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Revised Monday 20 March 2018

The Four Poems and an Advertisement: Reading Narratives of Identity¹

ANNE TOMLINSON

Principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute

‘Who you *are* matters’, the strapline of this conference, is definitely not the message that contemporary Western society proclaims. Far from it, we live in times of great ontological insecurity. Open any Sunday newspaper – particularly those with upmarket ‘Style’ sections – and you will be bombarded with advertising predicated upon the understanding that self-identity is something not only fluid but self-constructed. Our identity, the media proclaim *à la* Foucault, is not given to us, ‘we have to *create* ourselves as a work of art’.² ‘Who you *make* yourself matters’: is the current, anxiety-producing message.

In these late modern days, the self is seen as a reflexive project for which each of us is responsible. ‘We are not what we are, but what we make of ourselves’ writes the philosopher Anthony Giddens. ‘What the individual becomes is dependent on the reconstructive endeavours in which she or he engages’.³ And those endeavours involve buying into – mark that phrase – a life-style, a set of practices which give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity. This is Giddens’s description:

Lifestyle is not a term which has much applicability to traditional cultures, because it implies choice within a plurality of possible options, and is ‘adopted’ rather than ‘handed down’. Lifestyles are routinised practices, the routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieux for encountering others; but the routines followed are reflexively open to change in the light of the mobile nature of self-identity. Each of the small decisions a person makes every day contributes to such routines. All such choices are decisions not only about how to act but who to be. The more post-traditional the settings

¹ Delivered to the ‘First Five Years’ Conference of Church of Scotland ministers, held at St Mary’s Monastery, Kinnoull, Perth, on 29 January 2018.

² ‘On the genealogy of ethics’ in *Michel Foucault, Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-84*, ed. by Paul Rabinow, vol. I (1997), p. 262.

³ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity; Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), p. 75.

in which an individual moves, the more lifestyle concerns the very core of self-identity, its making and remaking.⁴

In this 'do it yourself' project of self-creation, identity often becomes synonymous with consumption and production. Consider, for instance, the recent series of Huawei Mate 10 Pro advertisements. Next to the photograph of a successful entrepreneur holding this new make of mobile phone are the words 'I am what I do'. This is an existentialist message pure and simple, as can be seen in a video-clip from a recent BBC Radio 4 series about life's big questions.⁵ As Jean-Paul Sartre declared in his 1945 public lecture 'Existentialism is a form of humanism', existence precedes essence; we create ourselves through what we do and the choices we make in a world without fixed values. 'This makes me 'me'; I am what I do.'

In the Huawei advertisement, Sartre's philosophical approach has been cunningly colonised, commandeered, by the world of consumerism for the sake of profit. Now rather 'the project of the self' has become one of the possession and use of desired goods, and one's identity consequently at the mercy of those who manipulate the manufacture of desire. Commercial advertising is predicated upon the understanding of the self as decentred, fluctuating and permeable. As Peter Leithart writes in his marvellously titled monograph 'Solomon among the Postmoderns',

If advertisers thought that human beings were rational actors, self-consistent and centred, they would attempt to prove the superiority of their products in rational, perhaps functional terms. Advertisers don't; they believe human beings are clusters of desires, particularly desires for novelty. Selves are not fixed, and their desires can be manipulated.⁶

The untethered self, in this way of thinking, is at the beck and call of forces beyond its control; it is quite literally 'in subjection' to the power of the dominant class, ideology, fashion house or company. Or worse still, it is subject to bombardment by all of these, resulting in multiple and fluctuating – rather than unified and integrated – personalities.

The building of personal identity upon such shaky foundations is dangerous, indeed sinful. Seeking to establish a sense of self by making good things into ultimate

⁴ Ibid., p. 81

⁵ 'John Paul Sartre and the Existential Choice', BBC Radio 4, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpXNRrtuo38>

⁶ Peter Leithart, *Solomon among the Postmoderns* (Brazos Press, 2008), p. 145.

things is idolatry and leads to the death of the self, as we see from the final parable in Luke 16. The Rich Man therein is nameless. He has built his identity to such an extent upon wealth that as soon as he loses his wealth, he also loses any sense of self.⁷ Lazarus by contrast, not similarly idolatrous, has a name, a self, an identity –and a future.

Clergy can so easily buy into similar means of creating identities, especially at the outset of their lives of public service, such are the seeming pressures to perform. The (understandable) desire ‘to make one’s mark’ or ‘to place one’s stamp on a place’ – phrases overheard being used by ordinands in the past month – jumpstarts a cycle of striving which is shaped by the (unattainable) expectations of others, fuelled by anxiety and fed by external affirmation, and leads ultimately to burnout and ill health, both mental and physical. It is all too easy to get sucked in by ‘the myth of competence,’⁸ and begin to believe that personal self-worth, relevance, and meaning – identity and selfhood, in other words– reside in external definitions and assurances.

Eugene Peterson names this for what it is: ‘vocational idolatry’:

the idolatry of a religious career that we can take charge of and manage. ...Pastors commonly give lip service to the vocabulary of a holy vocation, but in our working lives we more commonly pursue careers. Our actual work takes shape under the pressure of the market place; our vocation is pursued under the canons of job efficiency and career management.⁹

If such a cycle is already smothering your being, may the days at this Conference be a time when you begin to slough off such a consumerist carapace and unburden yourselves of its weighty pressure: a time when you become aware of and confess to such idolatry and are liberated from its shackles. When you hear that releasing voice saying ‘You did not choose me; I chose you’ (John 15.16).

The verse which forms the focus of this conference is well chosen. For being human first and foremost means being *addressed* by God: being called into being by a voice. Throughout the Old Testament calling, creating and naming are closely intertwined. God creates by uttering *logoi*, and creation springs into being in order to

⁷ Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God. Belief in an Age of Scepticism* (Penguin, 2008), p. 78

⁸ Israel Galindo, ‘The Myth of Competence’ in *Leadership in Congregations*, ed. by Richard Bass, (Alban, 2007), pp. 147-53 (p. 148).

⁹ Eugene Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant. An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*, (Eerdmans, 1992), pp. 4-5.

answer God's call 'so that it shall not return to (God) empty' (Isaiah 55.11). The words of God are the foundation of everything. Every reality is a communication of God, and everything exists by virtue of God's communicating act. There is no selfhood prior to the address of God as Rowan Williams shows in a study of St Bernard's sermons, 'I am called into being as a self by the prior love of God'.¹⁰ To exist is to exist as responding-to-God. We are not autonomous beings, self-sufficient individuals, but beings 'caught up in continuing encounter with or response to divine action',¹¹ constituted by our relation to the Creator; by our relationship with God's Word.

The first of our four poems, *A Canticle of Width*,¹² captures beautifully the relentless primacy of that call, that Voice. It was written by Scottish poet and linguist Andrew Philip who is himself training for ordination, and was dedicated to a fellow student upon his licensing as a Lay Reader. With its echoes of Psalm 139 and Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, it sings of the relationship between contingent being and divine initiative:

Risk first
where can you run from that

unanswerable voice
keep wide to its whispers hidden on the breeze
keep ready for the distance
each following day demands
 you have eyes for
the pith and skin of the matter
to see through the tussle
between brick and cloud

unanswerable risk
keep wide to the skiff and shift
the first voice
come close
the call acquires you

¹⁰ Rowan Williams "Know Thyself". What kind of an injunction?' in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements*, ed. by Michael McGhee, vol. 32 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 211-27 (p. 219).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *A Canticle of Width for Paul Stollard*. Unpublished poem with permission Andrew Philip <http://www.andrewphilip.net>

First and foremost then, the self is not a humanly constructed, self-constituting entity; we are constituted as what we are in relation to our Creator, caught up in – ‘acquired’ by – that continuing encounter with the divine speech-act. ‘Before we are looked at, spoken to, acted on, we *are*, because of the look, the word, the act of God’.¹³ My being is God’s word to me. Coming to realise that fact is an experience that releases us not only from the need to strive to create an identity for ourselves, but also from indulging in solipsistic analysis, as this second poem, written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer a year before his execution, indicates.¹⁴ The first three stanzas, depicting how others saw him, are ‘cabin’d, cribb’d, confined’, just as he was in Tegel Prison, their repeated interrogative openings mimicking the argot of his jailers:

Who am I? They often tell me
I stepped from my cell’s confinement
Calmly, cheerfully, firmly,
Like a Squire from his country house.

Who am I? They often tell me
I used to speak to my warders
Freely and friendly and clearly,
As though it were mine to command.

Who am I? They also tell me
I bore the days of misfortune
Equably, smilingly, proudly,
Like one accustomed to win.

These lines are in marked contrast with the stanza which follows, the long flowing lines and repeated present participles depicting the endless hungering, waiting and worrying he engaged in when alone, out of the public eye, mirroring the wearisome sleepless hours given over to introspection. Bonhoeffer’s own sense of self is in marked contrast to that which the world sees:

Am I then really that which other men tell of?
Or am I only what I myself know of myself?

¹³ Rowan Williams, ‘On Being Creatures’ in, *On Christian Theology* (Blackwell, 2000), pp. 63-78 (p. 72).

¹⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (SCM Press, 2001), pp. 130-31.

Restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,
 Struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my throat,
 Yearning for colours, for flowers, for the voices of birds,
 Thirsting for words of kindness, for neighbourliness,
 Tossing in expectations of great events,
 Powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,
 Weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,
 Faint, and ready to say farewell to it all.

‘Am I then really that which other men tell of?/Or am I only what I myself know of myself?’ It is the type of question with which we too, imprisoned by self-consciousness and self-doubt, are apt to torture ourselves. The fifth stanza goes on to wrestle with the conflicting pictures of identity:

Who am I? This or the Other?
 Am I one person today and tomorrow another?
 Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,
 And before myself a contemptible woebegone weakling?
 Or is something within me still like a beaten army
 Fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?

Such inner wrestling however – these ‘lonely questions’ – ultimately unimportant, as the magnificent couplet at the end of the poem depicts in ‘the final vocative of faith’¹⁵:

*Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.
 Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine!*

‘Thou knowest, O God, I am thine’ is the antidote to all vocational idolatry; it is a realisation that frees us up to be ourselves, the selves God called and made, knows and loves. It releases us from the kind of consumerist creation of identity depicted in the Huawei advertisement. As Bonhoeffer wrote in a letter from prison around the same time as the poem, ‘one must completely abandon any attempt to make something of oneself whether it be a saint, or a converted sinner, or a churchman (a so-called priestly type) ... instead we throw ourselves completely into the arms of

¹⁵ David Ford, *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999), p. 262.

