Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations

David Amponsah [Ph.D.]

(Un)Desirable Customs: A History of Indigenous Religion and the Making of Modern Ghana, c. 1800-1966

This dissertation examines the explicit and implicit currency of indigenous religious thought on political, moral, and social formations from precolonial through colonial to postcolonial Ghana. It advances new answers to debates in Ghana about the role, if any, indigenous religion has to play in a modern Christian-dominated public sphere that simultaneously defines itself as secular by situating these debates in the history of the suppression and appropriation of so-called "undesirable customs" and their agents by both British and Ghanaian government officials. Based on archival research (colonial reports, government records, legal documents, newspapers, diaries, etc.) and a dozen oral interviews (with former and current politicians, indigenous religious priests, chiefs, and elders), *(Un)Desirable Customs* argues that despite its "unpopularity" and decline, indigenous religion critically shaped the construction of the colonial and postcolonial Ghanaian state. I highlight the inherent paradox in how the state morally and culturally stigmatized indigenous religious beliefs and practices, in an attempt to perform certain conceptions of secular modernity and Christian morality, yet, at the same time, appropriated indigenous religious rituals and symbols. These contradictory measures, I argue, are better understood as strategies of purifications that the state has enacted and continues to perform on itself in its attempt to define itself as "modern." My study fundamentally shifts the attention from Christianity and Islam in relation to politico-moral formations to a focus on indigenous religion.

This historical project complicates current scholarship on secularism in both the West and non-West. It challenges us to examine the political, ethical, and conceptual limits of secularism and religious tolerance in the modern period. My research makes clear that the debate about the place of indigenous religion was, and continues to be, couched as an issue of public morality and well-being. This approach to the study of indigenous religion also calls into question the longstanding perception about its irrelevance, showing how various elements of indigenous

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religious beliefs and practices have left their imprint on the political, moral, and social fabric of society. I also attend to how Africans, particularly traditionalists, responded to their marginalization, the appropriation of their symbols, and the changing religious landscape. This work responds to the necessity to complicate the triumphant narrative of the implacable dominance of Christianity and Islam in the African political and public sphere.

Adviser: Jacob K. Olupona

Timothy M. Baker [Th.D.]

"Be You as Living Stones Built Up, A Spiritual House, A Holy Priesthood": Cistercian Exegesis, Reforms, and the Construction of Holy Architectures

The development of the Cistercian Order in the twelfth century came as a product of a number of reforms taking place in the century prior. These reforms affected all strata of society, and they impacted the way in which medieval European Christians viewed themselves, their social, political, and theological structures, the world around them, and their relationship to the Christian narrative of salvation history and eschatology. The early Cistercians built their "new monastery" (*novum monasterium*) upon an apostolic foundation of austerity and poverty, informed by a "return" to the *Rule of Benedict* as the program for their daily ritual and liturgical lives. These Cistercians centered their monastic "way of life" (*conversatio*) around the pursuit of ascent into God, seeking to become "citizens among the saints and members of the household of God."

The language of twelfth-century Cistercian ascension theology drew from a number of scriptural motifs for its expression. For examples, Bernard of Clairvaux described his monastery as the "heavenly Jerusalem" and his monks as "Jerusalemites"; Aelred of Rievaulx spoke of "living stones" building up the Temple of Jerusalem and rising up as sacred incense; and Helinand of Froidmont exhorted his monks to climb the mountain with Christ and to raise up within themselves a Temple of "living stones," becoming bearers of Christ like Mary, his holy mother. In the case of these and other Cistercian exegetes, the goal remained the same: by interpreting Christian scripture and tradition, Cistercian theologians sought to transform the monastery into a sacred space, bridging the gap between the human world and the realm of God, so that they, and their brethren, might ascend "as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood."

Adviser: Kevin J. Madigan

R. Brad Bannon [Th.D.]

Apophatic Measures: Toward a Theology of Irreducible Particularity

Apophatic Measures: Toward a Theology of Irreducible Particularity is a work of constructive comparative theology examining select writings of Śaṅkara (eighth century, India) and Nicholas of Cusa (fifteenth century, Germany). It investigates the

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theological significance of individuality, difference, and diversity from the perspectives of these provocative thinkers. It argues that, for Śaṅkara and Cusa, apophasis does not culminate in what Michael Sells calls a "semantic event," but instead in a sensual event. For each, negation removes intellectual distractions, awakening one to a heightened state of sensual attentiveness. Thus awakened, one attends to other persons, perceiving individuals as unique disclosures of ultimate reality.

