31 Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology* xviii, xxi.
32 Billy, "Mysticism and Moral Theology", 407.
33 Cessario, xx.
34 Stolz, *The Doctrine of Spiritual Perfection*, 180.
35 Enda McDonagh, *Doing The Truth* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979) 60.

Casting the Nets of Symbolism

Christopher Dyczek

A bridging-passage in a piece of music can have several roles. One of them is to make us wish that we might fully appreciate the effect of the music's ending when it comes. Able to hear the separate musical messages converge. In her great work *The Dialogue*, a complex meditation, Catherine of Siena speaks of 'the lovely and glorious bridge' of Jesus' presence as having a similar role. Although 'he was no longer with you'—and here, adding her own reflection to scripture, she adopts a voice as God's own—'his teaching remained.' The reader is addressed as one of the disciples who, on the day of the Ascension, were 'as good as dead, because their hearts had been lifted up to heaven.' The bridge himself has ascended, and we, the reader-followers, must ask, 'Where can I find the way?'[1] As we shall see, Catherine expects her metaphor of a bridge to play many parts in the dramatic speech patterns of conversion. It can stand for the reliable relationship we have with Christ through all our own difficulties. But it stands also for our vantage point of calmly casting nets to help others in trouble. Theological discourse has not often called on one symbol to be so versatile, although the image of each stone which contributes to a tower in *The Shepherd of Hermas* is similarly polyvalent. A recent translator of *The Dialogue*, Suzanne Noffke, suggests that Catherine may have had in mind the kind of walled bridge which was built over the Arno, containing shops. This was a route allowing concealment but could also mean sudden surprise for the traveller herself. It might indicate a suitable direction to evade severe pressures.

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Surprise endings can be devised by human ingenuity, or they can appear unforeseen as a gift from God. In either case, what can symbolism do if the surprise includes betrayal or unwarranted pain? The Zoroastrian account of ethical processes, with its honesty, personal purity, hospitality to the stranger, and ecological preservation of woodland, could not resolve its fears when faced with the problem of evil. People learning to increase their reserves of strength by keeping to the Path of Righteousness knew, of course, that they were limited beings, and that they must cross the perilous *chinvat* bridge when their time came to die. The social struggles eventually raise this question: how do our earthly narratives open up to a heavenly interruption? Water has been a versatile symbol, in many religious traditions, both of danger and of recovered healing. Such versatility is liable to present us with an unsettling range of meanings. Noffke's suggestion, that we connect Catherine's symbol with a given distinctive bridge over the Arno, is helpful because we feel that symbols make clearer narrative sense when we can talk about context. Nevertheless, the communication difficulties of translating a symbol, and also its proposed context, into the terms of a different culture are considerable. Those who have visited the Arno will have instinctive reserves of imagery to call on, not available to the less travelled reader. If I ask someone to consider the resonant symbolism of water in a Nigerian landscape, my mention of furrowed laterite soil, carved by flash floods, might show the dim possibility that bridges still count for something there. But if I speak of baobab trees, with their bulbous appearance, able to retain water during drought, many will feel I am painting a slightly fabulous, even mythological picture. They could experience uncertainty about bringing into this the image of Biafran war victims, in need of drink and of a means of cleansing their wounds.

Yet, there are stories known to us from many cultures of water put to violent uses—people are driven into it, or trapped because they cannot escape it. The ending of such a violent context for the symbol can be a great and religious wonder. The Israelites survived not only travel through the unbridgeable Sea of Reeds, but also events at Meribah, the 'waters of dissension', when they quarrelled in the wilderness. Abraham Heschel, in his essay 'The Sabbath', suggests that time is unlike space in that it cannot be dominated or amassed. We remember, or seek out, endings in time, as confirmations of an ever-possible scope for liberation, as given by God. Yet, as Catherine says, a mere ending with no recovery of peace must 'run away to nothingness.'[2] She evidently appeals here to a daily context in the search for God, picturing a clash of motives such as most readers will recognise. If the examples she uses are familiar enough—stories at a dinner table, for

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instance—the point may make sense in any culture. A reader recalls that motives must often be halted in their course, in order for God's peace to be detected and allowed its healing effect.