God'.¹⁶ Bonhoeffer, as David Ford has pointed out, refuses any image of self other than Jesus Christ; the self is thus 'freed from concern or anxiety about any formation or transformation of self apart from what happens in the course of worship and responsible living in the world'.¹⁷ We are here because of God's creative summons, and our reality cannot be earned by us or eroded by others.

'O God, I am thine.'

But God did not just call us into being; our vocation is not only to exist but *to exist as ourselves*, to be bearers of our unique names. No-one has put this more eloquently than Gerard Manley Hopkins in this, our third, poem¹⁸:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
 As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
 Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
 Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
 Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
 Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
 Selves — goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
 Crying What I dó is me: for that I came.

I say móre: the just man justices;
 Keeps grace: thát keeps all his goings graces;
 Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —
 Christ — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
 Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
 To the Father through the features of men's faces.

To be is to be *who you are*, where you are, what you are, a unique person, born in a particular place with a certain set of capabilities. God desires each of us to be the person God created. God calls us by our name, at each and every moment wanting us to be ourselves, longing for 'each hung bell' to find its tongue, and fling out broad that name. As Thomas Merton put it,

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 229, 137.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, xvi, p. 260.

¹⁸ Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'As Kingfishers Catch Fire' in *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Penguin Classics 1985).

...each particular being, in its individuality, its concrete nature and identity, with all its own characteristics and its private qualities and its own inviolable identity, gives glory to God by being precisely what He wants it to be here and now, in the circumstances ordained for it by His love and His infinite Art.... For me to be a saint means to be myself.¹⁹

Each one of us needs to hear that divine affirmation and to discover 'what is our particular way of playing back to God (that divine) self-sharing, self-losing care and compassion, the love because of which he speaks and acts in the first place'.²⁰ Each one of us must act 'in God's eye what in God's eye he [or she] is – Christ'.

There is a story told of Yehuda Loew ben Bezalel, the sixteenth century Talmudic scholar, Jewish mystic and philosopher who for most of his life served as a leading rabbi in the cities of Moravia and Bohemia. One night Rabbi Yehuda had a dream: he dreamt he had died and was brought before the throne. And the Angel who stands before the throne said to him, 'Who are you?' 'I am the famous Rabbi Yehuda of Prague, the maker of the Golem,' he replied. 'Tell me, my lord, if my name is written in the book of the names of those who will have a share in the Kingdom.' 'Wait here,' said the Angel, 'I shall read the names of all those who have died today that are written in the book.' And he read the names, thousands of them, strange names to the ears of Rabbi Yehuda; as the Angel read, the rabbi saw the spirits of those whose names had been called fly into the glory that sat above the Throne. At last he finished reading, and Rabbi Yehuda's name had not been called, and he wept bitterly and cried out against the Angel. And the Angel said, 'I have called your name.' Rabbi Yehuda said, 'I did not hear it.' And the Angel said, 'In the book are written the names of all the men and women who have ever lived on earth, for every soul is an inheritor of the Kingdom. But many come here who have never heard their true names on the lips of man, woman or angel. They have lived believing they know their names; and so when they are called to their share in the Kingdom, they do not hear their names as their own. They do not recognise that it is for them that the gates of the Kingdom are opened. So they must wait here until they hear their names and know them. Perhaps in their lifetime one man or woman has called them once by their right name: here they shall stay till they are silent enough to hear the King of the Universe himself calling them.'²¹

Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'

¹⁹ Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation* (Anthony Clarke, 1994), pp. 24-25.

²⁰ Rowan Williams, 'Vocation 1' in *Open To Judgement. Sermons and Addresses* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1994), p. 175.

²¹ <http://www.theschoolofmeditation.org/content/letter-16-hearing-your-true-name>

To become aware of God's calling you by name and God's absolute knowledge-and-affirmation of your self can, however, be overpowering, as we see in C. S. Lewis's parable, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Eustace, a rather odious character who has been turned into a dragon, is 'undragoned' by Aslan who transforms him into a very different boy altogether. In recounting this salvific episode to his cousins, Eustace asks Edmund:

'But who is Aslan? Do you know him?'

'Well – he knows me,' said Edmund. 'He is the great Lion, the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea, who saved me and saved Narnia. We've all seen him. Lucy sees him most often. And it may be Aslan's country we are sailing to.'

Neither said anything for a while.²²

'Neither said anything for a while'. The first response to the awareness that we are known by God through and through, that our identity is in and of God, should be silence, the silence of grateful contemplation. The task of coming to ourselves, of getting to know ourselves as God knows us, demands that we spend time in silence, stillness, solitude. As ministers, we must first and foremost be people of the desert, able to sit for long periods in 'that perilous exposure to God in solitude which is the basis of contemplation'.²³ In contemplative prayer, we shut off the ceaseless chatter by which we create, bolster and defend our own sense of identity and instead make silent space to become aware of God at the centre of our being and of the world's being, 'trusting in his knowledge of who we are and in the sheer grace of our existence'.²⁴

Such spacious waiting and watching, listening and giving thanks may seem indulgent, the antithesis of the target-driven busyness which congregations expect of their leaders. But *do* they really? Or do they long for us to model something different? Many years ago lay theologian Monica Furlong addressed a clergy conference in the Anglican Diocese of Wakefield with these words:

²² C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (Puffin, 1967), Chapter 7.

²³ Rowan Williams, 'Bread in the Wilderness. The Monastic Ideal in Thomas Merton and Paul Evdokimov', in *A Silent Action. Engagements with Thomas Merton* (Fons Vitae, 2011), pp. 23-39 (p. 30).

²⁴ Dustin Resch, 'Christ and Contemplation; Doctrine and Spirituality in the Theology of Rowan Williams' in *The Anglican Theological Review*, no. 2, vol 97 (2015), pp. 219-38 (p. 227).

I am clear what I want of the clergy. I want them to be people who can by their own happiness and contentment challenge my ideas about status, about success, about money, and so teach me how to live more independently of such drugs. I want them to be people who can dare, as I do not dare, and as few of my contemporaries dare, to refuse to work flat out (since work is an even more subtle drug than status), to refuse to compete with me in strenuousness. I want them to be people who are secure enough in the value of what they are doing to have time to read, to sit and think, and who can face the emptiness and possible depression which often attack people when they do not keep the surface of their mind occupied. I want them to be people who have faced this kind of loneliness and discovered how fruitful it was, as I want them to be people who have faced the problems of prayer. I want them to be people who can sit still without feeling guilty, and from whom I can learn some kind of tranquillity in a society which has almost lost the art.²⁵

As clergy, we are called to take time to get to know the self that God knows and to minister out of this still centre, not from any other identity of our own making. To be still, so that in the times when we are with others, we can be present as our authentic God-given selves.

In that stillness we become aware over and over again that we are called into being by the prior love and action of God. No-one has expressed this dialogical encounter between a finite creature and the divine initiative of grace as sublimely as our last poet, George Herbert.²⁶ No-one has made so clear that the 'acceptance of the divine love simply requires the abandonment of all effort at assessing my own worth, negatively or positively.'²⁷ No-one has echoed so tenderly God's address to each of us: 'who you are matters'.

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
 But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
 Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning

²⁵ Monica Furlong, 'The Parson's Role Today', Wakefield Diocesan Clergy Conference, April 1966.

²⁶ George Herbert, 'Love III' in *George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets* (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1978).

²⁷ Rowan Williams, 'Inside Herbert's Afflictions' in *Anglican Identities* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004), pp. 57-72 (p. 67).

If I lack'd anything.

'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here:'
 Love said, 'You shall be he.'
 'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
 I cannot look on Thee.'
 Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
 'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.'
 'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'
 'My dear, then I will serve.'
 'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
 So I did sit and eat.

'Methought I heard one calling, Child!/And I replied My Lord'.

We may conclude with one of John Bell's songs, 'Take O take me as I am'. The final phrase of this lovely chant ends on an unresolved dominant harmony, redolent of the eternal journey of self-knowledge upon which we are embarked: of coming to know, and live more securely out of, the secret of our identity which is hidden in the God who calls us and loves us as ourselves.

Take, O take me as I am
 Summon out what I shall be
 Set your seal upon my heart
 And live in me.²⁸

²⁸ John L. Bell, 'Take, O take me as I am' (Iona Community, 1995).

Searching for the Episcopalian Women: A Postgraduate Journey

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When I told people my dissertation topic – *Searching for the Episcopalian Women: Intolerance in Post-Revolution Scotland* – whether it was the sole expert in early eighteenth-century Scottish Episcopal history or other respected academics in the fields of Scottish or Church history, their first response was laughter. Their second response was to ask me, ‘How’s that going?’ The assumption is that these women do not exist. Even finding Episcopalian men during this period is hard, despite their political value to Jacobitism being more important to the tides of history. But these responses by other historians only fueled my passion to find the Episcopalian women.

In my dissertation, I analyzed female piety in Presbyterian-dominated areas of Scotland during the most intolerant period of history for the Episcopal Church. After William of Orange abolished episcopacy in February of 1689, the period leading up to and immediately after the third Jacobite Rising in 1745 was by far the most intolerant for Episcopalians in Scotland, and therefore the subject of my research.¹

I came upon this topic after meeting with the Vice Provost at St. Mary’s Cathedral, Glasgow. The purpose of the meeting was to find more outlets for ministry, but, while I did leave with a to-do list and a few important email addresses, what stuck with me was the anecdote that St. Mary’s holds the pocketbook containing seven sermons of the Rev. George Graeme, Episcopal minister for Glasgow from 1729 to 1759.² The transcribed versions of these sermons were emailed to me immediately, and as I walked to class I knew I had an, as yet, untapped source. I had a contribution.

¹ I submitted my dissertation under the supervision of Dr Karin Bowie at the University of Glasgow in September 2017, and was graduated from the University of Glasgow with an MLitt in Scottish History in November. The next installments in this series will include research from my dissertation and further work on this topic.

