Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations

Melanie Adrian [Ph.D. 2007]

Restricting the Republic: France, the Veil, and Religious Freedom

This dissertation examines the debate around the banning of the Muslim headscarf in public schools in France. It employs an ethnographic methodology and draws on literature in anthropology, political, and legal theory, and religious studies. This project examines the reasons why Muslim women veil and argues that their values, such as equality and the right to choose, do not run counter to publicly held norms. They consider themselves both Muslim *and* French and live their faith in continual negotiation with their immediate environment. This negotiation renders their Islam uniquely local and therefore distinctly French. Non-Muslims, however, see their insistence on wearing the veil as an affront to acceptable behavior in the public sphere and evidence of their unwillingness to integrate into French culture. This tension calls for a new understanding of socio-political integration, which I call *restricted integration*. Such restricted integration allows for manifestation of religion and identity and does not threaten these shared norms.

In 2004, France passed a law banning religious symbols in public schools because, it was argued, it would help to integrate marginalized populations, to protect young women from the pressures to veil, and to restore calm to areas prone to social upheaval. They legitimated the restriction on the right to religious freedom by using the concept of *laïcité*—France's version of separation of state and religion—and by a call for public order within the context of international human rights law. France also used cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights to substantiate its position. This thesis examines the grounds of France's claims and argues that *laïcité* does not mandate a particular restriction on religious freedom. Secondly, it holds that the French government did not prove the existence of a threat to public order. And lastly, the thesis takes up critical cases brought before the European Court and argues that a fear of Islam drove the judgments which allowed for a too-wide margin of appreciation.

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Erik Braun [Ph.D. 2008]

Ledi Sayadaw, Abhidhamma, and the Development of the Modern Insight Meditation Movement in Burma

Scholars in Buddhist Studies and related fields have long acknowledged the Burmese monk Ledi Sayadaw (1846–1923) as an important figure in the start of the modern insight meditation (*vipassanā*) movement in Burma, yet no scholarly work to date has focused on his specific role in shaping that movement. This dissertation is an intellectual biography of Ledi Sayadaw that analyzes the nature and extent of his contributions to the complex origins of insight meditation in the modern era.

This study connects the events of Ledi Sayadaw's life—from his birth in the Konbaung dynasty of Burmese kings to his death in the fully entrenched British colonial state—to particular texts he authored that shed light on his understanding of what meditation is and what it can do. His writings show that his vision of the ideal Buddhist life for the laity stressed doctrinal study, especially of the Abhidhamma, in addition to simplified meditative practices formulated through an Abhidhammic perspective. Using print technology, preaching, and social organizations, Ledi Sayadaw promoted meditation and study as key means for Buddhists to make sense of the modern world. Doctrinal study and meditative practice were understood to work together in a Buddhist's life for soteriological and social benefits.

Examination of Ledi Sayadaw's life and work offers not just the chance to understand local circumstances in Burma that contributed to meditation's modern efflorescence; it also offers the opportunity to view how a conservative figure negotiated the disjuncture between the pre-colonial world in which he was born and the challenges to Buddhism presented by the colonial transformation of Burmese society. Pre-colonial knowledge and practices served as the resources for Ledi Sayadaw's development of meditation as he responded to the perceived threats posed by the technological developments, societal fragmentation, and missionary attacks of the colonial period. Ledi Sayadaw stands as an example of someone who had clear connections to a pre-colonial heritage, even while he reformulated Burmese Buddhism into a modern form that promoted insight meditation as a mass movement.

Jason T. Clower [Ph.D. 2008]

The Unlikely Buddhologist Mou Zongsan (1909–1995)

Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), the leading light of Chinese philosophy in the last century, has influenced the study of philosophy and religion in greater China as deeply as Heidegger did in Europe and he is remembered for trying to revive Confucian philosophy by using ideas that he mined from the largely forgotten philosophy of Tiantai Buddhism.

Although well-known for this interest, Mou, first and last a Confucian apologist, did not explain clearly why he cared so much about Buddhist philosophy and why

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he put it at the center of his work and thought. To that end I have tried to reconstruct and to explain Mou's mature opinions about the content and significance of Buddhist philosophy and his reasons for commending it to Confucian philosophers. Through research into Mou's nearly unstudied two-volume normative history of Buddhist philosophy, *Buddhaness and Prajñā* (*Foxing yu boruo*) in concert with his writings about metaphysics and Confucian philosophy, I have arrived at interpretive conclusions about his missing definitions and arguments with which I can make sense of his explicit statements.

Simply put, Mou thought that he and other Confucians could capitalize on a great Buddhist philosophic breakthrough. He adapted a technique of doxography (*panjiao*) from the Tiantai tradition of Buddhism tradition, whereby he analyzed philosophic systems according to what they say about the relationship of ultimate value to the universe of objects and endorsed those systems which claim that the ultimate value is "paradoxically identical" to the universe of objects in some fashion. Mou thought that Confucians can use such a scheme to solve one of their great intramural disputes and conclude that humans who attain spiritual perfection will find the world perfect just as it is and will be rewarded for their efforts with happiness.

Carly Daniel-Hughes [Th.D. 2008]

Dressing for the Resurrection: Dress as Embodied Theology in Tertullian of Carthage

Why in the midst of heated third-century debates about creation and resurrection did the Christian writer, Tertullian of Carthage, pause to write to his community about the seemingly mundane matters like women's toiletries and veiling or men's attire?