For Śaṅkara, this is observed in the embodied encounter wherein a teacher incarnates Vedānta scripture, literally points at a student, and reveals "*This* Self is Brahman" (Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 2). In part, a student comes to see himself/herself as Brahman because of *being seen* as such by the guru who gives voice to the scripture in order that it may be heard (śruti). For Cusa, the intimate encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4) is paradigmatic of true, attentive sensuality. Though thirsty and fatigued, Jesus genuinely sees the woman just as she is, speaking to her particularly and personally, rather than reducing her individuality to socially or religiously constructed categories.

Employing a heuristic device termed "apophatic measure" in its trifold meanings of method, sensuality, and particularity, this dissertation contributes to contemporary discourses on the ontology of difference, the theo-ethical valuation of diversity, and the singularity of unique bodies. Rather than reducing individuals to ethnic, gendered, or other essentializing measures, persons are regarded as unique disclosures of ultimate reality. Each person is re/cognized as an unprecedented *imago Dei* (from Cusa's perspective) or as a particular manifestation (*vyakti*) of Ātman-Brahman (from Śaṅkara's perspective). Through the pedagogy and performance of apophatic theology, one progressively removes epistemic universals (including race, gender, and religious identity) superimposed upon unique persons, thereby cultivating a phenomenology of irreducible particularity. In other words, one learns to perceive the unique divinity of individual persons. Cusa and Śaṅkara refer to this, respectfully, as a vision of God and as seeing the highest Self. Awakened to an attentive sensuality, one re/cognizes this Self, incarnate before one's very eyes, as an apophatic measure of the immeasurable divine.

Adviser: Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

Kate Yanina DeConinck [Th.D.]

The Aftermath: Memorialization, Storytelling, and Walking at the 9/11 Tribute Center

Located in the heart of Lower Manhattan, the 9/11 Tribute Center is a small memorial museum that commemorates the attacks of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath. Tribute's five small galleries house numerous exhibits and artifacts; however, this museum is most widely recognized for its daily walking tours, which are led by individuals who hold direct connections to the attacks. These docents—who include survivors, first responders, rescue and recovery workers, local residents,

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and family members of the deceased—share historical information, statistics, and their own stories as they lead visitors around the new World Trade Center site.

Drawing from four years of ethnographic research and interviews at this memorial museum, my dissertation argues that Tribute has been a site of profound meaning making for many individuals struggling to gain purchase on an event that shattered their lives. I employ an existential and phenomenological approach to show how everyday acts of memorialization, storytelling, and walking have allowed individuals to cultivate a sense of agency and restore intersubjective bonds. Case studies also illuminate the complex interplay between personal memory and collective memory at this site as docents attempt to navigate the space between private and public realms.

In analyzing the continual negotiation of memory and discourse, I reveal how tensions can inhere when individual and official framings of the past diverge. Particular attention is given to the ambiguous place of religious narratives, histories, and interpretations of the past at Tribute, an institution that strives to remain religiously and politically neutral. I analyze the reasons why Tribute's leaders have attempted to prohibit conversations about religion from their site while also pointing to some of the consequences—both individual and social—of their framing.

Ultimately, this dissertation makes two important contributions to the field of Religious Studies. First, this work moves beyond conventional frames of reference to analyze the manifold resources (whether conventionally called "religious" or not) upon which humans draw to reconstruct viable lives in the wake of a trauma. And, second, it examines how institutional ideas about religion can shape exhibits, tours, and larger public perceptions of an event.

Adviser: Michael D. Jackson

Hannah L. Hofheinz [Th.D.]

Implicate and Transgress: Marcella Althaus-Reid, Writing, and a Transformation of Theological Knowledge

Marcella Althaus-Reid sought wherever language or meaning might shift or exceed their possibilities. To do so, she pushed theology from the light into the dark. In the spaces of political, economic, and sexual struggle, she proposed that we encounter the transformative embraces of God's indecent love. The intimacies of bodies matter in the illicit encounters of dark alleys. Caresses of flesh undress illusions; desires imagine alternatives; and bodies hunger for the unthinkable. Put differently: love and desire disregard boundaries, including the boundaries of knowledge, law, economy, and self. To write of God's love and our love—to write of God, humanity, and world—we must recognize, refute, and resist the ideological dependencies in dominant modes of doing and communicating theology, because these dependencies constrain the possibilities of bodies in love. We must interrupt academic complacency with (what she called) "Totalitarian" theological languages. We must transform the doing of theology itself.