² Graeme, George. “Sermon on Acts 17:11.” Sermon. “in my Room”, Glasgow, February 10, 1740. St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

———. “Sermon on Job 14:14b.” Sermon. “in my Room”, Glasgow, February 14, 1731. St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

———. “Sermon on Luke 23:42-43.” Sermon. “in my Room”, Glasgow, February 20, 1757. St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

———. “Sermon on Proverbs 27:4.” Sermon. “in my Room”, Glasgow, July 6, 1939. St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

The next day I met with Karin Bowie, then my lecturer and someone I knew I wanted to work with. I had made a list a few days before of my interests, my strengths and limitations when it came to research, and some buzzwords I thought could help my case. This was all thrown out after I found the sermons. I mentioned them to Karin and then after talking about my love for gender history and my own personal attachment to the Episcopal Church, we decided that the goal would be to look at female piety within the Episcopal Church during the period of greatest intolerance, from 1688-1750. The simplest method would be to look at this intolerance from the standpoint of personal piety, through these sermons by Graeme and whatever others I could find.

It might be useful to know a little about myself at this point: I grew up in a small town in Texas, and after bouncing through a few different youth groups, discerned my place in the Episcopal Church, where I was confirmed one week before my sixteenth birthday. I worked at Camp Allen for four years, and was active in the Episcopal Student Center at the University of Texas at Austin. After spending a week in Scotland, before studying in London, I made the decision to apply to the University of Glasgow for graduate school. Connection to the liturgy and the history is what originally drew me to the Episcopal Church when I was fifteen, so I don't know why I'm surprised that the Episcopal Church is what I ended up studying.

Back to my dissertation: after coming to the question of how the Episcopalian woman experienced piety in an age of political and religious intolerance, I realized that, as is so often the case, my question only invited more questions. After her church was outlawed and forced into secrecy in 1689, the Scottish Episcopalian woman's place in society was precarious throughout the 'long' eighteenth century. How did she engage with religion and politics in an increasingly intolerant time? How did she experience life and culture in Scotland following the Glorious Revolution and the crowning of William of Orange? Why is she only talked about when engaged in sexual relations with the Bonnie Prince? How did her religious ideals affect her daily life, and how did she take charge of her personal piety?

The aim of this journal article is to share how my dissertation affected me spiritually, but for the sake of academia, I do need to share a bit of background about

———. "Sermon on Psalm 107:15." Sermon. "in my Room", Glasgow, August 13, 1730. St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

———. "Sermon on Psalm 119:73." Sermon. "in my Room", Glasgow, July 19, 1733. St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

———. "Sermon on Romans 3:31." Sermon. "in my Room", Glasgow, September 5, 1731. St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

my dissertation: the historiography on this period and this topic is bare. Alasdair Raffe has written a great deal on the activities of Presbyterian women and the connections and comparisons between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church, but never the Episcopal Church on its own.³ Two doctoral theses— submitted in 1987 and 1999 by Tristram Clarke and Mairianna Birkeland, respectively— both study the Episcopal Church during this time of intolerance, but from a wider lens making little mention of women or personal piety.⁴ And while Maggie Craig's *Damn Rebel Bitches* does an amazing job of detailing the political and military contributions of Jacobite women, she only mentions religion for a handful of them, and the lack of footnotes in her book makes it difficult to continue the research.⁵

My methodology began with the aforementioned sermons of Rev. George Graeme, in particular his sermon for the funeral of a woman in his congregation, serving as a jumping-off point to begin understanding the function of women in Episcopal meeting houses.⁶ My research process continued with countless coffees and emails with Roger Edwards who, in addition to being a member of the congregation at St. Mary's Glasgow, wrote a book, *Love and Loyalty*, which includes an extensive discussion of the reverend.⁷ Roger provided me with invaluable sources and support throughout the work on my dissertation. In attending conferences and meetings of the Scottish Church History Society, the Scottish Episcopal Historians Network, and the Centre for Scottish and Celtic Studies at the University of Glasgow, I chatted with Tristram Clarke and Jamie Reid-Baxter, amongst other historians.

³ Alasdair Raffe, 'Female Authority and Lay Activism in Scottish Presbyterianism, 1660-1740', in *Religion and Women in Britain, C. 1660-1760*, ed. by S. L. T. Apetrei and Hannah Smith (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014).

Alasdair Raffe, 'Presbyterians and Episcopalians: The Formation of Confessional Cultures in Scotland, 1660-1715' *English Historical Review* CXXV, no. 514 (2010).

Alasdair Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714* Vol. 28 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012).

⁴ Mairianna Birkeland, 'Politics and Society of Glasgow 1680-1740' (Doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999). T. N. Clarke, 'The Scottish Episcopalians: 1688-1720' (Doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1987).

⁵ Maggie Craig, *Damn' Rebel Bitches: The Women of the '45*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1997).

⁶ George Graeme, 'Sermon on Job 14:14b' (Sermon, St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow 14 February 1731).

⁷ Roger Edwards, *Love and Loyalty: Looking for Glasgow's Early Episcopalians* (Glasgow: Roger Edwards, 2015).

The first step was locating the women: finding Episcopalian families in Scotland, looking for their records, and hoping the female members of the families had written something, been written to, or been written about. As for the women discussed in Maggie Craig's book, it was necessary to expand upon her work by carrying out further research into them and deducing their religion. Unfortunately, a lot of time was spent looking at documents that ended up not helping me at all. For instance, I spent hours and days reading the holdings concerning the Stirlings of Keir at the Glasgow City Archives, making extensive notes about which documents I needed to read. When Roger Edwards alerted me to the Stuart Papers at Windsor Castle (and their online access), I ended up reading every single text written to, by, or about John Walkinshaw of Barrowfield and James Stirling of Keir that was listed in the index.⁸ These papers about the 1715 Rising, in which the men were involved, mention little about Keir, but a full week was spent reading the countless letters on the more prominent Walkinshaw. Unfortunately, Walkinshaw's wife and ten daughters were only mentioned twice. I gained a good understanding of his own character, but little insight into that of the female members of his family.

Problematically, any topic approaching gender history must confront the traditional issue that middle and upper-class women at the time were confined to the home and not usually spoken of in surviving historical documents. And on the rare occasion that she did write something, then how clouded was it by the biases and influence of her husband/father/brother? As previously mentioned, there is far more work done on the Presbyterian Church during this time due to the basic fact that history is written by the winners. Paleographical limitations hindered my research as well: Rev. George Graeme's sermons had been previously transcribed as had the journals of Lady Anne Halkett, one of the only Episcopalian women whose documents survive in the modern era.⁹ The Barrowfield letters from the Stuart Collection and some letters of the Stirlings of Keir were already transcribed as well. Unfortunately, after spending hours at the Glasgow City Archives taking pictures of the afore-mentioned documents of the Stirlings of Keir, I realized that I couldn't use any of these documents because this family wrote with a more artistic style than

⁸ F. H. Blackburne Daniell, ed., *Calendar of the Stuart Papers Belonging to His Majesty the King, Preserved at Windsor Castle.*, Great Britain. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. Searchable text Vols. 3, 5 & 6 (Burlington: TannerRitchie Publishing in collaboration with the Library and Information Services of the University of St Andrews, 2009), Cd. 927, 2189, 3430, 5046, 6163, 7104.

⁹ Anne Halkett, *The Autobiography of Anne, Lady Halkett, 1677-78* (London, British Library: transcription available at <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/autobiography-of-lady-anne-halkett>).

anticipated, meaning I was unable to understand even the gist of the documents while attempting to transcribe them. I spent three hours reading a ten-page marriage contract, learning only that I don't like reading marriage contracts. Owing to the deadlines imposed by my department, I was unable to use these documents in my dissertation.

While reading Rev. George Graeme's sermons, I often had to stop and pull out my own journal to meditate and reflect on the sermons. His sermon on who he calls the malefactor (the penitent thief in Luke 23:42-43) was one that I went back to several times after completing my dissertation because it stood out so much and helped center me when I was struggling.¹⁰ These sermons were fascinating when attempting to understand how eighteenth-century Episcopalians encountered piety, but were emotionally draining as a practicing Christian who was trying to research them for grad school. For some odd reason, I did not expect that studying church history would make me think about my own spirituality at the same time. Separating my work from my faith was difficult for the entirety of January to September, 2017.

Lady Anne's journals had their own set of issues.¹¹ First, I kept identifying with her too much. After reading her journals and autobiography, I knew her well enough

¹⁰ George Graeme, 'Sermon on Luke 23:42-43' (Sermon, St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow 20 February 1757).

¹¹ Anne Halkett, *The Autobiography of Anne, Lady Halkett, 1677-78*: London, British Library Add. MS 32,376. n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6490. 'Ocationall Meditations, 1658/9-60.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6491. 'Ocationall Meditations, 1660-63.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6492. 'Ocationall Meditations and Select Contemplations. Instructions to My Son, 1668-70/1.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6493. 'The Widows Mite, & Occationall Meditations, 1673-74.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6497. 'Meditations, 1686/7-88.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6498. 'Ocationall Meditations, 1688-1690.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6499. 'Ocationall Meditations, 1690-91.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6500. 'Of Watchfullnese, 1693/4-95.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

———. "NLS. MS. 6501. 'Select & Occationall Obseruations, 1696-97.'" National Library of Scotland, n.d.

to easily place myself alongside her in the seventeenth century. I began to laugh along with her, as if we were friends. Alongside her I was furious at Moses for hesitating to accept the challenge God presented to him, and loved that Anne wrote often of her issues with Moses.¹² She wrote endlessly of her passion for the Episcopal Church, tradition and Eucharist, and as I read, I was cheering her along. Things started to get weird when she wrote often of her former boyfriend, Colonel Joseph Bampffield, decades after their affair, referring to him as ‘CB’; I am also called CB by my friends. She wrote about ‘CB’ a lot.¹³ Anne experienced a great amount of death and heartbreak during her lifetime, and her first response was always to pray, to thank God, and to have hope for the future. Even when her son died in prison (for supporting the Jacobite cause as his mother did) at the young age of thirty, she rejoiced that God took him from her before he could encounter more strife.¹⁴ Anne made me feel I could get through anything, because she had it far worse and still praised the Lord.

On trips to castles and estates, either with visiting friends or when I adventured in Scotland alone, I often became distracted by studying portraits of the family’s women during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, looking for their religion, looking for their records. While the trips began with excitement, guilt at exploring Scotland instead of studying soon set in. When walking through churches and cathedrals, I spent more time than I normally did in thinking how the building changed during the Reformation as did the ways in which the congregation experienced piety.