Previous feminist scholarship has often separated Tertullian's theology from his exhortations on dress, seeing the former as articulating a notion of spiritual gender equality. Alternately, scholars have read his comments, particularly on women's dress, largely as the result of male politics without reference to his larger theological agendas. This study employs a methodology that refuses to foreground theology or practice and shows that Tertullian, and the female members of his community, signified dress differently in order to manifest or contest theological conceptions of the created order and salvation along with the gendered status of Christians in relation to these states.

This study indicates how dress functions rhetorically for Tertullian to enact his theological conceptions by first examining polemical writings about human nature and the resurrection in *De anima*, *De carne Christi*, and *De resurrectione mortuorum*. There the fleshly body and sexual difference are said to be good as created by God. On the other hand, he figures this difference in terms of a hierarchy of male over female as permanent and imagines the flesh as ever in threat of corruption and decay. A survey of select Roman materials indicates a discourse of modesty upon

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which Tertullian draws strategically in his writings on dress, *De cultu feminarum I & II*, *De pallio*, and *De virginibus velandis*, in order to produce a distinctive Christian identity by tying the *palla* for women and the *pallium* for men to his theological worldview. But he also signifies these gendered dress practices differently. Where men's dress manifests a Christian ethnic masculine identity that is non-Roman, women's dress naturalizes his view of the permanence of women's subordination to men through the performance of modesty. Consequently, this analysis draws out how his insistence upon the repeated performance of his gendered worldview showcases how virgin women could and did contest it every time they refuse to cover their heads.

Ultimately by reading Tertulliuan's treatises on the resurrection and soul with his writings on dress, this study foregrounds the thoroughly gendered nature of his theological worldview. But this conclusion also indicates that there remains an opportunity for constructive feminist theological engagement that moves away from the false presumption that his treatises on the resurrection and creation posit spiritual parity between women and men. Instead, the space for possible engagement might reside in his positive views of embodiment and sexual difference necessitating, however, the critical and analytical tools to grapple with the profound interconnections between his essentialized gender hierarchy and all other aspects of his thought.

Timothy S. Dobe [Th.D. 2007]

Faqīrs in the Colony: Rāma Tīrtha, Sundar Singh, and Comparative Sainthood in the Punjab (1849–1929)

This dissertation studies the construction of sainthood in the colonial Punjab (1849–1929). It focuses on the lives of two ascetic "saints": the Hindu Rāma Tīrtha (1873–1906) and the Sikh convert to Christianity Sundar Singh (1889–1929?). My thesis proposes that asceticism in this context constitutes both 1) a shared norm of religious exemplarity grounded in local culture, and 2) a politically charged embodiment of a resistant Indian identity in the public sphere. As such, asceticism forms a constitutive element in the modern construction of the "sainthood" of both persons. While a modern person may naturally assume that Indian saints, even modern ones, would practice asceticism, this study problematizes this assumption by articulating the complex set of historical conditions under which the historically different practices of asceticism and sainthood emerged in the modern colonial period of India as intimately connected. In particular, the critiques of living Indian asceticism by nineteenth-century Protestant and Enlightenment thinkers and the evocations of India's past mystical golden age by nationalist Hindus set the stage on which the ascetics Rāma Tīrtha and Sundar Singh could emerge in the public sphere as saints. The study focuses attention on the ways in which these emergent ascetic figures employed western rhetoric and concepts in the modern context but, at the same time, resisted the privatized and belief-centered forms of modern

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religion, which the Empire had brought in. More specifically, I examine the self-understandings of Rāma Tīrtha and Sundar Singh as *faqīr*s, who practiced poverty, celibacy, and wandering in a region where religions had long shared asceticism as a norm. Both *faqīr*s drew on ascetic culture and practices in Punjabi and pan-Indian "saffronized" forms in order to pursue distinctively Hindu and Christian visions of a transformed self, to represent themselves as exemplary and authoritative figures, and to make strong claims about the essence of Indian religious identity and its fulfillment. Perched on the edge of, but ultimately shunning, explicit political activism or leadership, Rāma Tīrtha and Sundar Singh remained "spiritual" figures. In keeping with the ascetic traditions of their region, however, they preserved the worldliness of Punjabi asceticism by engaging in contests of power and by using ascetic discipline to pursue and to contest the shape of modern religion.

Mary Corley Dunn [Ph.D. 2008]

Sainte-Anne-duPetit-Cap: The Making of an Early Modern Shrine

My dissertation examines the making of the shrine to Saint Anne at Petit-Cap (now Beaupré) and situates the development of this devotion in the latter half of the seventeenth century within the received tradition of scholarship on early modern Catholicism. Traditional historiography tends to understand early modern Catholicism in terms of disjuncture and conflict—whether between medieval and early modern, Protestant and Catholic, "popular" and "elite," clergy and laity, urban and rural, or even "civilized" and "savage." My research, however, suggests that the story of early modern Catholicism—at least as refracted through the experience of making the shrine to Saint Anne—is perhaps *not* one best told by a hermeneutic of difference.

I argue in my dissertation that making the shrine to Saint Anne at Petit-Cap speaks to an early modern Catholicism defined as much by conflict and difference as by cooperation and convergence. The cult of Saint Anne as it emerged at Petit-Cap during those formative years suggests an early modern Catholicism not wholly divorced from the medieval Catholicism for which it so often serves as a foil. From its focus on Saint Anne (of all saints), to its emphasis on the practice of pilgrimage, to its enthusiasm for astonishing cures and incredible rescues, devotion at the seventeenth-century shrine at Petit-Cap continued to manifest tendencies towards the miraculous, the material, and the immanent. Moreover, while the history of the shrine at Petit-Cap indeed betrays the presence of conflict—not only between the usual suspects but also within the class of clerics (between, for example, Jesuit and Sulpician), within the class of élites (between, for example, bishops and Intendents), and within the class of "natives" (between, for example, the Christian Huron and the Iroquois who remained committed to traditional beliefs and practices)—close analysis suggests an early modern Catholicism defined at least as much by collaboration between parties all too often rendered enemies by the historiographical tradition. The development of the devotion at Petit-Cap owes as much to the manual

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labor of the ordinary *habitant* as to the elaborate ex-voto donated by Intendant de Tracy, as much to the enthusiasm of the citizens of cities like Québec and Montréal as to the fidelity of the rural seigneurial tenants, and as much to the support of the French crown as to the piety of the Amerindians converts.