The problem of evil frequently shows up in narratives in terms of the journeying thoughts of participants, whose energies are not really free to pause: they are operating a ship at sea, perhaps, and we imagine the relationship with God steadily going astray, as the boat struggles forward. The Ghanaian theologian, Mercy Oduyoye, has drawn attention to cases of distress about 'going astray', as a theme which speaks loudly in Fante legend, and also in postcolonial debate about society's dishonesty. She asks us to give a lot of thought to the experience that 'God does not rescue people in spite of themselves.' The oppressiveness which broods within some traditional views of power and authority has not been removed as a result of her people gaining political independence. But she wants those of her readers who have faith to tell themselves that the freedoms they now have are not illusory, to say with conviction that 'the sea has been crossed.'[3] She wants a faith which is able to resist all forms of inflexible structure, whether Western or traditional. Sensitivity to indigenous story-telling can foster this. The legend of Eku, matriarchal leader of the Fante as they crossed waterless plains, is about one person's powerful gift of getting beyond despair and motivating the whole group to continue on their way. With her encouragement to spur them on, they 'dragged their weakened legs along' until they reached a pool of water. At the brink, in spite of thirst, they held back. Enemies could have poisoned it. 'They peered at the woman and her dog with glazed eyes' as both took the risk of succumbing to evil, and drank.[4] A great shout of celebration, "Eku aso" (Eku has tasted) went up as no ill effects materialised. The event of the peace-bringing refreshment turned into a memory, and embodied a sense of new purpose: 'we can now drink without fear of death'.

Oduyoye is not just observing a parallel between the folk-tale and the Exodus story of the spring of water at Meribah. A connection with New Testament parallels, such as the Samaritan woman, could indicate resurrection aspects to the symbolism, but Oduyoye prefers to focus on ways in which resurrection peace is denied to Ghanaian women when cases of adultery are brought to trial. At the same time, she tells us that the image of Christ stilling the storm has been used by a group of women, the Dwenesie singers, to represent an end to destructiveness.[5] There are areas of symbolism in Catherine of Siena which would firmly support this approach. Catherine writes that 'those who are not thirsty will never persevere in their journey.'[6] Many lack the motivation to travel alone (towards an essential wholeness) yet 'they do not care for

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the company'. As a result, because they *are* alone, they are afraid. Bp. M. Buthelezi would add that quite often the thirst includes alienation, remoteness from the opportunities of education, employment and general development. 'To deny a person these opportunities [for God's gifts] is to displace him from his God-given place.'[7] Oduyoye expresses her hope that isolation will give way to 'communion'. She adds that her intuition can find an echo in many world views, including those of primal religions. If communion means that we take Christ, as St. John does, to be the place of God's spring of water, how actual is this experience? Don't symbols spiritualise the concept of Exodus liberation (an effect to which Oduyoye objects) by making it poetic? Paying attention to social contexts for the legendary or poetic material should help us to retain tangible aspects to the topic of communion.

