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# Poetry And Theology In The Modernist Period

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## LEWIS BRAEDON

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*Poetry, Practical Theology and Reflective Practice* A&C Black  
 Faith, Hope and Poetry explores the poetic imagination as a way of knowing; a way of seeing reality more clearly. Presenting a series of critical appreciations of English poetry from Anglo-Saxon times to the present day, Malcolm Guite applies the insights of poetry to contemporary issues and the contribution poetry can make to our religious knowing and the way we 'do theology'. This book is not solely concerned with overtly religious poetry, but attends to the paradoxical ways in which the poetry of doubt and despair also enriches theology. Developing an original analysis and application of the poetic

vision of Coleridge, Larkin and Seamus Heaney in the final chapters, Guite builds towards a substantial theology of imagination and provides unique insights into truth that complement and enrich more strictly rational ways of knowing. Readers of this book will return to their reading of poetry equipped with new insights and enthusiasm and will be challenged to integrate imaginative ways of knowing into their other academic and intellectual pursuits.  
*Faith, Hope and Poetry* Routledge  
 Clarke explores the relationship between Herbert's poetry and the concept of divine inspiration rooted in devotional texts of his time. She concludes that his poetry contains implanted codes which signified divine inspiration to a 17th century readership.

[Northern Irish Poetry and Theology](#)

Routledge

"Can poetry matter to Christian theology?" David Mahan asks in the introduction to this interdisciplinary work. Does the study of poetry represent a serious theological project? What does poetry have to contribute to the public tasks of theology and the Church? How can theologians, clergy and other ministry professionals, and Christian laypeople benefit from an earnest study of poetry? A growing number of professional theologians today seek to push theological inquiry beyond the relative seclusion of academic specialization into a broader marketplace of public ideas, and to recast the theological task as an integrative discipline, wholly engaged with the issues and sensibilities of the age. Accordingly, such scholars seek to draw upon and engage the insights and practices of a

variety of cultural resources, including those of the arts, in their theological projects. Arguing that poetry can be a form of theological discourse, Mahan shows how poetry offers rich theological resources and instruction for the Christian church. In drawing attention to the "peculiar advantages" it affords, this book addresses one of the greatest challenges facing the church today: the difficulty of effectively communicating the Christian gospel with increasingly disaffected "late-modern" people.

*Theology Poetry* Legare Street Press

This is the first comprehensive study of the theological significance of Paul Claudel, a poet frequently cited by literary-minded theologians in Europe and theologically-minded poets (such as von Balthasar, de Lubac and Eliot). His writing combines cosmology and history, Bible and metaphysics, liturgy and the drama of human personality. His work, which continues to arouse discussion in France, was acclaimed in his lifetime as the 'summa poetica' of a new Dante. Aidan Nichols' study demonstrates how Claudel's oeuvre, which is not only poetry but theatre and prose including biblical commentaries, constitutes a rich resource for constructive doctrine, liturgical preaching, and theological reflection. As the comparable example of Geoffrey Hill, Professor of Poetry at Oxford suggests, Aidan Nichols illuminates how Claudel's synthesis of many dimensions remains an important way of practising poetry in the Christian tradition today

*Heaven in Ordinary* Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

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for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

#### **Christian theology and old English poetry** BoD – Books on Demand

Religious poetry has often been regarded as minor poetry and dismissed in large part because poetry is taken to require direct experience; whereas religious poetry is taken to be based on faith, that is, on second or third hand experience. The best methods of thinking about "experience" are given to us by phenomenology. *Poetry and Revelation* is the first study of religious poetry through a phenomenological lens, one that works with the distinction between manifestation (in which everything is made manifest) and revelation (in which the mystery is revealed as well as revealed). Providing a phenomenological investigation of a wide range of "religious poems", some medieval, some modern; some written in English, others written in European languages; some from America, some from Britain, and some from Australia, Kevin Hart provides a unique new way of thinking about religious poetry and the nature of revelation itself.