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This dissertation offers five studies of theological writing arising from Althaus-Reid's experiments with indecency. Each considers one of her provocations in conversation with her interlocutors, paying careful attention to both the substance and performance. The first study engages with Paul Ricoeur, Jorge Luis Borges, and Umberto Eco to imagine writing in the shape of a hermeneutical labyrinth. The second questions the temporality of theological writing in conversation with Gustavo Gutiérrez, José María Arguedas, and Michel Foucault. The third examines how Althaus-Reid holds Jean Paul Sartre's concept of obscenity together with Jean Baudrillard's idea of reversibility, in order to press against illusions of writing that veil the materiality of lives lived in written pages. The fourth pursues the possibilities of writing bodies with Karl Marx, Jacques Derrida, Kathy Acker, and Lisa Isherwood. The fifth study extends Althaus-Reid's reading of Pierre Klossowski's meditation on radical hospitality as imperative for kenotic theological writing. Individually, the studies expand our imagination of what theological writing can or ought to be. Taken together, the studies provide a chronologically ordered view on Althaus-Reid's complex engagement with liberationist, feminist, and queer theoretical and theological traditions in the context of her ongoing dialogue with continental philosophy.

Advisers: Mark D. Jordan and Mayra Rivera Rivera

Thomas Christopher Hoklotubbe [Th.D.]

The Rhetoric of PIETAS: The Pastoral Epistles and Claims to Piety in the Roman Empire

This dissertation reads the Pastoral Epistles alongside imperial propaganda, monumental inscriptions, and philosophical writings of the Roman period to determine how claims to piety (Greek: εὐσέβεια, Latin: *pietas*) advanced socio-political aims and reinforced cultural values and ideological assumptions among its audiences. Coins celebrating the *pietas* of the imperial households of Trajan and Hadrian, the honorary inscription of Salutaris in Ephesus, and the writings of Philo and Plutarch are evidence that appeals to piety functioned rhetorically to naturalize hierarchies of power and social orders, recognize the honorable status of citizens, signal expertise in knowledge about the divine, and delineate insiders from outsiders. Moreover, the prevalence of appeals to piety indicates the virtue's broad cultural currency and prestige, which was traded upon for legitimating authority. This dissertation argues that the author of the Pastorals strategically deploys piety in his attempt to negotiate an imperial situation marked by prejudicial perceptions of Christians as a foreign and seditious *superstitio*, to reinforce (gendered) social values, to intervene in Christian debates over the status and authority of benefactors in the *ekklēsia*, to build confidence in and solidarity around the legitimacy of his vision of the ideal *ekklēsia*, and to denigrate the beliefs and practices of rival teachers.

Adviser: Karen L. King

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Nancy Sue Hutton [Th.D.]

"I am going to do it": The Complex Question of Action in Theology and Science in the Life of America's First Woman Minister, Rev. Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825–1921)

Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825–1921) became one of the most outspoken and remarkable women of her era: an ordained minister, a published author, a prominent public speaker, and a philosophical thinker whose writings described and explicated her syntheses of theology and science. Her life was punctuated by "firsts" that have significance within women's history as evidence of female success in what were then male-dominated arenas. In this dissertation I propose that the arguments that Brown Blackwell presented on behalf of women's rights can be understood as a synthesis of Rev. Charles Grandison Finney's religious teachings around *doing* with science-based theories that she believed revealed validating evidence about woman's nature and abilities to *do*. After the publication of her book, *The Sexes Throughout Nature* (1875), her contributions to woman's rights movements and her books were less documented by historians, perhaps because she was less focused on suffrage. I argue that during that time, her contributions to woman's rights were nevertheless significant as she worked among women who resonated with her religious sensibilities, agendas, and rhetoric: while many actively supported woman's suffrage, most did not. In advancing woman's rights, Brown Blackwell used rhetoric that synthesized her Finney-inspired ideals with her interpretations of science. This dissertation will add to the existing scholarship about women's rights, by recognizing the existence and thoughts of the thousands of religious women who contributed to woman's rights, even if they all did not support suffrage, as an outward expression of their inward piety.

