Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations

Eyal Aviv [Ph.D. 2009]

Differentiating the Pearl From the Fish Eye: Ouyang Jingwu (1871–1943) and the Revival of Scholastic Buddhism

This dissertation explores the rise of Buddhist scholasticism in Republican China (1911–1949) through the career of one of its most outspoken leaders, Ouyang Jingwu (1871–1943). Ouyang Jingwu, a lay Buddhist intellectual, charismatic teacher and polemical writer, is most recognized for his critique of the East Asian Buddhist tradition, and this critique stands at the heart of the dissertation. In addition to presenting this critique, this dissertation explores one of the most innovative hermeneutical alternatives offered by this influential and creative thinker. To date, scholars have overlooked the importance of Ouyang for later intellectual developments. I argue here that understanding Ouyang's critique is crucial for later developments in Chinese intellectual history both within and outside of Buddhism.

The first chapter of this dissertation outlines Ouyang's biography in order to provide a broader intellectual context. The second and third chapters discuss Ouyang's critique of the East Asian tradition. Chapter 3 surveys the problems that Ouyang identified in the East Asian Buddhist tradition, while chapter 4 highlights the core problem, in Ouyang's view, of the spuriousness of the *Awakening of Faith*. Finally, the fifth chapter introduces one of Ouyang's most controversial and idiosyncratic solutions to the problems in the tradition that he identified in his "Two Paradigms" theory.

I conclude that Ouyang's alternatives posed one of the greatest challenges to traditional Chinese thought in the modern period. It offered a systematic critique based on the medieval Indian Buddhist scholastic tradition. Later attempts to adapt traditional Chinese thought to the modern period, such as those by Buddhist apologists and the rise of the influential New Confucian movement, are closely linked to the scholastic Buddhist movement. One cannot understand the former without understanding the latter.

HTR 102:4 (2009) 497–503

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816009000972 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Timothy Dalrymple [Ph.D. 2009]

The Ladder of Thorns: Søren Kierkegaard on the Varieties of Suffering

This dissertation contends that the relationship between human suffering and divine love is an enduring and profound concern for Kierkegaard through the entirety of his literary production. He articulates a narrative of human advancement in which sufferings serve to draw the willing individual providentially and maieutically toward the possibility and the life of faith. Kierkegaard constructs a "ladder" of sufferings, as it were, where each rung has its own thorns and where each thorn can serve to transform the individual along the way to authentic subjectivity in faith. Only one wounded on the thorns of the present rung may pass on to the next, and the suffering of these wounds leads to death—and to the "new being" of faith, the highest rung, where one stands and remains only by being wounded continually in "Christian suffering." Through suffering the false self is put to death; in suffering the true self lives truly in the world. The story of the self is a story of suffering from beginning to end.

This dissertation moves in a broadly chronological manner through Kierkegaard's evolving treatment of the varieties of sufferings and the varieties of their uses through the love of God for the transformation of the spirit. What emerges is a novel way of reading Kierkegaard, his project, and his place in the intellectual discourse of modernity. Understanding Kierkegaard as an interpreter of suffering brings clarity to his undervalued works as well as his most celebrated, and to his readings in premodern Christian sources as well as modern. By connecting Kierkegaard's early (largely pseudonymous) reflections of melancholy, depression, despair, and anxiety with his later writings on "religious suffering" and "Christian suffering," one can see the whole of Kierkegaard's corpus in the coherence of its fundamental concerns and the continuity of its treatment of the suffering self, the suffering Christian, and the suffering Church. Moreover, this approach reveals the "attack upon Christendom" at the end of Kierkegaard's life not as a departure from sanity, but as the final unfolding of his critique of modern Christendom for neglecting the "price" of faith.