By looking organically at the community at Petit-Cap, complete with bishop, curé, indentured servant, seigneur, men, women, state officials, noble élite, missionary, and Huron convert, I hope to succeed in abandoning this hermeneutic of difference in favor of an alternative approach to understanding the nature of early modern Catholicism in all its complexity.

Linda Ellison [Th.D. 2008]

Abortion and the Politics of God: Patient Narratives and Public Rhetoric in the American Abortion Debate

In this dissertation I seek to understand more about the abortion experiences of women, who for political and religious reasons, oppose abortion. Yet they undergo one or many abortion procedures anyway.

I study conservative Christian American women, who have had abortions. I use data collected from individual interview sessions that I conducted with 729 conservative Christian women after their abortion procedures in Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C., from 2002–2006. Individual interviews lasted sixty minutes per session, and most women in the study volunteered for multiple interviews over the course of months or even a year. A subset of the women individually interviewed in Boston also participated in small-group interview sessions that met for seventy-five minutes weekly for periods of four months each. All women interviewees gave their written, informed consent. I recorded and transcribed the sessions and later analyzed the data using Atlas.ti.

In this study I confined my interviews to a sample group of women, but this study may apply to a broader American context. My study finds that for women considering abortion, their pregnancy concerns what "could be" but has "not yet" happened. This consideration represents a deeply American idea of a Lacanian imaginary in which a potential child differs vastly from the empirical, material child that the pro-life side of the debate describes. Overwhelmingly, conservative Christian women having abortions operate under a cultural model that abortion does not equal murder and that a fetus does not equal an actual child. Rather, an abortion equals the passing up of an opportunity, and a fetus equals not an empirical child but the potential of a child.

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Linford D. Fisher [Th.D. 2008]

"Traditionary Religion": The Great Awakening and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Southern New England, 1736–1776

This dissertation explores the ways in which religious practices and religious conversions became important sites of cultural negotiation between American Indians of southern New England and their Anglo-European counterparts in the eighteenth century. Although the process of cultural adaptation and change was ongoing, this particular period began in the 1730s with several non-Christian Native communities on relatively large tracts of land in Connecticut and Rhode Island and on Long Island (New York) and ended in the 1780s with the voluntary emigration of hundreds of then-Christianized Indians from Narragansett, Mohegan, Pequot, Montaukett, Farmington, and Niantic communities to Brotherton, a newly-formed Christian Indian community carved out of Oneida territory in upstate New York. In attempting to understand how these changes came about, I argue that in the years leading up to the Great Awakening, Native Americans selectively utilized English offers of cultural and religious education in order to improve their own standing in larger colonial society. In the Great Awakening, many Indians found themselves at a cultural crossroads, and chose to publicly affiliate with Christianity in part, at least, in hopes of finding practical aid in their ongoing land disputes with colonial officials. The result was a generation of Natives who practiced incorporative versions of Indian Christianities that the Mohegan minister Samson Occom termed "traditionary religion." In the thirty years following the revivals, the generation of Indians who experienced the Great Awakening slowly began to reject most forms of Anglo-American religious involvement or supervision, first in terms of churches, then in terms of education, and finally, in terms of association and geographical proximity.

Tamsin Jones Farmer [Th.D. 2008]

Apparent Darkness: Jean-Luc Marion's Retrieval of the Greek Apophatic Tradition

This study analyzes the use of patristic sources, specifically those of Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Areopagite, within the writing of Jean-Luc Marion (1946–). This analysis functions as an illuminating lens through which I evaluate a fundamental tension within Marion's philosophical project. I locate this tension between "givenness" and "saturation," between the radical manifestation and the endless hiddenness of phenomena, and finally, between the universality of a rigorous method and the contextuality of infinite interpretation.

Using textual analysis and philosophic argumentation, I place Marion's apophatic phenomenology in direct conversation with the patristic authors. My analysis proceeds along the following lines. First, I argue that, from his earliest publications onwards, patristic sources function in Marion rhetorically as an

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"authoritative" (orthodox) foundation for his contemporary engagements. For this apologetic reason, Marion retrieves the premodern sources in a strangely univocal manner despite indisputable evidence of his capacity for greater sophistication. Second, I challenge this univocal reading of Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius, in particular, by comparing their theories of *apophasis* and the distinct ontological assumptions contained therein. Third, I argue that Marion's double importation of Dionysius and Gregory (*in voce* Dionysius) highlights a tension that exists within Marion's philosophy in itself. On the one hand, Dionysius gives him the language and conceptual framework for treating revelation as simultaneous manifestation and concealment. On the other hand, Marion cites Gregory whenever he develops either a purely "pragmatic" theory of discourse or the originary gap between the "given" and the "phenomenal." Dionysius satisfies Marion's yearning for a language of givenness that is universal without being idolatrous, while Gregory feeds Marion's more recent discussions of an "endless hermeneutics" arising out of saturated phenomena.