Stories of courage

Catherine of Siena refers to believers travelling by a roadway which 'cannot be destroyed or stolen from anyone who wants to follow it.' The bridge was made so that 'escape' from the pounding waters of 'this darksome life' would be possible. Cruelty is characteristic of those who travel on the river, disregarding the bridge. No one can cross through the river without drowning. Is this an allegorised reference to baptism in the Jordan? Or is it a more empirical reminder of the dangers faced by Joshua? The bridge, we are told, is Christ's teaching. A hostel stands on the bridge, dispensing food to strengthen the pilgrim travellers 'so that weakness will not cause them to fall.' A climb of love is involved if we are to reach this place for gathering our powers. The covered bridge has 'walls and a roof of mercy' and the guiding lamps of the apostles and evangelists.[8] How far away from such story-telling is Mercy Oduyoye's discussion of quarrels on the Exodus journey? She sees a 'dilemma of the co-opted' in her society, and a comparable tension to that which could be discovered in the incident of Dathan and Abiram. These collaborators with Pharaoh were missing the security of life back in Egypt. Ghanaians and others who had some advantages from foreign structures, and did not let go of the colonial patterns of acting, are liable to speak in defeatist language. She suggests that for some, although landless, 'the prospect of getting a homeland did not excite them.' But in this comment, some of the eschatology which was evident in her view of 'the stilling of the storm' seems to be allowed to lapse. We might want to ask whether communion—a concept of interrelatedness, which derives its strength from God's mystery—is really equivalent to finding the protective structure of a bridge, or the getting of a homeland? Communion involves countless possibilities of speaking about current

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fear, about mortality, or hope, or compassion. However, these themes occur as narratives with an ending. Oduyoye does have an eschatology, and Catherine does believe that tears of 'unspeakable groaning' can bear the fruit of the Spirit. We shall miss their sensitivity to context if we do not investigate how these modify the symbols they use of future security. Oduyoye may regret that some of her fellow believers act like enemies to an exciting venture, but she is able to speak with faith about tackling their understandable rancour. The issue she wants to face is why the courage to be a People of God has almost left them.[9]

There are many legends from around the world which focus on courage as it appears in the living out of a call to fuller hope. Some may introduce a divine figure who is the reliable source of that courage. When this is done, one aspect of the story can be to touch the roots of courage, and understand it better. Climbing the bridge, in Catherine's account, may begin in 'slavish fear', but it can acquire the calmness more appropriate to those who know Christ's heart. It is the calm believer whose nets will help the flailing generality of human lives, caught in the 'spoiled clay of Adam.'[10] If we want to appreciate such distinctions better, we have a fairly wide range of African stories to help us. Courage, in the context of water symbolism and elusive communion, features in Ngugi's *The River Between,* for instance. In *The Rain Came,* a short story by Ugandan writer Grace A. Ogot, the village chief is expected by his Luo villagers to stop the cattle from dying in the fields. He ponders on his willing vow to 'lay down my life', if that is what is needed. However, Nditi the rainmaker has a dream, which he attributes to their common ancestor, who demands that a young girl, seen standing beside a lake, should 'die as a ransom for the people.'[11] The chief's only daughter, Oganda, who has brightened up his life, must be told of her fate, but his courage fails him. It is both a terrible shock and a traditionally honoured duty. The chain which she wears around her waist, seen in the dream, she must soon wear proudly in the underworld. Ogot brings us into the young woman's troubled thoughts, once she has been told. Osinda, the young man she loves and expects to marry, cannot be found. She will have to make the one day journey and face the lake monster alone, and rain will then come. But who will support her to face such a future with courage?

Aloneness in the face of death is a feature of this tale of uncertain destiny, just as it is for the theologies of Catherine of Siena and Mercy Oduyoye. Images of healing are suggested but they clash with one another. One image is of attaining the essential outcome for a time of drought: 'Rain was the precious medicine they were longing for.' Against this must be set images running through her mind, her present