I lived in student halls in the West End of Glasgow for a year. But right before submitting my dissertation, I moved into the spare bedroom of a friend’s flat in Dennistoun where I stayed for the remainder of my time in Glasgow. My original plan after submitting was not to think about church, church history, Scottish history, or the eighteenth century until the first of October when I would need to start writing a paper for a conference. Of course, I didn’t follow through with this. I submitted and celebrated on Friday then woke up Saturday morning and decided to take a walk around my new neighborhood. And of course, I ended up at Glasgow Cathedral (St.

———. “NLS. MS. 6502. ‘Select and Occationall Meditations, 1697/8-99.’” National Library of Scotland, n.d.

¹² Anne Halkett, ‘Ocationall Meditations, 1688-1690’, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS. 6498, n.d.

¹³ Anne Halkett, *The Autobiography of Anne, Lady Halkett, 1677-78*: BL Add. MS 32,376. n.d.

¹⁴ Anne Halkett. ‘Of Watchfullnese, 1693/4-95’, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 6500, n.d.

Mungo's of the Church of Scotland denomination, but commonly referred to as Glasgow Cathedral) on a forty-five minute guided tour with one of the volunteer guides. I only interrupted four times, and am still annoyed that when I asked the tour guides about the seventeenth of February, 1689 (the Emptying of the Cathedral) they thought it was a normal day. This day in particular was when the last Episcopal service at Glasgow Cathedral was held; when the church-goers went outside they were met with violence by Presbyterians from around the city and the Cameronian army who were ready and waiting for them.¹⁵ By this time, there was only one Episcopal minister left in the city, Archibald Inglis, who was willing to perform the service, as since William's Declaration was read in Glasgow on Christmas Day 1688, Episcopal ministers in Glasgow had been increasingly attacked and run out of the area. It was after 17th February 1689, the Emptying of the Cathedral, that the Scottish Episcopal Church entered the period of intense intolerance and practice in meeting houses.

During undergrad, I joked with my friend Alice about getting Episcopal shield tattoos. This didn't come to fruition then, but in the few days after meeting with Karin and deciding on a topic, I made an appointment with a tattoo studio in Glasgow. The Episcopal Church is where my friend group came from during undergrad and postgrad. My journey to find it during high school is a story very important to me. And once I decided to write my dissertation on it, the need for the tattoo became clear. My love for history is reflected in the ink on my back. My love for Jesus, the Episcopal Church, and the Liturgy; my friends, my communities; the love both the American Episcopal Church and the Scottish Episcopal Church are currently being punished for, and the basic response I give when people ask me what the Episcopal Church means to me (emphasis on liturgy, founded on questioning, and a place where women and queer people are given a voice); the piece of Scottish Reformation and Restoration history that I spent my postgraduate time working on are all reflected in the ink on my back. Exactly seven years after my original confirmation into the Episcopal Church, I received this permanent symbol of my commitment to my friendships, my faith, and my research.

The parallels between the eighteenth-century Episcopalian woman in Scotland and me, today in Glasgow, are remarkable. She was practicing a religion different than the Presbyterian majority, while I am a very religious person in a time and place in which the majority of people my age are agnostics or atheists. Pursuing

¹⁵ Clarke, 'The Scottish Episcopalian: 1688-1720' and Birkeland, 'Politics and Society of Glasgow 1680-1740'.

a postgraduate degree, I am relatively middle-class; the women I study were middle and upper class. This wasn't simply research, this was placing myself in the story. This was about finding out how I would have experienced life three hundred years ago in Scotland. I am passionate in my Episcopal faith and how I found belonging, tradition and reason in the Episcopal Church. Researching women that chose to retain this faith throughout a period of intense intolerance not only strengthens my own faith and resilience, but furthers my commitment to the Episcopal Church, to questioning, and betters my understanding of the piety of those who practiced before.

**Literary Similarities and Cultural Differences:
A Comparative Study on *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job**

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Both *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job are classical texts and with deprivation stories. These stories are similar in plot, narration and so on, but their cultural differences should not be underestimated. In *Zhuangzi*, the characters who are deprived do not generally question the way of Heaven, while in the Book of Job, Job does question the way of God. The stories in *Zhuangzi* show the author's helplessness in the Warring States time in ancient China; the Book of Job, it may be argued, reflects the author's seeking for justice for Jewish people in the time of the Babylonian Exile. The stories in *Zhuangzi* demonstrate that 'doing nothing' is the core concept in Taoist philosophy in ancient China while that concept can hardly be found in the Western Canon. Meanwhile the epistemological nature of the Book of Job cannot be separated from the text's religious motif – the justification of God and his action towards human beings.

This paper will compare two ancient texts from different cultures, examining both their literary similarities and their cultural differences. These texts are *Zhuangzi*, a foundational work for Taoism in ancient China, and the biblical Book of Job. *Zhuangzi* (or *Chuan-tzu*) is a collection of essays and stories in 33 chapters and is thought to have been written by the ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi and his disciples in the middle of the Warring States Period (c. 300 BC). The received text is the version of Guo Xiang (d. AD 312), who contributes by way of commentary a dense and philosophical treatise.¹ It is considered with the *Daodejing* (or *Tao Te Ching*) by Laozi to be one of the two classics that establish the fundamental conceptions of Taoism in China. Together with Confucianism, Taoism (道家) was founded of Chinese origin as a school of philosophy with an initial emphasis on naturally following the Tao (“道”, the ‘way’) that is the ultimate source and aim, and on passively accepting what happens to you, that is, literally, ‘doing nothing’ (无为, *wu*

¹ Martin Kern, ‘Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han’, in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, ed. by Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. I, pp. 73-75.

wei).² Compared with other ancient classics such as the *Analects* and *Mencius*, *Zhuangzi* changes the literary form by frequently focusing on fictional narratives as illustrations of philosophical reflections. In order to explain the concept of accepting what Heaven gives you or what happens to you and then ‘doing nothing’, there are several stories about characters who suffer deprivation or physical deformities. Such characters do not question the way of Heaven and simply receive what has happened to them with acceptance and fortitude. In these stories, there are also dramatic dialogues between the suffering character and his friends. In these dialogues are reflected different attitudes towards life understood as indicating the distinctions between Taoism and other voices such as are found in Confucian or other schools. But a great deal can be learnt about the origins of Taoism from these dialogues in *Zhuangzi*.

Similarly, in the Book of Job there is the story of a character, Job, who is deprived of his family and wealth and suffers terrible physical hardships. There are several dialogues between Job and his ‘comforters’ representative of voices or different values and it is only after these dialogues that the voice of God reveals itself at the end. Therefore, it is valuable to compare *Zhuangzi* with the Book of Job for their thematic similarities and their differences.

However, cross-cultural studies remind us that comparisons of texts from different cultural and religious backgrounds should be made with exceptional care. In such studies, an openness to others and dialogue are most important for proper understanding before conclusions are too hastily reached. As a background to this paper, therefore, I will draw upon the dialogical principles in the critical writings of Mikhail Bakhtin.³ Important also will be the principles of what in recent years has emerged and become known as Scriptural Reasoning. This began in the early 1990s in the comparative reading of sacred texts by Christian, Jewish and Islamic scholars as ‘a kind of depth-historiography’ intended to ‘transform polar opposites into dialogical pairs’.⁴ That is to say that the understanding and interpretation of one classical text

² Unlike Confucianism which has similarly huge influence on Chinese culture and thought but remains a cultural or philosophical ideology, Taoism was developed into two orientations: a philosophical one (道家思想) and a religious one (道教).

³ See, M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. by Wlad Godzic (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

⁴ Peter Ochs, quoted in Yang Huilin, ‘The Possibilities and Values of ‘Scriptural Reasoning’ between China and the West’ in *China, Christianity and the Question of Culture* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2014), p. 163.

could be open to the other in order to enrich understanding through a dialogue between differences and similarities. At the same time, such dialogical re-readings of classical text suggest reflections upon contemporary issues. By analyzing stories in *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job, it is our hope to shed some light on our understanding of some of today's urgent issues in an age of multi-culturalism and cultural exchange.

The Stories

Zhuangzi is not only a philosophical or a religious text. It also contains profoundly beautiful poetic narratives that are reflective of Taoist wisdom and teaching. Sometimes stories are employed to reflect a particular aspect of Zhuangzi's ideas and of particular interest is that known as the 'deprivation story'.

Here is one example. In Book VI of *Zhuangzi* (entitled 'The Way of the Great Teacher'), there is a story about Ziyu, who is deformed and deprived by Heaven. The four wise men Zisi, Ziyu, Zili and Zilai become good friends because they share the same idea of 'how death and birth, living on and disappearing, compose the one body'. Sometime later Ziyu becomes grotesquely deformed and Zisi goes to ask about his friend. Here is the translation by the nineteenth century missionary and sinologist James Legge (1815-1897) in his late contribution in 1891 to Max Müller's great work *Sacred Books of the East* (Vol. 39):

He was a crooked hunchback; his five viscera were squeezed into the upper part of his body; his chin bent over his navel; his shoulder was higher than his crown; on his crown was an ulcer pointing to the sky; his breath came and went in gasps.⁵

Before we begin the detailed discussion about this passage, we should first explain the reasons for choosing Legge's old translation. Firstly, although there are a number of more recent translations of *Zhuangzi*, (e.g. Burton Watson, Wang Rongpei)⁶, Legge's translation remains the first important scholarly translation which maintains its authoritative position. Secondly, as a Christian missionary, Legge's translation of *Zhuangzi* reflected his cultural and religious difficulties between Chinese Taoist philosophy and Christianity and the Bible.

⁵ Zhuangzi, *The Writings of Kwang-sze*, trans. by James Legge, in *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. by Friedrich Max Müller, vol. 39. 'The Sacred Books of China, The Texts of Taoism', part I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), p. 247.

⁶ Chuang Tzu, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. trans. by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi*, trans. by Wang Rongpei (Changsha: Hunan People's Press; Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1999).