*The Great Poets and Their Theology* Otto Harrassowitz Verlag

"Religion" has become suspect in literary studies, often for good reason, as it has become associated with reactionary politics and outdated codified beliefs. In *Modernist Reformations: Poetry as Theology* in Eliot, Stevens, and Joyce, the author demonstrates how three high modernist writers work to reform religious experience for an age dominated by the extremes of radical skepticism and dogmatic rigidity. The author offers new and provocative readings of these well-studied writers: Joyce and Stevens are usually considered purely secular, and the Eliot in this book is more progressive than reactionary. The readings here provide a fresh approach to their work and to the period. Using studies of religious experience by sociologists and theologians both from the modernist era and from our own contemporary world to frame the argument, the author examines the poetry closely and in detail to demonstrate that the work of these writers does not merely reflect religious themes and issues but does the actual work usually considered theological. Their poetry is theology. *Modernist Reformations* will renew and deepen appreciation for these writers, and perhaps their efforts at reformation may allow for our own engagement with religion in a secular age.

#### **Poetry and Theology in the Modernist Period** Wipf and Stock Publishers

What if the religious themes and allusions

in modernist poetry are not just metaphors? Following the religious turn in other disciplines, literary critics have emphasized how modernists like Woolf and Joyce were haunted by Christianity's cultural traces despite their own lack of belief. In *Poetry and Theology in the Modernist Period*, Anthony Domestico takes a different tack, arguing that modern poets such as T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, and David Jones were interested not just in the aesthetic or social implications of religious experience but also in the philosophically rigorous, dogmatic vision put forward by contemporary theology. These poets took seriously the truth claims of Christian theology: for them, religion involved intellectual and emotional assent, doctrinal articulation, and ritual practice. Domestico reveals how an important strand of modern poetry actually understood itself in and through the central theological questions of the modernist era: What is transcendence, and how can we think and write about it? What is the sacramental act, and how does its wedding of the immanent and the transcendent inform the poetic act? How can we relate kairos (holy time) to chronos (clock time)? Seeking answers to these complex questions, Domestico examines both modernist institutions (the Criterion) and specific works of modern poetry (Eliot's *Four Quartets* and Jones's *The Anathemata*). The book also traces the contours of what it dubs "theological modernism": a body of poetry that is both theological and modernist. In doing so, this book offers a new literary history of the modernist period, one that attends both to the material circulation of texts and to the broader intellectual currents of the time.

**Theopoetics** Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG

In today's crucible of myths, theology has a special problem. Ancient scenarios provided by Scripture are especially vulnerable to the modern outlook. Amos Wilder, a distinguished scholar and critic, here relates the Christian faith, in depth, to the changes in modern man's sense of reality, and to the powerful new forms of spirituality that reflect these changes. The focus is upon the deeper dynamics of the religious situation--that is, upon its myths and dreams, symbols and arts--rather than upon its doctrines and social forms. A total vision requires a mythopoetic and not only isolated visions and epiphanies. The testimony of contemporary poets and believers demonstrates that world-old myths and sagas can still have living power. As Wilder writes, "Before the message, the vision; before the sermon,

the hymn; before the prose, the poem. The discursive categories of theology as well as the traditional images of sermon and prayer require a theopoetic."

*Theology in the English Poets* BoD - Books on Demand

The book of Lamentations is a challenge to its readers. Its ambiguous theology, strident protestations against its deity, and haunting imagery confound interpreters. This monograph engages the enigma of Lamentations by assessing its theology. It does so, however, neither by tracing a single theological perspective through the book nor by reconstructing the history of the composition of the book. Rather, Heath Thomas assesses the poetry of Lamentations by offering a close analysis of each poem in the book. He reconsiders the acrostic as the foundational structure for the poetry, reads the book as an intentionally composed whole, and assesses the pervasive use of repetition, metaphor, and allusion. For the first time in the field, the analysis here is grounded on the insights of the Italian semiotician Umberto Eco. Drawing upon Eco's distinction between 'open' and 'closed' textualities, Thomas argues that Lamentations represents a distinctively 'open' text, one that presents its reader with a myriad of surprising avenues to interpret the poetry. This distinctive approach avoids a polarization in the portrait of God in Lamentations, arguing that its poetry neither justifies God outright nor does it exonerate God's people in the exilic age. Rather, it enables these theological visions to interrelate with each other, inviting the reader to make sense of the interaction. The ambiguous theological vision of Lamentations, then, is not a problem that the reader is intended to overcome but an integral feature in the construction of meaning. This original monograph offers a new perspective on how the poetry informs our appreciation of theological thought in the exilic age.

*Doctrine and Devotion in Seventeenth-century Poetry* Lutterworth Press

What is the role of spiritual experience in poetry? What are the marks of a religious imagination? How close can the secular and the religious be brought together? How do poetic imagination and religious beliefs interact? Exploring such questions through the concept of the religious imagination, this book integrates interdisciplinary research in the area of poetry on the one hand, and theology, philosophy and Christian spirituality on the other. Established theologians, philosophers, literary critics and creative writers explain, by way of contemporary

and historical examples, the primary role of the religious imagination in the writing as well as in the reading of poetry.