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involvement in traditional symbols of initiation. She was 'already anointed with sacred oil', so nothing can touch her as she walks all night through the great and dangerous forest, to the lake. In Christian terms, if the strength of an anointing and the heavenly power which relieves a drought somehow interacted, by inspiring people to dig wells, perhaps, and without requiring a death, we could apply the term communion to the energies involved. Grace Ogot is, I think, aware of this. But she wants to show, in this story at least, how such a spirit can only be achieved by a break with tradition. The age-old connection between the ancestor's demands and fear of the lake monster must be broken. The break happens as Oganda, with no companion, gets near to the lake. The split from the past is caused by love, with the sudden appearance of Osinda. The narrator tells us she feels desperate for a drink. The old version of courage remained in her thoughts: 'she remembered that she had to fulfil the wish of her people.' She wishes should could exactly picture the size and shape of the monster, but fear prevents any such calmness. The passage where she is reunited with Osinda involves an image of sympathetic magic. He puts garments of twigs on her and on himself, which act as protection from the eyes of the ancestors. Perhaps they are still in what Catherine calls a stage of 'slavish fear', but a biblical overtone may indicate that an improvement of their perceptions lies ahead. They head disobediently away from the lake, and her companion indicates that a transformed courage is now possible: 'Have faith, Oganda—that thing will not reach us.' Rain falls as they run away. Is the ending a little too docile? Or does it point to other stories yet to be told?

Images of communion

In the context of a partially Christian society, this story may be seen as wanting to wean readers away from the older concept of bravery, and into a new language. In the process, various supernatural beings lose their reliability. Catherine of Siena' s account of the great catch of fish, in John 21:6, reads the symbolism to mean that fishing had become unreliable because it happened at night. A person can 'wear herself out with great unprofitable pain', unless she waits to seek wayward converts only in the calm sea of God at dawn.[12] Possibly this is how the idea of Christian life as including a hostel is imagined by Catherine. The night of unchristian stories or habits of thought cannot be forced to end more quickly than those involved want it to. Grace Ogot's story is one we can picture being used in African Christian gatherings to begin a discussion of the disturbing process of shedding old convictions. It would allow an interim lifestyle in the hostel-community to put a language of communion in their place. Isabel Apawo Phiri has written about the

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Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians doing theology in a community context. A difficult aspect of this consists of deciding how some teachings that went on during traditional initiation, ones which were valuable, could be retained, while getting rid of the physical dehumanisation involved.[13] Mercy Oduyoye maintains a wide-ranging search for images of communion which engage significantly with social disruption. Identifying the religiously reliable patterns of creative thought which convey a sense of healing can be daunting. In Scripture we see Israel consigning its tensions to the wilderness through the mysterious process of offering a goat to the demon Azazel. She thinks a comparable desire to be in touch with mystery made the Copts focus distinctively on Mary as Theotokos. She suggests this specific form would not have come about if the people had not previously often expressed gratitude to Isis for water and fertile land. She dissents from the narrower scriptural theology of B. Kato who holds that any preoccupation with earthly well-being is an untrustworthy residue of primal religion, and as such is to be rejected. Her counter-argument is that during worship we use the symbols of primal religion, even while knowing that their use has limited value.[14] We might assume that Catherine of Siena would rapidly dismiss any allusion to Isis as a symbol too. But a tamed image of gratitude to Isis was not totally absent from city life in the middle ages. Boccacio's *Genealogies of the gods* discusses how she differs from Io, and Peter Comestor records her role in teaching writing to the Egyptians. Did Catherine have images taken from the language of myth in view when she wrote? Whatever the likelihood of this being a conscious motive in her work, it is startling to compare hymns to Isis with images in *The Dialogue.* Isis, as 'mistress of rivers', says 'I decreed that mercy be shown to suppliants.... I calm the sea and make it surge I make the navigable unnavigable whenever I so decide... .1 am the Mistress of Rain. I conquer Destiny.' The metaphor of being given a navigable course to follow extends, under her protection, to a wide range of human situations. A list of virtues composed by Isidore of Fayyum in the first century B.C. addresses her as 'Immortal Saviour', then continues:

> 'You who save from war all cities and all their citizens.
> All who are held in prison, destined to die,
> And all who are troubled by long painful sleeplessness,
> And all men wandering in a foreign land....
> All these are saved when they invoke your presence.'