Since Marion does not differentiate between Dionysius and Gregory, he has not recognized or utilized the two thinkers according to what each one distinctly has to offer. In this way, my study demonstrates the risk of contemporary retrievals of patristic thought—that one imports more than was bargained for—and the rich potential of such a retrieval that offers a way of thinking outside the paradigms regnant in continental thought today.

Mary T. Kantor [Th.D. 2008]

Holy Desires: An Ecclesiological Study of the Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World

The Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World, ancient custom then liturgical rite of the Roman Catholic Church, dates from the first centuries of the Christian Church, and is used by the Church today. The current rite comes from the Second Vatican Council's reforms of the Church and its liturgical life. This dissertation argues that the rite—the text, consecrated virgins' experiences of the rite, their living a consecrated life in the world through this rite—has the potential to magnify an element and dimension of ecclesiology, particularly an ecclesiology of Church in the world. The Church, and the broader culture, provides witness to women who fully live in the world, yet embrace that which is not yet fully present in the world—a divine spouse they experience in Jesus Christ.

This dissertation provides an overview of the rite's development, and textual analysis of its language of virgin, mother, bride/spouse—language used for consecrated virgins and for the Church—drawing on historical, patristic, ecclesial and liturgical sources; an overview of the Church's developing practices of the rite in the United States, an accounting not yet provided by or for the Church or the academy; contextualization of the rite and of consecrated life in ecclesial and canonical frameworks of the Church.

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This study of consecrated virgins, individually and corporately, uses sociological analysis (a national survey gathered demographics and information on these women's involvement in the Church, and their current status in the world) to provide the first statistics in tracking the history of this vocation in the United States. Extensive personal interviews for this dissertation are the first compilation of individual testimonies since the rite's return in the 1970s, giving voice to approximately one-third of the consecrated virgins in the United States.

From these women's voices and this examination of the rite, theological, ecclesiological meaning is drawn forth, providing understandings of how the consecration liturgy shapes and influences these women's lives and may influence the world. Recommendations and observations are offered from the perspectives of the academy, the Church, pastoral practice, and theology.

Brent Landau [Th.D. 2008]

The Sages and the Star-Child: An Introduction to the Revelation of the Magi, An Ancient Christian Apocryphon

This study analyzes a poorly-known ancient Christian apocryphal writing, the *Revelation of the Magi*. This document purports to be the personal testimony of the biblical Magi on the coming of Christ, and is the longest and most complex narrative devoted to the Magi surviving from antiquity. The first chapter is a critical edition of the Syriac text of this apocryphon as found in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, an eighth-century world chronicle preserved in a single manuscript, codex Vaticanus Syriacus 162. The corresponding annotated English translation is the first of its kind for this text.

The second chapter compares the Syriac text with a much shorter version of the narrative contained in the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum*, an Arian commentary on the Gospel of Matthew from the fifth century. It concludes that the *Opus* is a witness to a Greek version of this apocryphon and is essentially equivalent to the received Syriac. The third chapter attempts to trace the prehistory of the text prior to its fifth-century form, and argues that the earliest form of the text was a pseudepigraphon, written from the putative perspective of the Magi themselves. This text, which was composed in the late-second or early-third century, was redacted in the third or fourth century to include a third-person account of the Apostle Judas Thomas's conversion of the Magi.

The fourth chapter investigates the use of foundational Christian writings by the *Revelation of the Magi*. Although the text is obviously dependent upon Matthew for its basic narrative structure, the terminology and theology of the Gospel of John are much more influential, especially since the text portrays the Magi's star as Christ in luminous form—the literal "light of the world." The fifth and final chapter argues that the text employs two different modes of religious diffusion: divine universal revelation and human mission. Its presentation of divine revelation has particular consequences for understanding the origins of religious difference. According to

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the *Revelation of the Magi*, because Christ can appear to anyone, in any place, at any time, he is actually the wellspring of all of humanity's religious traditions.

Simon S. Lee [Th.D. 2008]

Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believers' Transformation: A Study of the Transfiguration and Its Development in Early Christian Writings

In my dissertation, I examine the Transfiguration story of Jesus found in the narrative accounts of the Synoptic Gospels and trace its trajectories of multiple readings through the first two centuries of the Christian era, especially focusing on texts where Peter is described as the main witness to the event—Synoptic Gospels, Paul, 2 Peter, *Apocalypse of Peter*, and *Acts of Peter*.

The Transfiguration, where Jesus appears in a glorious form with Elijah and Moses, is such a fascinating and complicated story. Modern scholarship on this topic seems to have exclusively focused on possible backgrounds or sources for the Transfiguration and on literary dependencies among various documents containing the story. In my dissertation, I considered these sources as parts of the dynamic process of complicated development of the Transfiguration and explored their trajectories—both forward and backward—through various narrative accounts, rather than focusing on their literary dependencies. Also, I emphasized the socio-historical aspects of the texts by showing how the development of the idea of the Transfiguration reflected ancient readers' historical contexts. In this development process, it seems that both specific historical events and multiple Jewish as well as Hellenistic ideas contributed to the various interpretations of the Transfiguration. In this sense, the textual instances of the Transfiguration may offer us some indirect information on the emergence of various Christian groups of people that emerged in conjunction with ideological trends of the times—both Jewish and Hellenistic. These instances further tell us how they modified the trends in ways that were distinctive to their self-identity and met their communal needs.