Adviser: Janet Browne

Elizabeth L. Jemison [Ph.D.]

Protestants, Politics, and Power: Race, Gender, and Religion in the Post-Emancipation Mississippi River Valley, 1863–1900

This dissertation argues that Protestant Christianity provided the language through which individuals and communities created the political, social, and cultural future of the post-emancipation South. Christian arguments and organizations gave newly emancipated African Americans strong strategies for claiming political and civil rights as citizens and for denouncing racialized violence. Yet simultaneously, white southerners' Christian claims, based in proslavery theology, created justifications for white supremacist political power and eventually for segregation.

This project presents a new history of the creation of segregation from the hopes and uncertainties of emancipation through a close analysis of the Mississippi River Valley region of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and West Tennessee. Religious arguments furnished foundations for the work of building a new South, whether in

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newly formed African American churches and schools, local political debates, or white supremacist organizing. Studying both African American and white Christians during the years when churches quickly became racially separated allows this work to explain how groups across lines of race and denomination responded to each other's religious, cultural, and political strategies. This dissertation centers these communities' theological ideas and religious narratives within a critical analysis of race, gender, and political power. Analyzing theology as the intellectual domain of non-elites as well as those in power allows me to demonstrate the ways that religious ideas helped to construct categories of race and gender and to determine who was worthy of civil and political rights. This work draws upon a wide range of archival sources, including previously unexamined material.

This dissertation advances several scholarly conversations. It offers the first sustained examination of the life of proslavery theology after emancipation. Rather than presuming that white southern Christians abandoned such arguments after emancipation, this project shows that white Christians reconfigured these claims to create religious justifications for segregation. Within these renegotiated religious claims about social order, African American and white Christians made religious arguments about racial violence, ranging from justifying the violence to arguing that it was antithetical to Christian identity. During the same years, African Americans argued that they deserved civil and political rights both because they were citizens and because they were Christians. This linking of identities as citizens and as Christians provided a vital political strategy in the midst of post-emancipation violence and the uncertain future of African Americans' rights. Through its five chronologically-structured chapters, this project demonstrates Protestant Christianity's central role in African American and white southerners' political lives from the Civil War to the turn of the twentieth century.

Adviser: Nancy F. Cott

Charles E. Lockwood [Ph.D.]

The Religious Significance of Kant's Copernican Revolution

This dissertation argues that Immanuel Kant's critical philosophy must be understood as an attempt to hold together a robust commitment to divine transcendence and an affirmation of immanent human activity. This argument is developed through an examination of Kant's Copernican revolution, or his account of how human beings must play an active rather than merely passive role in the theoretical and practical domains. Kant's revolution involves an appeal to what can be called our self-legislation, or our role in giving ourselves laws that structure our cognition and volition. A persistent strand of interpretation has maintained that Kant's emphasis on our self-legislation, signaled through his Copernican revolution, rules out any significant role for religious or theological claims. Indeed, Kant is often seen as initiating a modern anthropocentric turn, marking the shift away from a pre-modern theocentric perspective. This dissertation shows, however, that rather

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than privileging either a God-centered or a human-centered perspective, Kant is instead concerned both with what the divine and human share and with what distinguishes them from one another, and this theme is borne out in Kant's theoretical philosophy, his practical philosophy, and his philosophy of religion.

The dissertation is divided into three parts, each of which corresponds to one of Kant's famous three questions: What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope? These questions map on to Kant's theoretical philosophy, practical philosophy, and philosophy of religion, respectively. Kant sometimes added a fourth question: What is the human being? The dissertation suggests that Kant's answers to these first three questions involve an account of what it means to be a human being and thereby also serve to address his fourth question. This examination of Kant's Copernican revolution suggests that his anthropology is not a substitute for a discarded theology, but is itself theologically inflected. The dissertation draws on a number of works from Kant's mature corpus, including his three *Critiques* and *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, as well as other works of his theoretical and practical philosophy, including the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* and *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.

Adviser: David C. Lamberth

Juan Miguel Marín [Th.D.]