*Dante's Commedia* University of Notre Dame Press

Alicia Ostriker's artistic and intellectual productions as a poet, critic, and essayist over the past 50 years are protean and have been profoundly influential to generations of readers, writers, and critics. In all her writings, both the feminist and the human engage fiercely with the material and metaphysical world. Ostriker is a poet concerned with questions of social justice, equality, religion, and how to live in a world marked by both beauty and tragedy. *Everywoman Her Own Theology: On the Poetry of Alicia Suskin Ostriker* engages Ostriker's poetry from throughout her career, including her first volume *Songs*, her award-winning collection *The Imaginary Lover*, and her more recent work in the collections *No Heaven*, the volcano sequence, *The Old Woman*, *the Tulip*, and *the Dog*, and *Waiting for the Light*. Like her literary criticism and essays, Ostriker's poetry explores themes of feminism, Jewish life, family, and social justice. With insightful essays—some newly written for this collection—poets and literary critics including Toi Derricotte, Daisy Fried, Cynthia Hogue, Tony Hoagland, and Eleanor Wilner illuminate and open new pathways for critical engagement with Alicia Ostriker's lifetime of poetic work. *Poetry, Bible and Theology from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing

In the Middle Ages, unconventional theological views were often expressed in poetic form. Jakob Petuchowski provides parallel texts of ten medieval theological poems in the standard liturgy that express unconventional and daring theological ideas, each with a commentary on the poem and its author, and a survey of Jewish thought on its particular theme.

*Theory and Theology in George Herbert's Poetry* Bloomsbury Publishing

What happens when poetry deals explicitly with a serious theological issue? In *Poetry Does Theology*, Jim Rhodes seeks one answer to that question by analyzing the symbiotic relationship that existed between theology and poetry in fourteenth-century England. He pays special attention to the narrative poems of Chaucer, Grosseteste, the Pearl-poet, the author of *Saint Erkenwald*, and Langland. Rhodes' careful analysis describes how the relationship between theology and poetry underwent a radical transformation as the latter half of the fourteenth century progressed.

*Theology in the English poets* Xlibris Corporation

This volume examines for the first time the most important methodological issues concerning Christian poetry - i.e. biblical and theological poetry in classical meters - from a diachronic perspective. Thus, it is possible to evaluate the doctrinal significance of these compositions and the role that they play in the development of Christian theological ideas and biblical exegesis.

*Modernist Reformations* Sheffield Phoenix Press Limited

'O let them be left, wildness and wet' As *Kingfishers Catch Fire* is a selection of Gerard Manley Hopkins' incomparably brilliant poetry, ranging from the ecstasy of 'The Windhover' and 'Pied Beauty' to the heart-wrenching despair of the 'sonnets of desolation'. Introducing Little Black Classics: 80 books for Penguin's 80th birthday. Little Black Classics celebrate the huge range and diversity of Penguin Classics, with books from around the world and across many centuries. They take us from a balloon ride over Victorian London to a garden of blossom in Japan, from Tierra del Fuego to 16th-century California and the Russian steppe. Here are stories lyrical and savage; poems epic and intimate; essays satirical and inspirational; and ideas that have shaped the lives of millions. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). Hopkins' *Poems and Prose* is available in Penguin Classics.

*Poetic Theology* Penguin UK

Poet and essayist Sheila Bender tells the story of her family and the family of her son's fiancée coming together, understanding that 25-year-old Seth Bender would be taken off life support. She writes about the months they faced together before the upcoming day that would have been his wedding day, and she tells the story of using poetry to write her way out of grief and find a way of carrying her son's life in her own, a way of understanding mortality and immortality. *A New Theology: Turning to Poetry in a Time of Grief* is accessible, absorbing, and a bringer of peace to those who mourn." *Poetry Does Theology* Boydell & Brewer The theology and the poetry of Welch poet R.S. Thomas.

*American Poets and Their Theology* JHU Press

A fresh examination of the four poems of the Cotton manuscript, arguing that they share a profound theological vision.

*A New Theology* Springer

A unique look at Bonhoeffer's poetry written during his prison years, facilitating a fascinating conversation between biography and theology.