Amod Jayant Lele [Ph.D. 2008]

Ethical Revaluation in the Thought of Śāntideva

This dissertation examines the idea of *ethical revaluation*—taking things we normally see a good for our flourishing and seeing them instead as neutral or bad, and vice versa—in the Mahāyāna Buddhist thinker Śāntideva. It shows how Śāntideva's thought on the matter is more coherent than it might initially appear, first by examining the consistency of Śāntideva's own claims and then by applying them to contemporary ethical thought. In so doing, this dissertation makes four significant contributions.

Śāntideva claims that property and relationships are bad for human beings because they promote attachment, and that others' wrongdoing is good for humans because it allows individuals to generate patient endurance. Yet he also urges his

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readers to give property to others, and to prevent the wrongdoing of others. Is he caught in contradiction? The dissertation argues that he is not, because giving to others is not intended to benefit the recipient materially, but rather to produce beneficial mental states in them, and preventing wrongdoing is intended to benefit the potential wrongdoer and not the would-be victim. In both cases, Śāntideva emphasizes individual action in a way that makes social or political action more difficult to justify. The dissertation's first contribution, then, is to demonstrate a very different interpretation of Śāntideva that contrasts notably with standard presentations of Mahāyāna ethics. Its second contribution is to refute claims that Buddhists have no normative ethics.

Śāntideva's resolutions of these apparent contradictions also have relevance for contemporary ethical thought. Martha Nussbaum argues against an ethical revaluation similar to Śāntideva's, on the grounds that such a revaluation makes it contradictory to argue for providing goods to others, preventing others from wrongdoing, or engaging in political action. Śāntideva's views show that ethical revaluation is a more sustainable position than these criticisms of Nussbaum's would imply. The third contribution of this work is to show that if ethical revaluation is to be rejected, it must rejected on other grounds. The fourth contribution is methdological: It helps bridge the gap between normative and comparative religious ethics by finding similarities of concern and differences of opinion between Śāntideva and a contemporary thinker.

Anna Criscinda Miller [Ph.D. 2008]

Ekklēsia: ***1 Corinthians in the Context of Ancient Democratic Discourse***

This dissertation investigates and reconstructs a vital discourse centered on the democratic, civic *ekklēsia* in the early Roman Empire, demonstrating this discourse's place in the rhetorical construction of the early Christian letter 1 Corinthians. Scholars of ancient history and the New Testament have widely dismissed the civic *ekklēsia*, the assembly, as a functioning institution or source of social knowledge in the first century. By contrast, this dissertation argues that this period knew a widespread *ekklēsia* discourse that originated with the civic assembly, but expanded into numerous other sites to constitute logic and *topoi* associated with constructions of ancient democracy. With a fresh examination of first-century Greek texts, the dissertation maps the contours of *ekklēsia* discourse in various sites including education, civic government, and the reinterpretation of biblical narrative by the Jewish writer Josephus. While this examination draws out key *topoi* of *ekklēsia* discourse including communal discernment, citizen speech and freedom, it also explores the role of the discourse in critical debates over citizen participation and leadership. Mapping this wider *ekklēsia* discourse in the first century facilitates a new consideration of the struggles and debates visible in the first letter to the Corinthians.

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A rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians deploy *ekklēsia* discourse towards a construction of this community as a democratic assembly. This construction features the authority of the assembly as a decision-making body and the exercise of leadership through persuasive speech. However, the rhetoric of 1 Corinthians also shows that Paul and the Corinthians alternately mobilize *ekklēsia* discourse in struggles over leadership, participation and communal identity. While Paul's rhetoric engages an *ekklēsia* discourse designed to promote hierarchy and his own position as an apostolic leader, the Corinthians mobilize a competing discourse towards an egalitarian vision of community that emphasizes the open participation of free "citizens." While providing significant insight into one early Christian community and its relationship with the apostle Paul, a focus on *ekklēsia* discourse in first-century literature also suggests new possibilities for the way we interpret community dynamics and debates over leadership, freedom and equality in the early Roman Empire.

Brenna Moore [Th.D. 2008]

'Leaning Over the Abyss': Raïssa Maritain, the Allure of Suffering, and the French Catholic Revival

Although the name Raïssa Maritain (1883–1960) occasionally surfaces in the study of French Catholicism alongside that of her celebrated husband Jacques Maritain, her own writings have received scarce critical attention. This omission is significant considering her extensive activity in a range of intellectual communities in Europe and the United States. As a key player in the twentieth-century French Catholic revival, Raïssa Maritain published several books of poetry, wrote theological texts on contemplative prayer, intellectual life, mysticism, aesthetics, and as a Jewish convert, on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. One goal of this project is to open up Maritain's works to English-speaking readers.

But Maritain's life and writings also offer a way to focus a broader question about how to understand the widespread attraction to theologies and practices that center on suffering and anguish—a central feature of French Catholic revival writings. Like many critics of atheistic positivism in France, the themes in Maritain's own works are undeniably dark, and she rarely veers her attention away from the suffering of the cross, the affliction of the soul, and the tears of the Virgin. While Maritain deepened and expanded this tradition, she also modified it and continued to do so throughout her life. Symbols and practices around anguish were consistently intellectually and emotionally provocative, but they were also highly malleable. My analysis tracks these changes from 1900–1944. Raïssa Maritain was a Jewish convert and one of the few women in this intellectual circuit, and I pay particular attention to her engagement with the long-standing association in French Catholicism between suffering and women, and suffering and Jews.

Using the methods of close textual analysis and historical-cultural investigation, the chapters proceed thematically and chronologically. I begin with Maritain's 1906

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conversion to Catholicism and proceed through her experiences and writings in interwar France, and finish with her exile in New York during World War II. The final chapter is an opportunity to track the fate of the French Catholic valorization of redemptive *souffrance* when it came in contact with the central trauma of European history in 1940–1944. Maritain's refusal to overlay the Holocaust with meanings of redemptive suffering and her simultaneous turn to sanctified suffering as a project of memory suggests a need to think carefully about the relationship between memory and the power of theologies of suffering in the context of an unthinkable present.