'A Firestone of Divine Love': Erotic Desire and the Ephemeral Flame of Hispanic Jesuit Mysticism

A Firestone of Divine Love serves as a capstone of two years of Jesuit ministry and fifteen of academic study. It extends nine articles into a book project to be published by Gorgias Press. Its original thesis appeared as:

> In the last decades of the sixteenth century the Society of Jesus prohibited its members the reading of several mystical texts. A theme that cuts across these texts is the use of erotic language to describe the relationship between the soul and God. I argue that behind the prohibition lies the fear that erotic desire would be a threat to a Jesuit masculine identity. ("Heterosexual Melancholia and Mysticism in the Early Society of Jesus," *Theology & Sexuality* 13 [2007] 121–135)

Working across the disciplines of the History of Christianity and Women, Gender and Sexuality studies, I integrate these articles and deepen the original thesis within its sixteenth-century Hispanic context.

Chapter One introduces as historical setting the late medieval spirituality that inspired the first Jesuits to compose their order's earliest spiritual texts, exemplifying it with the mystical doctrines of annihilation and deification. Chapter Two develops the first half of the deepened thesis: late medieval mysticism offered Jesuits of the first generation an erotic discourse that served as a space for grieving loss, even when within the confines of a gestating Jesuit masculine ideal.

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Chapter Three develops the second half. Jesuits of the second generation succumbed to the popular views dominating in a late sixteenth-century Spanish atmosphere permeated by the Inquisition's association of heterodox spirituality with women, racial minorities, and sodomites. It links the 1573 edict against mysticism with the 1599 decree against the admission of racial minorities, the de-emphasis on the importance of women's ministry, and the condemnation of erotic interpretations of Christian bridal language as potentially moving Jesuits too close to feminized racial undesirables. Finally, Chapter Four explores the aftermath of 1599 and its impact on the ministry of Jesuits who, living in the margins and borderlands of the Hispanic empire, were able to preserve in their writings the tradition of Jesuit mysticism and ministry.

Adviser: Luis Manuel Girón-Negrón

Elizabeth Monson [Ph.D.]

Ethical Formation in the Life and Works of the Crazy Yogi of the Drukpa: 'Brug smyon Kun dga' legs pa (1455-1529)

This dissertation explores the ethical formation of persons depicted by the 15th century text entitled the *Liberation Life Story of Drukpa Kunley* (*'Brug pa kun legs kyi rnam thar)*. My analysis examines the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* from a perspective that considers writing as a spiritual discipline akin to other practices of spiritual formation such as prayer, meditation and confession. Drawing on the work of such theorists as Paul Ricoeur, Michel Foucault and Alasdair McIntyre, I argue for a position whereby life-writing functions to form ethical persons. Using Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* as an outstanding example of this ethically-formative function of literary activity, I examine the text's presentation of what it means to be an ethical person and how such persons arise through a particular way of interacting with the world.

In considering the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, I explore questions about authorial intent, textual agency, and the readers imagined by the text. In addition, I highlight three principal themes developed within the text: exposure of hypocrisy, joyful acceptance of truth, and an unstinting examination of authority. These themes are expressed through both content and form: the narrator openly discusses them, and the text itself creates an experience for the reader that resonates with these themes through its repeated shifting among diverse literary forms and genres. I refer to this strategy as a *cacophony of genres*, and my assertion is that this effects an *ethic of disruption*, a condition that challenges the reader and draws into question conventional ways of seeing and being in the world.

Finally, this dissertation explores and advocates for a model of scholarship that approaches the study of a text as an ethnographic encounter. This model, which draws on the work of anthropologist Michael D. Jackson, considers the usefulness

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of intersubjective practice for scholars of religion and other fields. I propose that this model for studying texts, which engages with a wide range of agents and influences—including our own—can yield deeper and more relevant insights into our objects of study.

Adviser: Janet Gyatso

Max Perry Mueller [Ph.D.]

Black, White, and Red: Race and the Making of the Mormon People, 1830–1880

This dissertation uses the histories and doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) as case studies to consider how nineteenth-century Americans turned to religion to solve the early American republic's "race problem." I begin by approaching Mormonism's foundational text, the Book of Mormon, as the earliest Latter-day Saints did: as a radical new lens to view the racialized populations—Americans of European, African and Native American descent ("white," "black," "red")—that dominated the antebellum American cultural landscape in which the church was founded in 1830. Early Mormons believed themselves called to end all schisms, including racial ones, within the Body of Christ as well as the political body of the American republic. However, early Mormon leaders were not racial egalitarians. Their vision consisted not of racial pluralism, but of the redemptive "whitening" of all peoples. Whiteness—both as a signifier and even phenotype—became an aspirational racial identity that non-whites could achieve through conversion to Mormonism. As the church failed to become the prophesied panacea for American racial and religious divisions, its theology evolved to view race as fixed. Black and Mormon became mutually exclusive identities. And though based on Book of Mormon theology, the Mormons held out hope for mass Indian redemption, it was forestalled as the church focused on shaping white converts into respectable Mormons.