Other inscriptions say she devised marriage contracts, abolished the

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rule of tyrants, and established languages for mankind. The last occurs on a column in thanksgiving from someone who has recovered from blindness. Most of these human situations have a shared feature, the need for either physical or spiritual light. Isis was 'the one who rises and dispels darkness, Shining when traversing the primeval ocean.'[15] Pain, fear and wailings are overcome as a result. Now compare Catherine's *Dialogue* with its claim that 'knowledge of yourself leads you to shed the cloud of selfish love.' 'Life-giving fruit' can result, for 'humility is the governess and wet-nurse of the charity into which this branch of discernment is engrafted.' Although the soul is a vessel which can fit itself to serve Christ, the 'weariness and troubles' coming from within are themselves like a stormy river threatening to drown it. Fruitfulness will require the waters to become calm, so that light reaches the tree of 'steadfast courage.' Our patience is tested, under the insults of neighbours, our compassion tested by their cruelty.[16] There are a number of indications that Catherine assumed such testing was a severe reality for reluctant Christians as well as the usual prospect for believers. There is scope here for a theology of the symbol which might support or extend Oduyoye's insights. This should, I suggest, include concern for social consequences, when a symbol is pulled towards political goals. Malina has cited several problem cases, such as military advantages, in Haiti.[17]

Before attempting to draw out such implications, however, we would want to understand better why Oduyoye, more directly aware of primal religion as an existing social context, would point to weeping Isis as a striking symbol in early Christian Egypt. The role of a mother keen to help her child is worth bearing in mind here. The child has to face a more complicated, more commercialised world than she did. It has more likelihood of losing track of the essential features of communion, more likely to prefer pragmatic city relationships. The sense of commitment is serious, but there can also be humour, an important ingredient in coping with culture once it has been thrown into new forms by the intrusions of outsiders. Visiting an Igbo friend in his Nigerian home neighbourhood some years ago, I was treated to a tour of some local traditional practices. One visit was to a small pen roofed with corrugated iron and tucked away just off the path, beneath a large tree. It had pieces of old cloth hanging at the sides, and piles of round clay pots, some of them broken, crowded along its sides. My friend told me this was a shrine to a water spirit called Mami Wata. Years later I discovered that this is a pidgin name, introduced after the first encounters between European sailors and the West African tribes. Worship of the 'water woman' now occurs in some fifty different African cultures. She is regarded as foreign, yet accessible, and brings misfortune to those who anger her.

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Marine sculptures and stories of European mermaids (seen on the bowsprits of ships) are incorporated into the cult. If we consider such developments in relation to Oduyoye's interest in primal religion, we could appreciate a similarity to St. Luke's passage in *Acts* 14. Luke recalled the time when the travellers Paul and Barnabas had their preaching confused with legends of Zeus and Hermes. Paul is a great preacher because he can cope with such confusions.

There are forms other than wayside shrines in which the Mami Wata legend continues to be attractive to present day Africans.[18] I was reminded of this symbolism of a meeting of cultures last year, at the annual drama festival in Avignon. In the same town where Catherine of Siena had struggled with an international mix of cultures, and with the gaudy immaturity which resulted, a version of the Mami Wata legend was presented, as dramatised by Lucette Salibur and Akonio Dolo. Under a full moon, somewhere in Africa, Kalinka, a thirteen year old boy, is about to undergo a series of tests of initiation. His path is watched over with emotional concern by a poet-representative of the water spirit. Water here becomes a symbol of the difficult journey ahead, with life's maturity easily lost, a divine gift. Salibur announces herself as the magic singer familiar with Mami Wata: "A market trader in words, she bears the thirteen colours of the rainbow on her two heads, standing between the visible and the invisible." From her solidly constructed bicycle, fitted with a large box at the front, she can produce puppets and shadow figures, or flashing lights, to mark out the alarming encounters and energetic transitions undergone on the quest. It is a quest to recover primal harmony. The boy must head up river towards its source, then he can free his memory from its silent burdens. With horns and other accessories, the actress lets us see the child coping with time passing, the four seasons reminding him of his vulnerable birth in the hold of a boat. A great serpent reminds him of his mortality. Beauty, love and suffering are enacted, helping him to learn the language of the trees, the flowers and the birds. A terrifying beast on a throne stirs up fear, and the thirst he feels can only be slaked by the words of Mami Wata. Redemption is expressed as a process of coming back to his senses.