Tovis Page [Ph.D. 2008]

The Problem of the Land is the Problem of the Woman: A Genealogy of Ecofeminism at Grailville

This dissertation brings current theoretical understandings of the relationship between religion, gender, and ecology to bear upon a sociohistorical analysis of the evolution of the U.S. Grail at its main center in southwestern Ohio at Grailville. Founded in the Netherlands in the 1920s, the Grail today is a small international women's movement with a spirit of high idealism and deep roots in the Roman Catholic tradition. Grailville, a partially converted old farm on 300 acres of land, has been the organizational heart of the U.S. Grail since 1944.

A genealogy of ecofeminism at Grailville demonstrates that the roots of ecofeminism extend farther back than, and well beyond the bounds of, the radical political movements of the 1970s and '80s with which it is commonly identified. Proceeding in reverse chronological order and drawing on archival and ethnographic sources, the dissertation first examines the emergence of ecofeminism at Grailville in the late 1970s through '90s and then the midcentury forms of praxis that facilitated its emergence. At Grailville in the 1940s and '50s, women cobbled together new ideological variants out of the discourses of surrendering womanhood, valiant lay sainthood, and Catholic rural life. Although explicitly opposed to feminism and endorsing an instrumentalist appraisal of nature, the Grail's early ideals of valiant Catholic womanhood and Catholic rural life—when deliberately "lived" at Grailville—cultivated modes of subjectivity that emerged later as forms of feminism, environmentalism, and ecofeminism.

This study complements work already done on the U.S. Grail and Grailville by focusing on the persistent emphases on women and the land and on the longstanding effort to "make ideas live." In doing so, it establishes Grailville as an important site of preconciliar Catholic agrarianism as well as later forms of ecofeminism, and it places Grailville along the spectrum of U.S. forms of "lived religion." With respect to the interdisciplinary study of religion, gender, and ecology, the dissertation makes several contributions. It deepens and broadens scholarly accounts of ecofeminism; it demonstrates the importance of historical, ethnographic, and case-

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study approaches; and it highlights the eco-social implications of understanding embodied practice—including ritual practice—as pedagogical and normative.

Cameron Elliot Partridge [Th.D. 2008]

Transfiguring Sexual Difference in Maximus the Confessor

This dissertation studies the conception of sexual difference in the thought of Maximus the Confessor (580–662 C.E.). It focuses in particular upon several enigmatic phrases in Ambiguum 41, which describe first the human person and then Jesus Christ as "shaking out of nature the distinctive characteristics of male and female, . . . driving out of nature the difference and division of male and female, [and] . . . removing the difference between male and female" (PG 91.1305 C, 1309 A, and 1309 D). These statements have appeared to contemporary scholars to conflict with the broader shape of Maximus's thought because they find in the Confessor a theological vision of cosmic unity in distinctions, a positive valuation of material creation, and his position, amid the seventh-century Monothelite controversy, that Christ had two wills stemming from his human and divine natures. By contrast, I argue that the removal of "male and female" in Ambiguum 41 does not conflict with, but rather plays a crucial role in Maximus's vision of the transfiguration of creation. The key to understanding Maximus's language of sexual purgation, as I argue in chapter three, lies in its link with his notion of the human person as bond [σύνδεσμος] of the cosmos. In chapter four I argue that the notion of "male and female" in Maximus's anthropology relates in an important way to his Christology, not by a parallel to the presence of two wills in Christ, but rather by the absence of two key volitional modalities in Christ, γνώμη and προαίρεσις, deliberative will and free choice, respectively. The removal of male and female in human beings and the absence of deliberative will and free choice in Christ mirror each other because of their connection in Maximus's notion of "original transgression." Chapters one and two treat two key predecessors of Maximus, Gregory of Nyssa and Nemesius of Emesa, and show how each theologian defines sexual difference in relation to the organization of the cosmos in ways that likely influenced Maximus.

Mark Stephen Murray Scott [Ph.D. 2008]

Cosmic Theodicy: Origen on the Problem of Evil

In my dissertation I examine Origen of Alexandria's (185–254 C.E.) treatment of the problem of evil. I undertake a major re-evaluation of the salient themes of his theodicy, which include the pre-existence of souls, the fall, creation, and universal salvation. Origen casts the problem of evil into cosmic relief. His layered cosmology functions as a theodicy that attempts to explain cosmic disparity and unjust suffering. The themes of his theodicy unfold through the narrative of the soul's journey from pre-existent bliss to its fall, purification, and deification when God will restore cosmic harmony. According to Origen, God acts as a kind Father,

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Teacher, and Physician, who employs suffering—even the suffering that we inflict on ourselves—for our betterment. My analysis incorporates both his speculative philosophical works, such as *De Principiis*, and his often neglected homilies and biblical commentaries. It unites the speculative and exegetical aspects of his theodicy. For Origen, the logical problem of evil remains deeply interconnected with the moral problem of evil; one cannot dissociate them.