Although afflicted with this terrible deformity, Ziyu does not question the way of Heaven. Instead he praises the Creator who had made him the deformed object that he is, easy in his mind and making no complaint at all. He even limps to a well and looks at himself, praising the Creator again. When his friend asks him whether he hates his condition or not, Ziyu replies that he does not even though his body would soon begin to decay and die. After all, he might then be reborn in wonderful ways. Thus following the flow of nature, he can transcend both joy and sorrow:

If He were to transform my left arm into a cock, I should be watching with it the time of the night; if He were to transform my right arm into a cross-bow, I should then be looking for a Hsiao to (bring down and) roast; if He were to transform my rump-bone into a wheel, and my spirit into a horse, I should then be mounting it, and would not change it for another steed.⁷

Ziyu, then, never challenges the ways of the Creator and never complains about his condition. Zhuangzi thus reflects a perfect Taoist attitude toward life and death: when one has got what one has to do, there is the time to do it; submission to what happens to you is the highest priority; when we do what the time requires us to do and when we show submission, there is felt neither joy nor sorrow. This kind of state, according to Ziyu (that is, according to Zhuangzi), is a perfect state to which the ancients aspired. In the end, Ziyu admits that, since ‘creatures cannot overcome Heaven (the inevitable) is a long-acknowledged fact, why should I hate my condition?’ Obviously, the conclusion for Ziyu is that when you are faced with illness or

⁷ *The Writings of Kwang-sze*, p. 247-248. In this quoted passage there is a controversial interpretation: on the crown of his head was an ulcer pointing to the sky. The original Chinese is 句贅指天. According to various authoritative versions, its basic meaning is ‘the hair bun in the back of his head is pointing to the sky’. Here Legge may have misunderstood the original text. Zhao Jing has recently suggested that Legge’s translation of *Zhuangzi* is rather inferior in quality to his translation of *Daodejing* because he lacked a competent native scholar to assist him. This Legge himself admits. See Zhao Jing, ‘A Study of the ‘Preface’ and ‘Introduction’ to James Legge’s *The Texts of Taoism*’, in *A Poetics of Translation: Between Chinese and English Literature*, ed. by David Jasper, Geng Youzhuang, and Wang Hai (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), p. 98. However, the sense is certainly unclear. A more recent translation suggests, ‘his neck-bone pointed up to the sky’. Chuang Tzu, *The Inner Chapters*, trans. by Solala Towler (London: Watkins Publishing, 2010), p. 128.

misfortune, Heaven or the Creator destines you for the condition; that humankind cannot overcome Heaven. Submission then is the only response.

Here we may take a moment to discuss the position of James Legge, from whose translation of *Zhuangzi* this paper takes its quotations. After more than thirty years in China, in 1876 Legge became the first Professor of Chinese at Oxford University. In the above quotations, we suggest that Legge is engaging in a kind of Scriptural Reasoning, or cross-cultural dialogue. In the original Chinese text, the party that gives the illness or deformation to Ziyu is 造物者, that is, literally, the Creator. However, Legge translates it variously by employing not one but three terms: 'Creator', 'He' and 'Heaven'. 'Creator' is closest in meaning to the original, but Heaven is also possible since the Chinese are familiar with this concept in Taoism. 'He', however, when used in such a context, is the word that clearly suggests, for Legge, a reflection upon the personal God of the Bible. However close Legge endeavours to remain to the original meaning of Chinese classical texts, his Christian missionary stance can never be entirely forgotten. The word 'He' is, for him, suggestive of the God of the Bible, and reveals his tensions as a translator, both theologically and philosophically, with the culturally and religiously remote Taoism of Zhuangzi. In short, when Legge encounters the concept of determinism or fatalism in Taoism, he is left wondering if there is a God at all in Taoism. On the other hand, even though the deeply Christian Legge may not interpret each idea of Zhuangzi precisely, still his understanding of Taoism is remarkable and to the point. In his appraisal of the story of Ziyu Legge clearly recognized that such submission to one's lot is central to the teachings of Taoism.⁸ Many years later Legge wrote with profound understanding of Taoism which, in his widely read book, *The Religions of China* (1880), he described respectfully as 'the name both of a religion and a philosophy'.⁹

Besides Ziyu's story of being ill or deformed, there are other similar narratives in *Zhuangzi*. For example, in Book IV, which is called *Renjianshi* (that is, 'The Way of the Human World'), there is a description of a person named Shu:

There was the deformed object Shu. His chin seemed to hide his navel; his shoulders were higher than the crown of his head; the knot of his hair pointed to the sky; his five viscera were all compressed into the upper part of his body, and his two thigh bones were like ribs.¹⁰

⁸ *The Writings of Kwang-sze*, p. 248.

⁹ James Legge, *The Religions of China* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1880), p. 159.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220. Here it can be seen that Legge's translation of 'ulcer' in Book VI is problematic because the original words are the same in this passage. Word-for-word translation is impossible.

Once again, although stricken with this terrible condition, Shu did not complain or question the way of the Creator. Indeed, when compared with Ziyu, Shu is even more optimistic. He could make a living by sharpening needles and washing clothes for others. He could support ten people by sifting rice and discarding the husks. Because of his condition he was free from conscription into the army. In the end, speaking on behalf of Shu, the author says that if a man who is crippled is able to support himself into good old age, then ordinary people with 'crippled virtue' should achieve even more.

We can observe from what we have seen that when faced with terrible physical deformity or ailments, the general attitude in *Zhuangzi* is to submit to one's lot, to have what you are given and to do what you can do. The reason or the cause of such ailments or deformity is never questioned. In other words, such characters never complain, doubt or question the Creator. It may then be suggested that this sense of passive-acceptance is one of the essential ideas in *Zhuangzi* and in Taoism.

What, then, of Job? A man also suffering deep afflictions through no fault of his own, Job is not satisfied or convinced about the reasons suggested by his 'comforters' for the misfortunes that have happened to him. He refutes the charges put on him by his friends. Only after long questioning of the ways of God does Job come to acknowledge his own ignorance and inability, finally realizing that one cannot employ human conceptions of right and wrong to judge God. One cannot only fear God, for his mystery lies beyond the boundary of human understanding. In the words of Gabriel Josipovici:

The Book of Job is about the impossibility of man's ever understanding the causal links (the story), and yet his need to trust that God does indeed uphold the world, that there is a story there of which we are a part. It shows that man must neither simply accept that there is a story nor refuse to believe that there is one, but that it is his duty constantly to question God (and himself) about it.¹¹

We see at once in the Old Testament story both the similarities with and the deep differences from the deterministic Taoism of *Zhuangzi*.

Zhuangzi

It is quite clear, on the other hand, that there are literary similarities between the stories of *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job. Both are about good characters who suffer through no apparent fault of their own, and both have dialogues which reflect voices

¹¹ Gabriel Josipovici, *The Book of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 290.

from different schools of thought. However, we should never forget that these two works grew from very different cultural origins. Zhuangzi offers his conceptions of Taoism, which is one of the most important philosophical and religious schools of thoughts in ancient China. His writings are set within a specific historical and cultural context in ancient China.

As we have seen, there is a certain type of character who when stricken with illness or deformity thinks that submission to life and what it brings is what they should do without complaining and questioning. Besides the two examples already mentioned, there are other stories in *Zhuangzi* reflecting a similar attitude when people lose a spouse or a friend. Their characters are not only submissive but even sing songs or manifest a certain happiness at funerals or other sad occasions.

In Book III of *Zhuangzi* ('The Way of Nourishing Life'), there is such a story. When Lao Dan (Laozi) dies, his friend Qinyi goes to his room to mourn, as is the custom. But Qin Yi only utters three loud shouts and departs, and his disciples think that their master has not shown proper grief as a friend. Qin Yi explains that 'quiet acquiescence in what happens at its proper time, and quietly submitting (to its ceasing) afford no occasion for grief or for joy'.¹² Such acquiescence is highly reminiscent of the ancient Christian teaching of *apatheia* or dispassion: the refusal to be overwhelmed or displaced by strong emotions.¹³ It is what the American monk Thomas Merton, in his study of the early Desert Fathers calls '*quies*'¹⁴ that is the fruit of purity of heart, and it is no accident that Merton was himself drawn to write upon *Zhuangzi* in his book *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (1965).

A similar disposition is found in the story of Zisanghu in Book VI of *Zhuangzi*. When Zisanghu dies and before he is buried, Confucius hears of this and sends his disciple Zigong to see if he can help or assist in any way. When Zigong arrives, someone is composing a song, and someone else is playing a lute. Zigong is very surprised and says that what they were doing was not appropriate for the occasion. But the two men simply looked at each other and laughed out loud, saying that Zigong does not understand what was appropriate. What these two meant is that dying is part of what the Creator has ordered. Therefore, what we should do most appropriately is quietly accept and submit and even enjoy ourselves at the time of such a grievous incident.

The most familiar story of this sort is about Zhuangzi himself. It is narrated in Book XVIII. Zhuangzi's wife has died and his friend Huizi goes to give his condolences.

¹² *The Writings of Kwang-sze*, p. 199.

¹³ For a contemporary discussion of this in Christianity see Rowan Williams, *Being Disciples* (London: SPCK, 2016), pp. 77-79.

¹⁴ Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert* (London: Sheldon Press, 1974), p. 8.

When Huizi arrives, he sees Zhuangzi sitting on the ground with his two legs straight in front of him, singing a song and banging on a pottery basin. Huizi chides Zhuangzi for his failure to grieve for his wife and even, apparently, to be enjoying himself. Zhuangzi replies that his wife has merely returned to the state in which she was before she was born and that now she was with nature once again. Nothing unnatural has taken place. Therefore, Zhuangzi concludes, why should he be sorrowful when his wife was lying between Heaven and Earth?

Why do these characters in *Zhuangzi* neither question nor complain about what has happened to them? Either they quietly accept and submit to their fate, or they seem to behave in extraordinary ways. But there is one occasion when Zhuangzi does question the ways of Heaven. In the last passage of Book VI ('The Way of the Great Teacher'), we find the story of Ziyu and Zisang, who were friends. It rains continuously for ten days and Ziyu fears that Zisang may be in distress. Ziyu wraps up some rice and goes to Zisang's house to give it to him. When he comes near to Zisang's house, he hears from inside contradictory sounds of both singing and wailing. It is Zisang who is playing a lute and uttering the words 'Father', 'Mother', 'Heaven' and 'Men'. Zisang is repeating these words over and over, singing and wailing all the time and so Ziyu goes into the house and inquires as to the cause. Zisang replies (in Legge's translation):

I was thinking, and thinking in vain, how it was that I was brought to such extremity. Would my parents have wished me to be so poor? Heaven overspreads all without any partial feeling, and so does Earth sustain all;—would Heaven and Earth make me so poor with any unkindly feeling? I was trying to find out who had done it, and I could not do so. But here I am in this extremity!—it is what is appointed for me!¹⁵

Legge significantly does not translate the original words of the last sentence literally. According to the original Chinese text, it is fate, lot or destiny (命) which made him so poor and be in such extremity. But who or what rules such fate or destiny, neither Zisang nor Zhuangzi himself asks further. Legge himself adds a significant footnote to this passage: 'Here is the highest issue of Tâoism: – unquestioning submission to what is beyond our knowledge and control.'¹⁶

We suggest that here James Legge was misunderstanding Zhuangzi's idea by confusing the thinking of Zhuangzi and that of Job. On the one hand, we agree that it

¹⁵ *The Writings of Kwang-sze*, p. 258.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 258, footnote 1.

is true that the stories selected in Zhuangzi and Job have a surface similarity, but on the other hand they are quite different in their philosophical or theological significance. Here, Zhuangzi is showing his fatalist or determinist stance in which one does nothing, while Job is more about the act of faith in which he is not 'doing nothing' but recognizing the power of God.