However, this history is not simply one of declension. Instead, the church's evolving view on race arose out of the persistent dialectal tension between the two central, and seemingly paradoxical, elements of the Mormon people's identity: a missionary people divinely called to teach the gospel to everyone everywhere, and a racially particularistic people who believe that God has, at times, favored certain racial groups over others. As Mormon identity became more racially particularistic, white Mormons began to marginalize non-whites in the "Mormon archive"— which I conceptualize as the written and oral texts that compose the Mormon people's collective memory. However, a handful of black and Native Americans wrote themselves into this archive, claiming their place among the prophets and pioneers that mark membership in Mormon history. They understood that literacy signified authority, and thus with their own narratives, they wrote against what they believed was the marginalization of their historical subjectivity.

Advisers: David N. Hempton and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

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Devaka Premawardhana [Ph.D.]

Continuities of Change: Conversion and Convertibility in Northern Mozambique

Recent scholarship on Africa gives the impression of a singular narrative regarding Pentecostalism, that of inexorable rise. Indisputably, Pentecostalism's "explosion" throughout the global South is one of today's more remarkable religious phenomena. Yet what can we learn by shifting attention from the places where Pentecostal churches succeed to where they fail? Attending to this question offers an opportunity to reassess a regnant theoretical paradigm within recent studies of Pentecostalism: that of discontinuity. This paradigm holds that Pentecostalism, by insisting that worshippers break with traditional practices and ancestral spirits, introduces a temporal rupture with the past. This is a salutary theoretical move, insofar as it challenges the social scientific tendency to see people as largely reproductive of the past, incapable of discontinuous change. The problem, however, is the implicit assumption that "traditional" cultures—Pentecostalism's contrast class—are static by comparison. My research reveals that the Makhuwa-speaking people of northern Mozambique prove themselves extraordinarily capable of change, and not solely as the result of conversion to Pentecostalism, migration to cities, or other features of African "modernization."

This dissertation describes Makhuwa rituals, metaphors, and histories that inculcate dispositions toward mobility and experimentalism. What is significant about these types of change is their banality in everyday affairs. As such, they help mark the Makhuwa "traditional" framework as constitutionally pliable and malleable. Change, even radical change, is endogenous. The new churches' ecstatic dances and spirit baptisms, their theologies of rebirth and renewal, are some of the features that most appeal to those who participate in them. Their appeal, however, is as extensions of, not alternatives to, indigenous ways of being.

Yet if the convertibility of the Makhuwa self precedes entry into the churches, brings people into the churches, and finds reinforcement in the churches, it also facilitates exit from the churches. Change is not only incremental and regular, it is also reversible. The reason the churches fail to retain members is not, as their leaders often complain, that people are too rooted in their ancestral ways, but precisely the opposite: they are un-rooted, mobile by tradition.

Adviser: Jacob K. Olupona

Rev. Peter Vorkink, II [Ph.D.]

Gnōthi Seauton: Why and How to Teach Religion and Philosophy to Secondary School Students

Rather than "saving" the difficult fields of religion and philosophy for college curricula, it is instead developmentally appropriate for high school students—fourteen- to eighteen-year-olds—to engage the complex existential, ethical, and analytical challenges raised by these disciplines, especially as they pertain to the

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adolescent search to "know thyself" (Gr. γνῶθι σεαυτόν [*gnōthi seauton*]). This is explored in the context of unfolding trends in American education which downplay the importance of a humanities education in the overall curriculum, and with reference to models of adolescent psychology and pedagogical theory, drawing in particular upon my forty years of experience as a classroom teacher.