Gábor Ittzés [Th.D. 2009]

"The Breath Returns to God Who Gave It": The Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality in Sixteenth-Century German Lutheran Theology

This study examines the development of a new Lutheran doctrine of the soul's immortality in the course of the sixteenth century. After a brief sketch of the medieval and Renaissance background, I begin with Luther, whose eschatological thought has been much scrutinized, but without producing a lasting scholarly consensus. Against widely different recent interpretations, I argue that Luther's apophaticism and emphasis on the unspeakability and ungraspability of the post-mortem state should be recognized. Against a popular mid-twentieth-century theological posi-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816009000972 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tion that sharply juxtaposed the resurrection of the body with the immortality of the soul, and attributed the same conviction to Luther, it must be affirmed that the Reformer saw the latter doctrine entailed in the former. He understood both insights as articles of faith of which reason could never be certain.

Analyzing revisions between his *Commentarius* and *Liber de anima*, I show that Melanchthon's mature position was that the immortality of the soul could be recognized by reason without revelation, while belief in the resurrection of the body was a privilege of faith. Melanchthon's return to Aristotle and his admission of reason, however, must be seen in the context of a Lutheran law–gospel dialectic, and should not be regarded as compromising the older Reformer's theology.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, German Lutheran authors, including Melchior Specker, Andreas Musculus, Basilius Faber, Martin Mirus, David Chyträus, and others produced a remarkably coherent body of literature in which they affirmed the soul's immortality. Superficially, the new orthodoxy seems closer to Lateran V than to Luther, but that is not the case. While patristic ideas and other factors were also in play, the three most profoundly formative influences shaping the work of second- and third-generation Reformation theologians originated with Luther, Melanchthon, and a confessional commitment against the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. Philosophically, later-sixteenth-century authors were all students of Melanchthon. Theologically, however, Luther exerted a more profound influence on them, which I demonstrate by examining their arguments and prooftexts in general, and their treatment of three questions—soul sleep, knowledge of the righteous dead, and the appearance of departed souls on earth—in particular. The dissertation concludes with some reflections on the functions and consequences of the doctrine.

Ching Keng [Ph.D. 2009]

"Yogâcāra Buddhism Transmitted or Transformed? Paramârtha (499–569 C.E.) and His Chinese Interpreters"

This dissertation argues that the Yogâcāra Buddhism transmitted by the Indian translator Paramârtha (Ch. Zhendi 真諦) underwent a significant transformation due to the influence of his later Chinese interpreters, a phenomenon to which previous scholars failed to pay enough attention.

I begin with showing two contrary interpretations of Paramârtha's notion of *jiexing* 解性. The traditional interpretation glosses *jiexing* in terms of "original awakening" (*benjue* 本覺) in the *Awakening of Faith* and hence betrays its strong tie to that text. In contrast, a contrary interpretation of *jiexing* is preserved in a Dunhuang fragment Taishō No. 2805 (henceforth abbreviated as T2805).

The crucial part of this dissertation consists in demonstrating that T2805 and the *Awakening of Faith* represent two competing lineages of the interpreters of Paramârtha. The first clue is that modern scholars have voiced objection to the traditional attribution of the *Awakening of Faith* to Paramârtha. In addition, I dis-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816009000972 Published online by Cambridge University Press

covered that striking similarities exist between T2805 and Paramârtha's corpus with respect to terminology, style of phrasing, and doctrine. I further draw attention to the historical testimonies about two different doctrinal views held by Paramârtha's interpreters. Therefore, I argue that there were two lineages in the name of Paramârtha's disciples around 590 C.E.: the indirect lineage interpreted Paramârtha through the lens of the *Awakening of Faith*; and the direct lineage—represented by T2805—preserved Paramârtha's original teachings but died out prematurely. Later Chinese Buddhist tradition mistakenly regards the indirect lineage as Paramârtha's true heir and attributes the *Awakening of Faith* to Paramârtha.