Historically and culturally, scholars of *Zhuangzi* through the ages, for example Qian Mu and Liu Xiaogan, have shown that peaceful acceptance and quiet submission to reality or fate is the central theme of this classical text¹⁷. Other scholars such as Fang Yong have also pointed out that it is not that Zhuangzi does not wish to ask the way of Heaven, but the context set within the stories gives him no choice¹⁸. This attitude of passive acceptance is the consequence of being either in the apparent situation of helplessness or that of hopelessness. It is generally accepted that the first part of *Zhuangzi*, usually called the Internal Section or Inner Chapters, was probably written by Zhuangzi himself, and the other two parts, called the External Section and the Miscellaneous Section, were written or collected by his disciples and their disciples after them. The theme and ideas established by Zhuangzi in the Internal Section are the essential spirit of the whole book. Zhuangzi himself lived in the period of the Warring States (403-221 BC), a time of turbulence and poverty.¹⁹ In these violent days, Zhuangzi lived in poverty, but he 'despised wealth and rank, power and fame, endeavouring to keep independent individuality in troubled times and seeking for an unfettered and unrestrained spirit.'²⁰ Zhuangzi's attitude of passive acceptance and submission reflected in his stories of suffering and deprivation should be contextualized in a period in China that was devastated by war and rife with political conspiracy and deception. In this season of darkness 'innocent people were slain without reason and society became a trap where human beings became brutalized'. The social context of Zhuangzi's time can be described as 'a period of history where

¹⁷ Qian Mu, *Collection of Annotations of Zhuangzi* (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2014). Liu Xiaogan, *Philosophy of Zhuangzi and Its Development* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2010). Qian Mu was a representative in continuing traditional Chinese culture after the political change in mainland China in 1950s by moving to Hong Kong and Taiwan, while Liu Xiao was the representative of the first generation in studying Zhuangzi after the reform and open-up in mainland China in 1980s.

¹⁸ Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi*, annotated by Fang Yong (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010).

¹⁹ See, Patricia Buckley Ebrey *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 38-43.

²⁰ Yuan Xingpei, ed, *History of Chinese Literature* (Beijing: Higher Education Press, 1999), vol. I, p. 114. (Text slightly edited).

blood was on the rampage and which mercilessly revealed itself before Zhuangzi'. In this winter of despair Zhuangzi reveals an evil and vicious human world in which the Taoist 'passive attitude and way of dealing with oneself and with others are a reflection of helplessness'.²¹

Philosophically, this teaching of Zhuangzi was later developed and called 'doing nothing' and it forms one of the central ideas in Taoism. It has recently been the subject of studies of contemporary culture in such writings as Wang Hai's 2016 essay 'The Power of Powerlessness', linking 'doing nothing' or 'wu wei' with the thought of Maurice Blanchot.²² As discussed above, in most cases these deprived individuals do not question who or which party consigns them to such a miserable state, with the only exception of Zisang's case, when he exclaims that it is fate, lot or destiny that makes him become what he is. Then what is exactly this fate, lot or destiny, in Zhuangzi's Taoism, and what is its relationship with the supreme Dao?

In *Zhuangzi*, there are a number of places where Zhuangzi writes about fate. For instance, in Book V, Zhuangzi illustrated the idea of fate through the speaking of Confucius: 'Death and life, perseveration and ruin, failure and success, poverty and wealth, superiority and inferiority, blame and praise, hunger and thirst, cold and hot – these are the changes of circumstances, the operation of our appointed lot.'²³ Although Zhuangzi is considered as the original follower of Laozi in Taoism, this idea of our 'appointed lot' is actually drawn from Confucius. In Book XII of the *Analects*, Zixia, one of Confucius' disciples, said: 'There is the following saying which I have heard, death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honours depend upon Heaven.'²⁴ Here James Legge rendered the idea of 'lot' (命) as 'determined appointment', which is not an exact interpretation. Another British Sinologist Arthur Waley rendered 'lot'(命) as Heaven ('Death and life are the decree of Heaven; wealth and rank depend upon the will of Heaven'.²⁵), which is more accurate since in ancient Chinese culture, whether in Confucianism or in Taoism, of these two Chinese characters 命 means 'lot' and 天 means 'Heaven'. They are equal in meaning and usage on some occasions and are often used together as one phrase. Thus it is safe to conclude that in these deprivation stories the party that establishes these extreme

²¹ Chen Guying, *Contemporary Annotation and Translation of Zhuangzi* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2007), p. 127. (Text slightly edited).

²² Wang Hai, 'The Power of Powerlessness: Rediscovering the Radicality of Wu Wei in Daoism through Blanchot', in *A Poetics of Translation*, pp. 195-204.

²³ *The Writings of Kwang-sze*, p. 231.

²⁴ *The Writings of Kwang-sze*, pp. 252-53.

²⁵ Confucius, *The Analects*, translated by Arthur Waley (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1998), p. 147.

situations is fate or Heaven. However, Zhuangzi seems to expand the Confucian idea of fate or Heaven by including not only the question of death and life, wealth and rank, but also that of superiority and inferiority, blame and praise etc.

Although Zhuangzi developed the idea of fate from Confucianism, his idea of Heaven is evolved from Laozi. Apparently, in *Daodejing*, Heaven is in such a superior position that sometimes it is equal to Dao itself (e.g. chapter 16; chapter 47). It is often the case that Laozi's Heaven is used in parallel to Earth (e.g. chapter 5: Heaven and Earth are ruthless; chapter 7: Heaven is eternal, the Earth everlasting; chapter 25: something formless yet complete... existed before heaven and earth.²⁶). Thus the Heaven in *Daodejing* is more inclined to be in a form and materialized. However, the Heaven in *Zhuangzi* is often used in parallel to human beings or human actions, thus being more formless and unspeakable. By discussing lot and Heaven, we come to the key concept in Taoism — Dao, or the Way. In the *Daodejing*, Heaven is often set in parallel to, or even equal to, Dao, which is more inclined to be in form, like Heaven. Whereas in *Zhuangzi*, Dao is seldom mentioned and when it is it is more likely to be formless, being immaterialized and unspeakable. In the *Daodejing*, Dao is called the beginning and linked to 'to have' and 'to have not' (at the very beginning of *Daodejing*, it says that the Dao is both nameless and named at the same time, the former being the beginning of Heaven and Earth and the latter being the Mother of all things). Whereas in *Zhuangzi*, Zhuangzi himself explained his doubt: 'if there is this beginning in Laozi's sense, is there a beginning in the beginning?'²⁷ By asking and questioning in this way, Zhuangzi made his special contribution in the development of Taoism by transforming the materialized Dao into a more formless one, thus developing Laozi's philosophical Dao into a philosophical, literary and ritual Dao. Maybe we, as readers, can imitate Zhuangzi's particular approach and ask this question: As far as Dao is concerned, is there a *bereshith* in the *bereshith*, if there is a *bereshith*?²⁸

After discussing the historical, cultural and philosophical significance of the deprivation stories in *Zhuangzi*, we may look at them from another perspective, that is, the dialogical principles of Bakhtin. If we put the context in which *Zhuangzi* was written and place it in a larger dimension, we may find that Zhuangzi's attitude, whether it be termed as passive acceptance or 'doing nothing', is only one school of thought in that epoch of tremendous changes in Chinese thought and religion. The traditional Chinese four-character phrase 'One-hundred School Contending in

²⁶ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. by Arthur Waley (Beijing: Foreign Languages Teaching and Research Press, 1998), pp. 11, 15, 53.

²⁷ Wang Bo, *The Philosophy of Zhuangzi* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004), p. 156.

²⁸ *Bereshith* (Genesis 1.1) is the first work of the Hebrew Bible, meaning 'at' or 'in' [the] head." It is usually translated as 'In the beginning'.

Thoughts' (百家争鸣) is a vivid description of the emergence and development of different schools of thought in the Spring and Autumn (722-481 BC) and Warring States times. Zhuangzi's Taoism was not only one of the outstanding schools of thought in these early periods in Chinese history, but was also both influencing and being influenced by other schools. For instance, as we discussed above, in *Zhuangzi* there are a number of passages about Confucius such as in Zisang's story and also about Laozi. Confucian voices and Taoist voices, even two different voices in the same Taoist school, are contending, questioning, and influencing each other, generating creativity in that particular time. In *The Origin and Goal of History* (1949), Karl Jaspers argued that in this Spring and Autumn and Warring States period, two of the three major religions in China (Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism) were born and then institutionalized. Philosophers and writers such as Confucius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Mozi (Mo-tzu) form a special part of what Jaspers called the Axial Age, along with more or less contemporary philosophical thinkers in the West such as Socrates and Plato. Jaspers further pointed out that cultures in the Axial Age such as those of ancient Greece, the Hebrew peoples, China and India went through a transformative stage. That is, they all transcended their predecessors in the so-called primitive cultures. Those ancient cultures such as those of ancient Babylon and Egypt, which did not go through the same process, died and became cultural fossils.²⁹

Jaspers also suggests that some classic texts in both the East and the West were formed in similar epochs and even in the same age. That is the case, he would argue, for *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job. As we have seen the concept of 'doing nothing' is at the heart of Zhuangzi's Taoism. However, the fundamental concept in the Book of Job is different. Although there are clear similarities such as the plot of stories, the literary narration and the dialogues, there is nothing like 'doing nothing' in the Book of Job and here the Hebraic and the Chinese are clearly distinct.