My dissertation contributes to the theorization of theodicy. I develop an interdisciplinary approach called "theodicy as navigation." It draws from sociological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical, and theological conceptions of theodicy in order to argue that theodicy attempts to create and to sustain meaning in the face of inexplicable suffering. It constitutes the process by which we integrate evil into a larger theological narrative. It clarifies and corrects the following five major issues in Origen scholarship: 1) Philosophy—I subvert the disjunctive portrayals of Origen as either a Platonist or a Christian and take an integrative approach to his identity; 2) Pre-existence—I reconsider his theory of pre-existence by illustrating its Christological bent; 3) Creation—I show that Origen held a positive view of the salvific value of creation; 4) Soteriology—I argue that the logic of his theodicy entails universal salvation, including the Devil, despite his ambivalence on this question; 5) Pedagogy—I elucidate the pastoral and intellectual dimensions of his dual pedagogy.

John Chapin Seitz [Ph.D. 2008]

No Closure: Catholic Practice and Boston's Parish Shutdowns

In 2004 the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston announced the closure of more than eighty of its 357 parishes. In the months that followed, parishioners at several closing parishes took over and occupied their churches in opposition to the closure decrees. They sought to save their parishes by persuading the archdiocese to rescind the closure decision. In the meantime, the church occupiers, or "perpetual vigilers" as they called themselves, took responsibility for the buildings and the rituals for those who stayed on. This project seeks to explain why Catholics resisted and what that resistance says about twentieth- and twenty-first-century U.S. Catholicism.

Drawing on historical and anthropological methods of inquiry, I explain the anxieties and upheaval around the church closings in Boston in terms of Catholics' struggles with the changing meanings of sacrifice and sacred presence. The period from the 1960s through the 1970s launched a continuing set of theological exchanges and contestations across and with the Catholic past on these themes. The ambition of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) to combine continuity with change involved more than a description of the project of reform; it presented an ongoing puzzle for the churches and the individual Catholics within them. Boston's resisting Catholics lived inside these tensions of "modern" Catholic theology.

In Chapters 1, 2, and 4, I use the histories of parish, archdiocese, and Church, as well as broader social histories to track the changes in the rules of the "practicing

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parish." Calls for sacrifice that enjoined ownership of the church by parishioners as "the people of God" replaced the rationales for sacrifice that once promised to infuse the local parish with Church glory. Reform of the ancient rite of church dedication in the 1970s aimed to replace overflowing presence in Catholic locales with presence concentrated in the eucharist and in the gathered congregation. Boston's parish closures threw Catholics into an uneasy reengagement with these changing theologies of sacrifice and presence. Chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation draw on fieldwork within the resisting parishes in order to show that these occupying Catholics took up the resistance, and their sense of belonging in the Church, as eager but troubled interlocutors of Catholic modernity.

Sarah Sentilles [Th.D. 2008]

Just Looking: Theological Language, Ethics, and Photographs of Violence

This dissertation has two parts. In part one I analyze the theological language that emerges in the writings of three theorists of photography: Roland Barthes, John Berger, and Susan Sontag. They employ theological language when writing about photography's ability to transgress limitations and when describing the encounter between viewers and photographs. I interrogate the viewing practices that Barthes, Berger, and Sontag outline and propose that theological language offers resources for constructing an alternate form of ethical looking.

In part two I build on the theoretical framework developed in part one and investigate the reception of the Abu Ghraib photographs as crucifixion images. Many who insisted on the publication of the photographs from Abu Ghraib, ascribed to a "politics of empathy." They assumed that the images would elicit an emotional response that would in turn lead to action against the violence depicted in the photographs. Empathy, however, has not comprised the only response to the photographs. The photographs have elicited a wide range of response including moral outrage, triumphalism, warmongering, indifference, sexism, sexual fantasy, racism, and humor. Such varied reception disrupts the common assumption that viewing representations of violence necessarily leads to empathy and that empathy necessarily leads to beneficent action on behalf of those pictured. Through a critical analysis of the Abu Ghraib photographs as crucifixion images, I propose that viewers trade the seemingly definitive knowledge of the other that such a reading promises for a different mode of relation in which the photographed other is both real and essentially unknowable. Certain aspects of the Christian theological tradition, those rooted in thinking about and living with the unknowability of God, offer resources for turning such mystery into an ethical category. Although photographs and narratives about photographs seem to "capture" the other, viewers must resist this illusion and recognize that claiming to know an other may constitute a form of violence in itself. Viewing the other as real and unknowable may create opportunities for ethical relationships to emerge.

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Robert N. St. Hilaire II [Th.D. 2008]

Desire Divided: Nature and Grace in the Neo-Thomism of Pierre Rousselot

This study explores the early work of the French neo-Thomist Pierre Rousselot, S.J. (1878–1915). Rousselot, a theologian of major significance in twentieth-century Catholic thought, influenced Henri de Lubac, Joseph Maréchal, Karl Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, all of whom express an indebtedness to his thought. Among his many philosophical and theological contributions, Rousselot set the stage for *la nouvelle théologie*, a controversial and influential movement within Catholic theology that insisted in new and radical ways on the intimate integration of nature and grace.

This study explicates in particular Rousselot's understanding of the relationship between nature and grace in the works of Thomas Aquinas. Rousselot offers his interpretation of Thomas primarily in his major thesis, *L'Intellectualisme de saint Thomas*, which he published in 1908. Rousselot focuses on Thomas's doctrine of the intelligent creature's "natural desire to see God" (*desiderium naturale visionis Dei*), especially as Thomas presents it in the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Compendium theologiae*.

As this study demonstrates, Rousselot's reading of Thomas amounts to a tacit response to the philosophical apologetics of Maurice Blondel (1861–1949). Blondel's treatise *L'action*, published in 1893, had exercised considerable influence in Rousselot's day. Rousselot tries to show that Thomas's metaphysical approach to "intelligence" (*intellectus*) anticipates Blondel's teaching on the openness or receptivity of human existence to a saving God and eternal life. Yet Rousselot also endeavors to prove, in contrast to Blondel's philosophy, that Thomas safeguards the natural power of reason to know reality apart from faith and grace. Rousselot thus finds a delicate balance in Thomas's thought between the intellect's innate dynamism toward God and the natural integrity of its rational operations.