This implies that Paramârtha may have agreed with Xuanzang 玄奘 (600–664) much more than scholars have assumed. For example, Xuanzang's characterization of the notion of "aboriginal uncontaminated seeds" is similar to how Paramârtha depicts *jiexing*. It also implies that we should distinguish the strong sense of the notion of "tathāgatagarbha" (the "womb" [garbha] of the Tathāgata, i.e., the Buddha) in the *Awakening of Faith* from its weak sense. The fact that even Vasubandhu endorses the weak sense of "tathāgatagarbha" strongly challenges the received wisdom that Yogâcāra and Tathāgatagarbha were two distinct and antagonistic trends of thought in India.

Mark Johnson McInroy [Ph.D. 2009]

Perceiving Splendor: The "Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses" in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

This study argues that the so-called "doctrine of the spiritual senses" should be recognized as a vital component of the theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988). The doctrine of the spiritual senses has been interpreted in the Christian tradition in a variety of ways. In its epistemological sense, it generally claims that human beings can be made capable by grace of perceiving "spiritual" realities. After a lengthy period of disuse within systematic theology, Balthasar recovers the doctrine in the mid-twentieth century and articulates it afresh in his theological aesthetics. At the heart of this project stands the task of perceiving the absolute beauty of the divine form (*Gestalt*) through which God is revealed to human beings. Although extensive scholarly attention has focused on Balthasar's understanding of revelation, beauty, and form, what remains curiously neglected is his model of the perceptual faculties through which the human being beholds the form that God reveals. I argue that Balthasar draws upon the fecund tradition of the spiritual senses in an effort to develop the anthropological structure requisite to perceiving the "splendor" (*Glanz*) of divine revelation. In other words, it is precisely through the spiritual senses that one performs the epistemologically central task of "seeing the form."

Furthermore, to the minimal extent that Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses has been treated at all, no source properly acknowledges the remarkable manner in which he creatively rearticulates the doctrine in his aesthetics. I therefore

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816009000972 Published online by Cambridge University Press

additionally claim that Balthasar integrates elements of the classic doctrine of the spiritual senses with the thought of his contemporaries, and that from this intersection emerges a highly original understanding of the spiritual senses. I also explain how, in the various interactions and tensions between Balthasar and Barth, on the one hand, and Balthasar and Rahner, on the other, the importance of this theme in Balthasar's thought has been overlooked in the secondary literature to date.

Atalia Omer [Ph.D. 2009]

After Peace: How Does the Israeli Peace Camp Think about Religion, Nationalism & Justice?

This dissertation analyzes the Israeli peace camp and how positions on the questions of the interrelation between religion and nationality relate to the interpretations of justice vis-à-vis the Palestinian predicament. The dissertation studies the "visions of peace" and the "visions of citizenship" articulated by groups as diverse as Peace Now, Gush Shalom, Netivot Shalom, Rabbis for Human Rights, the Israeli-Palestinian Balad political party, and the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow. By drawing on recent scholarship, which attempted to link "peace" and "justice" in a meaningful way, this work devises a set of dynamic criteria with which to evaluate each peace platform and its respective interpretation of justice. Challenging the modernist-secularist inclination to interpret "nationalism" as a "religion surrogate" or a structural analogue of religion, the underpinning theoretical point is that religion and nationalism are intricately related and thus cannot be viewed as dichotomous or antithetical. Hence, religious sources, vocabularies, institutions, and leadership may function centrally in devising interpretations of culturally embedded secularity in zones of ethnonational contestations—a process which is referred to in this dissertation as the *hermeneutics of citizenship*.

Likewise, the dissertation emphasizes the critical importance of rearticulating subaltern voices and histories as a central dimension of conflict transformation and peacebuilding efforts. It accomplishes that by highlighting the counter-hegemonic cases of the Mizrahim (the "Arab Jews") and that of Palestinian-Israelis. Both the effort to centralize subaltern counter-narratives (including those of internal victims) and the insistence on the irreducibility of "religion" to "nation" suggest creative potentialities for thinking about questions of peace and justice in contexts of ethnoreligious national conflicts.