In pursuit of this thesis, I argue for a more appropriate understanding of the definitions of religion and philosophy, as well as a more holistic understanding of the act of philosophizing. More traditional and restrictive definitions of religion need to be revised to embrace the view of the student as a person who is seeking meaning in a variety of situations and places, often outside of organized religion. The understanding of what it means to teach philosophy—that is, "to philosophize"—is likewise reappraised in light of Phillips Exeter Academy's reliance on the pedagogy of the Harkness method, which mandates seminar-style classes modeled after the Socratic exchange. This invites a discussion of how Socrates used the apothegm γνῶθι σεαυτόν, an understanding of which is a necessary part of defining both the word philosophy and the activity of philosophizing. There is a difference between education as *intellectual and spiritual formation* and as *information transmission,* a distinction drawn from the original intent of a Platonic dialogue.

In Chapter Two, I demonstrate how seven major figures—Immanuel Kant, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Frederick Buechner, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer—function as intellectual muses for teaching students how to come to know thyself better as a person. The first four are read directly in class; the latter three inform the pedagogy embedded in the religion department curriculum at Phillips Exeter Academy.

In Chapter Three, I offer numerous Phillips Exeter Religion Department course descriptions and lesson plans to illustrate how one translates the theory of the dissertation into classroom practice.

Adviser: Kimberley C. Patton

Luke M. Wayland [Th.D.]

Sanctifying a Darke Conceit: Seeing the Bible in The Faerie Queene

Approaching the poem from the perspective of reception history, the present dissertation seeks to show that the Bible's role in *The Faerie Queene* is far more pervasive than has usually been recognized. Rather than see the biblical material as the domain of only certain sections—notably, Book I and perhaps Books II and V—I propose that it is to be seen as a meaningful presence throughout the poem. Indeed, I will argue that it provides a previously unnoticed, unifying structure to the whole.

I begin by giving a brief sketch of the Bible in Spenser's early life. From here, I draw upon the resources of modern biblical scholarship—specifically, Childs's "canonical approach"—to describe the way Spenser read the Bible and, consequently, the ways in which he alluded to it. I go on to discuss the notions of "typology"

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and "allegory," providing the foundation for a discussion of Spenser's reading not only of the Bible, but of the ongoing narrative of history. Then follows an exploration of the ways Spenser seeks to relate the various legacies of the Classical and biblical past to his Christian, humanist present, which culminates in a description of the Christian canon's structuring role within the poem. This leads to a reflection on this structure's significance through consideration of the various instances of books and of reading that occur in Book I. I then take up this theme again in Book III, in the transformation of Malbecco and in the idolatrous Tabernacle-Temple of Busirane. Drawing upon the early modern discourse concerning images and idols, I conclude with a discussion of *The Faerie Queene* as a unified, poetic sign pointing to the Divine Presence—a function typified in the discarded ending of Book III

Adviser: Gordon Teskey

Thomas A. Wetzel [Th.D.]

Violence and the Survival of Israel in the Book of Esther

The book of Esther stands in a complex relationship to the Christian tradition. Accepted as canonical by ancient Israel, Judaism, and Christianity, the book nonetheless is known in the Church not for its powerful narrative of Jewish deliverance, but rather for the ways in which Christian interpreters have rejected the narrative as too violent and too "Jewish" to be normative in any way for Christians. Reading the Hebrew version of the Esther story preserved in the Masoretic Text, one at first notices the story's complete lack of overt references to Israel, Torah, or even the God of Israel, suggesting to many gentiles throughout Christian history that it is not a religious narrative, but rather a story of Jewish nationalism "gone mad" in a willful excess of ethnic violence, as one interpreter has described it.

Reading the narrative with attention to the myriad of canonical allusions contained within the story, however, the interpreter will recognize that the God of Israel is indeed present in the Esther story, manifest precisely in the perduring presence of his covenantal partners, the Jews. This reading of the narrative is made apparent in the Septuagint versions of the Esther story, which display their religious sensibilities overtly. But this reading is also evident in the Masoretic Text, seen first in the victory of Esther and Mordecai over Haman. This victory both represents and embodies the Jewish victory over Amalek, the cosmic opponent whose existence throughout history has continually challenged and undermined the divine order in creation. The reader then sees that Israel is present in the Esther story in the *zera' hayyĕhûdîm*, the seed of the Jews who (perhaps even unknowingly) enact a real and efficacious form of liturgical memory in their fasting, penitence, and military action. Despite the characters' (and the narrative's) religious silence, the portrayal of Jewish victory in the Esther story challenges the Church to rethink its understanding of salvation history, as well as the Church's place in the biblical understanding of God's covenant with Israel and the divine order of creation.

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