Reconciliation: the eternal glimpsed through a social future

The energies of what Oduyoye calls primal religion are still present in a story like this, but they have been modified and updated. Perhaps there is something of a concern for the antagonism between cultures expressed in the figure on a throne. The performance used simple means, and the audience could sense through them everyone's need to overcome fragmented experience. To me, it suggested how antagonism between old and new ideas of religion presents young Africans approaching adulthood with deep conflicts. This is why Oduyoye asks, as urgently as Catherine of Siena, whether a bridge offered by God, a

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path of reconciliation between enemies, could replace tribal feuding. Christ's love is 'the bridge from which Christians can jump into the pool of saving blood that leads to everlasting life.'[19] The love which calls people to journey towards light and wholeness, and to do this in communion with others, might first be met in a variety of dreams, stories and traditional memories. Sometimes it will not be heard with much clarity. We are caught up in a tangle of broken hopes, or what Catherine described as broken pathways. She depicts love that has no time for others as a cloud 'plastered over the pupil' of the eye of faith. It causes the soul's walking to be sluggish, impatient to turn back. And as she then observes, this is no condition to be in when facing the scorpions of worldly pleasure, which carry gold in front of them, but have venom in their tails. Fortunately for humanity, this venom was never able to touch Jesus, the child of God, even when his message of love led to his crucifixion.[20] This is the key doctrinal thought at the heart of much of her imagery. I do not want to overlook the account of doctrine in Catherine's work given by U. Cavallini. Cavallini says the bridge is the way of love which led to heaven but was broken by the lie which took hold of Adam and Eve in Eden. The bridge is Christ himself, and therefore a speedy route by which to rise above ourselves.[21] Because it comes from God's love, it is a hard path, but the steps set up by Christ's actions are our true encouragement. There are some who are encouraged by the wind of self-conceit instead. In pursuit of honours, they go off down the river, the sails of their will swollen.[22] But communion with Jesus Christ, his merciful self-giving, takes place at the small storehouse found on the bridge itself.[23]

Mercy Oduyoye also distrusts worldly honours. From her Methodist viewpoint, this means being cautious about taking over Europe's historical blend of Christian doctrines, because these point to an imperially-devised understanding of the Church. Yet when she suggests that the Donatist Christians, and their martyrs, from fourth century North Africa, were more reassuringly involved with indigenous Berber thinking, we may feel that such a theology of pure and holy separateness does not sit well with the rest of her argument. For the Donatists, of course, the Church was like the Ark of Noah, watertight. Well-tarred, inside and out, it had kept out the defiling waters of the world, so its members saw no need to change to face a different future. It seems to me that even performers of the Mami Wata initiation legend, some of them perhaps aware of parallels with the Christian sacrament, could indicate a larger vision of how God acts. Oduyoye may be exploring this possibility. She takes the view that baptism is in harmony with certain symbolic longings of primal religion. She adds a plea for other practices

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of traditional society too: polygamy can be better understood as a feature of the struggle with economic need, and non-Christian naming ceremonies can be seen as social commitment.[24] These ideas might make sense among the Berbers, but it is surely unlikely that they would be accepted by Donatists.

Catherine does approach symbolism in ways which make contact with the primal energies of love and conversion. Christ retrieves people from the 'dead water' of sin, while Christian hearts are bowls receiving his water of love.[25] The humility and charity of the servants of Christ makes them able to cast out the gentle net of desire and bring in unbelievers, leading them to baptism.[26] Although she was involved in a Church which displayed all the features of worldly empire, she could resist its mechanical thinking. She teaches a faith which ends in the defeat of empires. The metaphor of Christ as a bridge is an element of innovation in her theology. Bridging may be an archetypal idea, but it is not one of the biblical archetypes. She elaborates the image because it implies paths of action independent of the familiar remorseless current of the world. Moreover, it indicates that the conversation between belief and non-belief, between those on the bridge and those in the turbulence or on the river's bank, has begun. In practice, we are not consulted about how far Christ is willing to immerse himself in the problems of worldliness. We could regard the result as an inter-cultural debate on salvation symbolism. But it is also an ecumenical exchange of views, or an opportunity to listen to dialogues concerned with hope.