The Book of Job

Fundamentally the Book of Job is a theological text, a poetic reflection on theodicy: how can the good and loving God allow innocent people to suffer? With its ancient origins in very early Egyptian, Babylonian and Sumerian texts,³⁰ the theme of Job continues in poetry and philosophy, the greatest example in English literature being John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667).

²⁹ For further comment on China and the Axial Age see, Eric Ziolkowski, 'Axial Age Theorising and the Comparative Study of Religion and Literature', in *Literature and Theology*, vol. 28, no. 2 (June, 2014), pp. 129-50.

³⁰ See, Norman H. Snaith, *The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose* (London: SCM, 1968).

The Book of Job actively seeks to justify the ways of God to men. Job does not 'do nothing' but rather strives to develop his own theology. Briefly here we need to establish something of the historical and cultural background of the text. Scholars generally agree that Job is to be understood as a just man living approximately in the time of the Jewish patriarch Abraham though not himself a Hebrew.³¹ The story of Job extends back deep into oral traditions and it was long thought that the Book of Job was written down in the reign of Solomon. Tradition has even attributed the book to Solomon himself.³² More recent studies reveal that the book was most probably written, or, more accurately, compiled, in the Hellenistic Age or at the time of the Babylonian Exile (c. 597-39 BC). It has even been suggested that the Book of Job was first written as a verse play as during the Hellenistic period there were many newly built theatres in the region of Palestine.³³ Others would argue that the time of writing or compilation was the period of Babylonian Exile or shortly after it when the Jewish people, under oppressive conditions, were facing a crisis and a profound challenge to their religious faith and national culture.³⁴ This later dating makes sense inasmuch as the questioning spirit in the Book of Job is quite different from other early Pentateuchal stories such as the testing of Abraham. In Genesis 22, it seems, Abraham never doubted the astounding order given by God and there is no description of Abraham's psychology at all when faced with the situation of losing his only son at such an old age.³⁵ However, Job ponders intensely upon what has brought all his woes upon him since he has kept the ways of God so piously. He questions what justifies what happened to him and such questioning or inquiry, whatever its ancient roots, is also one of the most prominent features of Greek philosophy. At the same time Job's questioning of Heaven's justice may be taken in the context of what the Jewish people themselves were suffering in the exilic and post-exilic period. The people who once, as they thought, complied with God's covenant so faithfully, who respected its laws and who were chosen and protected by Jehovah, had now lost their homeland and

³¹ See further, James L. Crenshaw, 'Job', in John Barton and John Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 331-34.

³² See, Edward J. Young, trans. by Daniel Chow, et al. *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Hong Kong: Taosheng Publishing House, 1977), p. 355; *The Chinese Study Bible* (Shanghai: Chinese Christian Association, 2006), p. 769.

³³ Zhu Weizhi, *Twelve Lectures on Biblical Literature* (Beijing: People's Literature Press, 1989), p. 307.

³⁴ Crenshaw, *op.cit.*, p. 332.

³⁵ See Erich Auerbach's classic essay 'Odysseus' Scar', that describes Genesis 22 as 'fraught with background' in *Mimesis*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 3-23.

were governed by alien nations. They were confronted with the inevitable question: why has Jehovah deserted them when they were so faithful? The question is that of Job.

Here it should be mentioned that neither the characters in *Zhuangzi* nor Job question the way of Heaven (although in the beginning Job did question the justification of a good man being punished while ultimately he did not question the way of God). However, their philosophical and even religious differences are also quite obvious and deserve more attention than they have been given. Zhuangzi's not questioning Heaven is a reflection of determinist or fatalist conception in Taoism while Job's not questioning God is the reflection of the fact that Job is a man of faith. Against the background of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of discourse both active and passive,³⁶ Job can be considered as the 'active' narrator or learned interpreter who is deeply concerned about the Jewish people's fate and is eagerly seeking a way out of bondage. Job's three 'comforters' represent a more 'passive', traditional Hebrew religious culture, insisting on a pattern of cause-effect. If we suffer ills there must be a reason for it. It is generally agreed that the passages concerning Elihu were inserted later into the text and that Elihu himself is probably Jewish.³⁷ It might be suggested that the Elihu passages are relatively insignificant because Job does not respond to him at all and if these passages are omitted the narrative line between Job's talking and God's responding out of the storm would not be disturbed. On the other hand, it could equally be argued that Elihu's contribution is as important as other discussions in the Book of Job if we place the whole text into the later context of the Hellenistic Age or the Babylonian Exile. Elihu can then be considered as a representative of Hellenistic Jews who held concepts that are markedly different from more traditional perspectives, but at the same time who were perhaps not insightful or learned enough to seek out an appropriate theological solution since God does not respond to Elihu but only to the more profound Job directly. Job stands distinctly apart from his three friends, against whom God is directly angry,³⁸ and Elihu.

Conclusion

When proclaiming James Legge's contribution in bridging inter-cultural communication between China and West, it is also important to recognize that he was probably confusing the philosophy of Zhuangzi and the theology of Job. Our aim has been to separate and point out the difference between the two traditions. 'Doing nothing' is an attitude of escaping from troublesome and war-fraught times, which

³⁶ See, Todorov, *op.cit.*, pp. 70-72.

³⁷ See, *The Chinese Study Bible*, p. 800.

³⁸ Job 42.7.

has its profound influence in Chinese culture in almost every aspect. The Book of Job, the story of which appears much earlier than the compilation of Bible itself, shows Job's staunch faith in God in troubled times for Jewish people.

To some extent, Zhuangzi's ideas are close to Stoic thinking, though there are crucial differences also. The implication of much thinking about comparative religion and culture in the nineteenth century, following such pivotal works as Sir Edward Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865),³⁹ was that all religions have a common origin. But, to be fair to him, after his many years as a western scholar and missionary in China, this was not a model to which James Legge subscribed. In *The Religions of China*, a mature book published at the end of his life, Legge is quite clear that cultures and religions, even when they have profound similarities, have even more profound differences.

For *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job, the literary similarities in narration and character are clear and important, but we should not underestimate their cultural and philosophical differences. In his great translation of the Taoist classic, which he renders as the *Tâo Teh King*, Legge readily admits the untranslatability of *Tao* (道). He simply leaves it as transliterated, noting its similarity with another untranslatable term from the Greek, the *Logos* of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel.⁴⁰ To Legge, as a Christian, *Tao* is the equivalent of something like 'duty to God' – but he is not prepared to go further, and he quotes his great predecessor in Chinese studies in Paris, M. Abel-Rémusat, writing in 1823: '*Ce mot me semble ne pas pouvoir être bien traduit, si ce n'est pas le mot λογος dans le triple sens de souverain Être, de raison, et de parole.*'⁴¹ The similarities between *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job are mainly in their textual or narrative appearance, or we might say that they only share literary similarities. But as far as culture is concerned they are different, one being essentially a philosophical and literary text, passive in its nature, and another more profoundly and actively theological. However, although we cannot be naïve to the differences between these classical texts in different cultures, it is possible today that we share through them a dialogical spirit as the hospitality of Scriptural Reasoning suggests. Classical or scriptural texts remain, in a sense, timeless, their terms synchronic across all cultural and religious barriers. In this spirit, both of our texts, Chinese and biblical writings continue to speak to us, bound together by their common literary qualities and characteristics. In them, literature becomes a binding force across religious and

³⁹ See further, E. O. James, *Comparative Religion* (London: Methuen, 1961), pp. 15-34.

⁴⁰ *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 39, pp. 12-13, 47.

⁴¹ Quoted in, James Legge, Introduction to The Texts of Tâoism, Part 1, in *The Sacred Books of China*, vol. 39 of *The Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1891), p.12.

philosophical differences. With a willingness to have dialogue between such texts, differences can be tolerated or reassessed. Thus the literary qualities of *Zhuangzi* and the Book of Job bind them together even as we address their profound religious differences.

Book Reviews

ARMAND LÉON VAN OMMEN. *Suffering in Worship: Anglican Liturgy in Relation to Stories of Suffering People* (London: Routledge [Liturgy, Worship and Society], 2017). 170 pp. ISBN 9781472475404. £110.

This book is a welcome addition to the small but growing library of work integrating the study of Christian liturgy with ritual and pastoral studies, drawing on anthropology and other social sciences as well as the traditional theological and historical disciplines.

The study is based on fieldwork carried out in Anglican chaplaincies in the Benelux countries. Given the limited group of congregations, it was necessary to exercise particular care in protecting the identities of ordained and lay ministers who participated, and especially of congregants who shared painful experiences with the author. This means that, while particular individuals are referred to throughout the book, they are not located in the context of their communities or of their own narratives – at least not in a way perceptible to the reader. A consequence is that the participants are almost reduced, if not to a statistic, then to disembodied and unidimensional characters in miscellaneous anecdotes. It is accordingly very difficult to appreciate how the fieldwork relates to the liturgical theology which the author develops in the latter part of the work. While the anonymity of the subjects certainly needed to be protected, one wonders whether this might have been done in another way. As the author discounts any relevance to their being members of Anglican communities in diaspora, it is presumably not really relevant that the study was carried out in the Archdeaconry of North-West Europe of the Church of England Diocese in Europe. If this detail were omitted, might it have been possible to include suitably anonymized accounts of the stories of the participants, and more first person reflections of their experiences in worship?

The author emphasizes the Eucharistic provision of (Church of England) *Common Worship* as the liturgical usage common to the congregations studied, with some reflection on the particular words of the authorized texts. Particularly given the acknowledged diversity of provision within *Common Worship*, and the diversity of liturgical traditions within which it is used, this would seem relevant only if there were some comparison with the experience of people processing suffering in very different worshipping contexts. Where corporate worship does not evoke the passion of Christ so vividly, or include partaking with others of the sacramental elements, what is the experience of those burdened by their own or others' suffering? Does the experience of corporate worship give meaning to suffering in the same way, by

connecting it with that of Jesus, and does it offer resolution which enables the worshiper to go out into the world strengthened and renewed?