This study contributes both to the recent scholarship on twentieth-century Thomism and to a methodology of how to read Thomas today. Rousselot draws upon nineteenth-century neo-Scholasticism and the heritage of classic Thomist commentary, namely that of Tommaso de Vio Cajetan and Francisco Suárez, while, at the same time, paves the way for *la nouvelle théologie*. Rousselot's work not only reveals an interesting and fruitful moment in the history of Thomism but also offers insights into how Thomas himself conceives of the relationship between nature and grace.

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Charles M. Stang [Th.D. 2008]

"No Longer I": Paul, Dionysius the Areopagite, and the Apophasis of the Self

In this dissertation I argue that the pseudonym, Dionysius the Areopagite, and the influence of Paul together constitute the best interpretive lens for understanding the aims and purposes of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* [*CD*] and its pseudonymous author. By and large, modern scholarship on the *CD* has passed over the question of the pseudonym and the influence of Paul and has interpreted the corpus against the backdrop of late Neoplatonism or late antique Eastern Christianity. First, I argue, appreciating why this late-fifth- or early-sixth-century author wrote under the name of Paul's Athenian convert, mentioned in Acts 17:34, not only alters our understanding of central themes of the *CD* but also resolves certain scholarly debates. Attention to the pseudonym and to the influence of Paul thus allows us to make headway on such central, but controversial, themes as hierarchy, Christology, theurgy, and apophasis. Second, when we read the *CD* against the backdrop of the pseudonym and the influence of Paul, I contend, the "mystical theology" of the *CD* reveals a corresponding "mystical anthropology," to which Paul serves as the premier and authoritative witness. For Dionysius Paul is the exemplary lover of God, whose fervent *eros* carries him outside himself in ecstasy and therefore renders him split, which thus opens him to the indwelling of Christ. Third and finally, I argue that the practice of writing under a pseudonym, and especially this pseudonym, is for our author an ecstatic devotional practice that aims to breach the singular self—the "I"—and thereby to suffer, as Paul does, the indwelling of Christ: "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). The very writing of the *CD*, under this pseudonym, constitutes a practice integral to the enterprise described in the *CD*, a mystical, theological, and anthropological asceticism that aims to "unsay" and to "unknow" both God and self.

Alan Gerard Wagner [Ph.D. 2008]

Practice and Emptiness in the Discourse Record of Ruru Jushi, Yan Bing (d. 1212), a Chan Buddhist Layman of the Southern Song

In this dissertation I studied the works of one Chinese Buddhist layman, Yan Bing 顏丙, also known as Layman Ruru (Ruru jushi 如如居士, d. 1212). His extant writings survive in two editions, a handwritten manuscript of more than 400 pages and a woodblock print of 121 pages. In this rare and exceptional corpus we find a great wealth of primary material on Buddhist thought, culture, and practice in the Southern Song (1127–1279), including essays on doctrine, morality and meditation, written prayers and supplications, detailed ritual protocols, records of his formal Chan teachings, a complex diagram of the Buddhist cosmos, and essays and verses on the unity of the "Three Teachings" (Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism).

This study had two aims. First, it introduced Yan Bing to the English-speaking scholarly community by presenting a substantial volume of transcriptions and

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translations from his corpus. Second, it explored the relationship between the doctrine of "emptiness" or "nonduality" on the one hand and "conventional" Buddhist morality and ritual piety on the other. Both of these religious orientations are well represented in Yan's works. As a second-generation dharma heir of Linji Chan Master Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163), Yan emphasizes meditation and *huatou* contemplation as the fastest solution to the problem of karma and rebirth. At the same time, he strongly urges adherence to the Buddhist precepts, the cultivation of merit, and the pursuit of rebirth in Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land.

The study proceeds through a careful examination of the relationship between one's store of karmic merit and the possibility of attaining "sudden" enlightenment; the various uses to which Yan applies the doctrine of nonduality in his preaching; and an extensive comparison with another Buddhist layman, the Pure Land devotee Wang Rixiu 王日休 (d. 1173). We find that Yan sees "conventional" religiosity as a support to the pursuit of ultimate liberation and that different understandings of "emptiness" have a tangible impact on programs of practice.

Adrian Weimer [Ph.D. 2008]

Protestant Sainthood: Martyrdom and the Meaning of Sanctity in Early New England

This dissertation examines the rhetoric of martyrdom in seventeenth-century Protestant culture, exploring how Puritans, Baptists, and Quakers imagined themselves within biblical and historical narratives of persecution both to strengthen their authority in matters of religion and to reinforce a model of the true spiritual life. Memories of persecution, especially stories of the Protestants killed during the reign of Queen Mary in the mid-sixteenth century, were central to a model of sanctity that had powerful devotional and political applications.

In examining how the notions of persecution and affliction move in and out of the literature of the period, I find that how early modern Protestants conceived themselves is closely related to how stories of historic suffering were appropriated by different groups. The sense of being uniquely threatened and marginalized had striking implications for intergroup conflict and for the justification of aggression against Native Americans during King Philip's War. This examination of the historical imagination and persecution contributes to our understanding of the meaning of suffering and holiness in Protestant religious culture, of the significance of trauma on the religious experiences of future generations, and of the role of religion in justifying violence, as well as in furnishing the moral conscience.

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