1 Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue,* S. Noffke tr., S.P.C.K. 1980, p. 68-9.
2 Ibid., p.67.
3 Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing,* Orbis Books 1986, p. 83, 88.
4 V. Fabella & M.A. Oduyoye eds., *With Passion and Compassion,* Orbis Books 1990, p. *35-6.*
5 Ibid., p. 38.
6 Catherine, *Dialogue,* p.107.
7 M. Buthelezi, 'Salvation as Wholeness' in J. Parratt ed., *A Reader in African Christian Theology,* S.P.C.K. 1987, p. 89.
8 Catherine, *Dialogue,* p. 70, 101, 73, 67, 123, 113, 66.
9 Oduyoye, *Hearing,* p. 83. And p. 144 on eschatology.
10 Catherine, *Dialogue, p. 52.*
11 G.A. Ogot, 'The Rain Came' in E. Ayitey Komey & B. Mphahlele eds., *Modern African Stories,* Faber 1964, p. 181, 187, 185,189.
12 Catherine, *Dialogue,* p. 309.
13 Isabel Apawo Phiri, 'Doing Theology as African Women' in Parratt, *A Reader,* p. 50.
14 Oduyoye, *Hearing,* p. 25, 61, 53.
15 Louis V. Zakhar, *Hymns to Isis in her Temple at Philae,* Brandeis University Press 1988, p. 140, 138, 80.
16 Catherine, *Dialogue,* p. 30, 40, 58, 39, 38.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2002.tb01813.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

17 B.J. Malina, 'From Isis to Medugorje: Why apparitions?', *Biblical Theological Bulletin,* 20,2 (Summer 1990), p.81.
18 See also H.J. Drewal, 'Interpretation, Invention and Re-presentation in the Worship of Mami Wata', in R. Stone, ed., *Performance in Contemporary African Arts,* Indiana University Folklore Institute, 1988.
19 Fabella & Oduyoye, *Passion and Compassion,* p. 43.
20 Catherine, *Dialogue,* p. 106, 96, *65.*
21 G. Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena,* G. Chapman 1998, p. 73-4.
22 Catherine, *Dialogue,* p. 78.
23 Cavallini, *Catherine,* p. 72.
24 Oduyoye, *Hearing,* p. 9, 116-119. And p. 22-24 on Berbers and Donatism.
25 Cavallini, *Catherine,* p. 54.
26 Catherine, *Dialogue,* p. 308.

Israel's Historic Suspicion of the Vatican

Kevin L. Morris

If I forget you, 0 Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!
Psalm 137

They say, 'Come, let us wipe them out as a nation;
let the name of Israel be remembered no more.'
Psalm 83

It has been remarked that the Israelis have a 'slightly morbid fascination with things Roman Catholic, especially in relation to the Holy See'.[1] Until 1993 a meeting between the Pope and the Grand Rabbi of Israel was vetoed because the leader of Catholicism was regarded as a 'source of impurity'.[2] Since Israel is the focus of one of the most combustible problems in the world, it is important to understand every filament of that beleaguered nation's anxieties, one of which is its anxiety about Catholics. Well-known is its concern about the Church's role during the Nazi era, and its historic contempt for Jewry. Perhaps less familiar is Israel's anxiety about the Church's supposed historic antipathy towards Zionism and the State of Israel. Such amorphous perceptions are the stuff of the Middle Eastern scene, which is a mirage built on sand, an ocean of propaganda,

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