Notwithstanding these reservations about the way in which the material is presented, and questions left unanswered, this is a pioneering work. The book offers valuable insights into ways in which worshipers may relate to God, their Christian faith, and the congregation, and in so doing find some resolution to their own pain and suffering, and that of others and the world generally, in commemorating the saving death of Christ in the Eucharist. The engagement of quotidian human experience with the Christian narrative of human salvation in the liturgy has the potential to bring healing to individuals, families, and communities. Those engaged in pastoral ministry, and who are gifted with some liturgical sensibility, would readily recognise this. What is needed are the tools to enable those less gifted to exercise liturgical leadership effectively, not so that it becomes a vehicle of pastoral care to particular individuals, but so that it enables worshipers, in identifying with Christ in his passion, to find resolution of whatever burdens they may be carrying. This study provides the foundations on which such material might be developed.

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DOROTHY C. BASS, KATHLEEN A. CAHALAN, BONNIE J. MILLER-MCLEMORE, JAMES R. NIEMAN, AND CHRISTIAN B. SCHAREN. *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016). 325 pp. ISBN 9780802868732. £19.99.

JOYCE ANN MERCER AND BONNIE J. MILLER-MCLEMORE, EDS. *Conundrums in Practical Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). 320 pp. ISBN 9789004324237. £45.

Divinity students may well value both 'academic modules' and 'more practical topics', but consider the latter 'less challenging'. Educators soon get fed up of wisecracks from their peers that either go, 'Practical theology. Isn't that a contradiction in terms?' or, conversely, 'Isn't all theology supposed to be practical?' These two books go to the heart of this debate - and not simply to the relationship between theory and practice, but to questioning such taken-for-granted categories. Bonnie Miller-McLemore, being a common denominator, anchors these texts in a stream of scholarship in the USA that has recently included, but is not limited to, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (2012) which she edited. In many senses the volumes under

review not only go deeper than the *Companion*, they address significant deficiencies in its coverage.

Christian Practical Wisdom is a book about knowledge, but of a particular kind. Objective, abstract knowledge (the way of viewing the world that is traditionally privileged in universities) lies at one end of a theory/practice spectrum. The book's claim is that the sort of knowing that energizes Christian life is located closer to the opposite end of that spectrum, where we find embodied, situated, knowing-in-action. This would likely come as no surprise to already-sympathetic readers, but with the aim of rebalancing the relationship between theory and practice (not overthrowing the former), the authors offer particular insight into the *interplay* between various ways of knowing. What emerges is imaginative description and conceptual defence of wisdom that is 'morally attuned, rooted in a tradition that affirms the good, and driven toward aims that seek the good' (*Christian Practical Wisdom*, p.5).

The authors are five leading practical theologians in the USA who gathered in a retreat centre and continued conversations that developed relationships among them that were integral to the crafting of the chapters that bear their respective names. Theirs, as they insist it be termed, is a collective rather than a collected volume. In Part One each author articulates an aspect of Christian practical wisdom in largely autobiographical or autoethnographic mode. In exploring how bodies shape knowledge, Miller-McLemore relates, for example, her experience of discovering the body habits and posture of an Episcopal tradition, contrasting with those of her Disciples of Christ heritage. Through a reflection on the relief brought by swimming whilst recovering from back surgery, Cahalan reflects on the value of the *Lectio Divina*. A camping trip lies at the centre of Bass's story of encountering the wonder of God's creation, interwoven with family relationships developed through pain and reconciliation; for her, wisdom in everyday life. Nieman unpacks the local wisdom that he found lay behind a Lutheran congregation intentionally building the upper floor of their church hall to be sloping. By way of his appreciation of, amongst others, Alabama Shakes and Jack White, Scharen reflects on the wisdom found in rock music that helped him engage with brokenness at individual and societal levels.

Each of these chapters is valuable in its own right as an exemplar of how to write 'theological reflection' (the expectation sometimes presented to Divinity students with little in the way of examples to get them going). However, Part Two offers conceptual discussions and ought to be read *after* Part One - a sequence especially important for readers who feel an urge to cut to the chase and skip what s/he considers to be 'fluffy' personal stories.

This second part traces the eclipsing of practical wisdom in the modern West and a critical discussion of attempts at its recovery in North American practical theology, such as the seminal work of Don Browning. Continuing the constructive

contribution, a further chapter proposes a creative interplay between imagination and modern, critical, biblical scholarship. With similar purpose, the final substantive chapter explores the relationship between spirituality and practical wisdom, largely through the frame of unknowing, apophatic mysticism.

In the second text the *conundrums* explored by this largely US-based list of scholars (there is one each from South Africa and Norway) demonstrate the maturity of the discipline by not being simply intellectually puzzling, but having material implications for social inequalities and political injustices experienced by people on a variety of margins. Tom Beaudoin tackles three interwoven ‘disorientations’: the theological significance of practice, the white-racialised character of his own practical theology, and a ‘Christian-Centrism’ that neglects the possibilities of knowing itself through understanding a second religious (or nonreligious) tradition. He deploys a term from religious studies, ‘christianicity’ to draw attention to how the practice of Christianity is actively making and sustaining an identity: rather than being an abstract, solid state ‘thing’.

Eileen Campbell-Reed’s conundrum is that faced by any researcher who values the richness of a single case study for demonstrating the complexity of a situation, but who wonders, or is warned, about the danger of over-simplification and misleading application to other contexts. She concludes that these are worth the risk, not least because of an emphasis on the relational character of practical wisdom that bears its own import of local accountability. Katherine Turpin (placed strangely, it seems, out of sequence) poses a variation on this conundrum: adequately accounting for the complexity of local knowledge located in specific contexts. Reducing complexity may well be necessary if action is not to be overwhelmed. Not all local knowledges are considered to hold equal status. And micro-, meso- and macrosystems interlock in often intricate, multilayered ways. Choosing which layer or perspective to relate and analyse is not an innocent step in a research project, but one, concludes Turpin, requiring wisdom and more gentle forbearance by reviewers and colleagues who might wish yet more complexity (that includes, unrealistically, their preferred research interests). At the same time, researchers ought to be cognisant of what is at stake for the community about whose local knowledge they have published.

The principal readership of *Conundrums* is those teaching and researching in practical theology in higher education institutions so Faustino Cruz digs into the tension, even dichotomy, created between scholarship and wider administrative/support service in career progression. He brings the vocation of being a reflective practitioner into the domain of university administration, re-framing ‘service’ as empathic knowing. Reflexivity, understood as itself a conundrum, prompts Jaco Dryer to explore his situatedness as a male, Afrikaans-speaking,

member of the Dutch Reformed Church, and white researcher, navigating, and accounting for, the biases in his worldview that has been shaped by colonialism. Despite one's best efforts, reflexivity is always partial, but, he argues, with ethical imagination a genuine concern for the wellbeing of those one is researching may be developed and so a practical theologian need not be paralyzed. The theme of race is also significant for Courtney Goto who recounts her experience of being invited to write a chapter on it for an introductory text in practical theology. She found herself required to expound dynamics of power and privilege that were not deemed necessary for her white fellow-authors to articulate regarding their research. The notion of 'coercive mimeticism' provides Goto with an interpretive lens for the experience of people of colour being expected to frame themselves in the terms delivered by members of more dominant cultures. The conundrum here lies around playing the part expected (and thereby failing her own minority community) or refusing this patterning (and thus being further distanced as exotic and risky). Acknowledging such coercion has to be, she concludes, a communal task within the practical theological community, involving alliances across any number of differences.

Phillis Sheppard's chapter (strangely, not immediately following that of Goto's in the collection) also engages with race. She contends that even when practical theologians critique discourses on race this occurs through a lens where cultural misrepresentations abound. Given that people of colour are relatively scarce within the discipline, Sheppard proposes that those who are the subject of theorising raced bodies often remain absent. The challenge she poses is to take up raced bodies in practical theological research but in such a way as to represent 'fully lived raced bodies' (*Conundrums*, p. 243), a method that would demand confronting ideologies of whiteness.

Tone Kaufman recognises the invidious position of practical theologians who engage in empirical research that is criticized by social scientists for sneaking in normative evaluations and by scholars of Divinity as being not normative enough. Drawing on the work of Hans Harbers and Geir Afdal, Kaufmann breaks from any dichotomy between description and prescription. Instead, we are introduced to different forms of normativity (from-within and from-the-outside). In research engagement with, for example a congregation, the researcher's findings can help people revise their practice (from-within) without telling them how to run their church (from-the-outside). Such research might well be interdisciplinary, but, as Joyce Ann Mercer argues, this leaves practical theology with a two-fold conundrum: the vortex of evermore complex analysis from so many disciplines and identity issues for researchers who are not deemed to hold full membership in *any* field. Mercer's way forward lies in drawing parallels with jazz musicianship in which experts in

improvisation require solid knowledge of musical structure and advanced dexterity in a number of styles. In addition, as she observes, practical theologians require to be adept at the institutional politics that circulate in interdisciplinary endeavours. Miller-McLemore picks up the politics of practical theology in the academy in her conundrum: practical theologians claim that knowledge resides in practice but have struggled to work this out in their employing institutions. The valuing of theory over practice as sources of knowledge has proved to be a stubborn stumbling block about which, argues Miller-McLemore, more academics' consciousness requires to be raised. Claire Wolfteich unpacks her dislocation of being a Roman Catholic practical theologian when the discipline does not have a home in those denominational structures and is largely dominated by Protestant discourse. Whilst one resolution seems to lie down the road of Catholic contextual theologies, Wolfteich is concerned lest this be a Protestant 'colonisation'. Her proposal is more towards partnership with systematic and moral theologians, and fostering conversations with Catholic contextual theologians.

These volumes have their respective strengths. *Conundrums* advances sophisticated discussion of significant problems and challenges within the discipline – precisely those everyday remarks that open this review. *Christian Practical Wisdom* makes its contribution by offering conceptual clarity on *wisdom* as a critical mode of engaging with a number of modes of knowing. Taken together, the two books help to recover *wisdom* from its 'non-academic' label within the taken-for-granted assumptions theological educators encounter (and sometimes clash with) all too regularly.

Together, these volumes could help hold practical theology on course lest it diverge into privileging Bible and tradition *or* experience, especially in the context of the often non-transparent, un-named politics of studies in Divinity. Furthermore, recent seeming normalization of white supremacy in the USA and Europe demands urgent and sustained critical reflection. In Scotland, we have not grappled much with the whiteness of most of our theology (including practical theology). In the UK as a whole, debate has intensified around the relative value of university subject-areas. These two books will stimulate readers in considering the important social question of the role of higher education in cultivating *wisdom* when the two main foci of institutions are often employability and knowledge acquisition. Even when the foci are employability and critical thinking the latter may not be synonymous with being a *wise* thinker.

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