This dissertation further argues that the new field of inquiry and practice of "religion in peacebuilding" overlooks the importance of introspecting the nexus between religion, nationalism, and ethnicity as articulated and reproduced in zones characterized by ethnonational conflicts. This critique derives from this work's recognition of the following: 1) the persistent role of religion in the processes of imagining and reimagining the nation as suggested in Anthony Smith's work on nationalism; 2) the potentially transformative and liberalizing role of "state" institutions in moving away from exclusivist interpretations of nationhood toward

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816009000972 Published online by Cambridge University Press

increased inclusivity, which according to Anthony Marx's study, has been the case in western Europe; 3) David Little and Scott Appleby's notion of the *ambivalence of the sacred* and the irreducibility of the resources of religion to interpretations of nationalism, despite what might be suggested by nationalist rhetoric; and 4) ongoing theoretical conversations, which have challenged modernist interpretations of the "secular" as representing the absence or diminishing presence of religion and as subsequently implying a neutral public sphere.

The central contention that emerges out of this scrutiny of the Israeli peace camp is that a just peace to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would necessitate the following conditions: 1) recognizing Zionism as a root cause of conflict; and 2) partaking in a process of reimagining alternate interpretations of the "nation," understood as a "political theology." The two cases of the new Mizrahi discourse and of the Palestinian citizens of Israel were presented in order to underscore the following propositions: 1) why the ideology of Zionism may be viewed as a root cause of the conflict; 2) the structural and ideological interconnectedness between the broader Palestinian-Israeli conflict and questions of social justice within Israel proper; 3) the importance of exploring and reclaiming subaltern counter-narratives in the process of introspecting and reimagining the national ethos; 4) the creative and empowering effectiveness of post-colonial and post-modern theoretical insights in de-naturalizing national claims and perceptions; and 5) the relevance of international human rights conventions and theories of multiculturalism to thinking locally through the problem of peace and justice.

Christian Rice [Th.D. 2009]

For the Common Moral Benefit: Thinking through the Conditions Necessary to Secure the Moral Priority and Fixity of Individual Rights

This project begins with the presupposition that a non-negotiable set of individual rights is of critical moral importance. Indeed, to my mind, one cannot speak of the "common good" without protecting, first and foremost, a set of individual moral entitlements. This set of entitlements, which, I will argue, must be understood to be logically detachable from comprehensive moral and religious doctrines, functions as a minimal common good. Understanding rights as "rights to the goods in one's life,"[1] I assert that defense of this prior type of good is a critical moral requisite if we are to safeguard the common moral welfare of all citizens.

Alarmingly, I see the priority and stability of individual rights as under attack in a variety of ways. Scholars debate whether rights should be prioritized over democratic deliberations, for example, so that they have moral priority over attempts by society to define and pursue shared common ends. And, even within the liberal fold, there are key philosophical disagreements, which potentially hold an enormous

[1] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816009000972 Published online by Cambridge University Press

influence upon whether our democratic culture might actually satisfy what I take to be the moral point of individual rights protections—that rights operate as fixed and non-negotiable limits on the use of state power.

This dissertation, then, seeks to outline the conditions under which the status of certain key individual rights can be guaranteed. Critically, I posit a doctrine of natural or inherent rights, grounded in what I see as the reality of non-trivial necessary moral truths.

I then make a case for the importance of a doctrine of public reason, which I develop as a logical offshoot of my case for inherent rights. The aim of such a doctrine is to guarantee that state policies, which affect basic entitlements, are translatable in a way that all citizens can, at least, accept as reasonable, even though there will be inevitably political disagreement among them. I argue that a conception of public reason, which succeeds in protecting the rights of all citizens without discrimination, must be logically detachable from comprehensive moral and religious doctrines.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816009000972 Published online by Cambridge University Press