries such as the ones contained in the margins of many copies of the Geneva Bible, Winstanley seems to be almost wholly original in, for example, his interpretation of the beasts in Daniel 7. I would like to suggest that it was precisely Winstanley’s near rejection of scripture’s literal truth that enabled him to treat it in the imaginative way that he does. James had thought that printing his bible without commentary would decrease factionalism, but in its unadorned form it may have actually helped to encourage the heretical yet powerful freeform model of biblical reading that we see in texts like Winstanley’s *Fire in the Bush*.

Saturday, May 7, 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; “The Bible and Radicals, Early Modern and Otherwise”
Kevin Seidel, “The Bible, the Book of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and the Book of Culture”

Keywords

- history of the book
- John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*
- new historicism

Recommended reading

- Greenblatt, Stephen. “The Word of God in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980. 74–114.
- Hofmeyr, Isabel. *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004.
- Seidel, Kevin. “*Pilgrim’s Progress* and the Book,” *English Literary History*, 77.2 (2010) 509–534.

Abstract

This paper builds on a recently published essay of mine that reexamined the literary-historical situation of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, part one and two, in light of recent work on its transnational reception history by Isabel Hofmeyr. The way that African writers have used *Pilgrim’s Progress*, according to Hofmeyr, turns out to be deeply analogous to the way Bunyan uses the Bible. The book, scroll, and letters that appear in *Pilgrim’s Progress* work together to disclose three, interrelated circuits of literacy—moral, legal, domestic—operating in late seventeenth-century conceptions of “the Book.” A moral circuit held the Bible to be the supreme book of wisdom; a legal circuit used the Bible to justify state authority; and a domestic circuit used the Bible to speak the language of intimacy. Bunyan combines these circuits, none simply religious or secular, to make his fiction an entertainment, in this world, of the world to come. One of the main purposes of the essay was to show that the book that appears in the opening scene of *Pilgrim’s Progress* is not equivalent to the Bible, nor does the Bible always appear in *Pilgrim’s Progress* as a book.

In this paper, I try to do with new historicist concepts of “culture” what Bunyan did with “the Book,” disclosing the way that certain notions of Biblical authority operate in new historicist assumptions about culture. Beginning with Stephen Greenblatt’s essay, “The Word of God in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” I describe one powerful afterlife of the KJB in prevailing new historicist notions of culture.