

Editorial

As *The Bible and Critical Theory* enters its eleventh year some changes are afoot that signify both continuity and change into the foreseeable future. From 2016, Caroline Blyth and Robert Myles, both from the University of Auckland, will take over from Roland Boer and Julie Kelso as managing co-editors of the journal. Chris Meredith from the University of Winchester will stay on as the book review editor. In the meantime, Robert has assisted Roland in putting together the current issue, and Caroline will assist Julie with the next issue that is due out later this year.

The journal's focus and scope remains unchanged: it is a venue for the dissemination of high-quality, international research located at the intersection of critical theory, broadly understood, and the Bible – also broadly understood to encompass not only the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament but also extra-canonical literature and various biblical afterlives. The journal will continue to publish articles and book reviews not only by biblical scholars, but also by critical theorists interested in the questions the Bible and biblical studies might pose for critical theory. Its commitment to open access publishing also remains unchanged.

The affiliated seminars provide a physical gathering for those interested in the kind of innovative and exploratory work that is showcased in the journal. In the northern hemisphere, *The Bible and Critical Theory and Reception Seminar* will meet this year from the 9-10th of September in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Further details can be found on James Crossley's blog here:

<https://historicalchaos.wordpress.com/2015/04/27/bible-critical-theory-and-reception-seminar-2015-birmingham/>

While the southern hemisphere *Bible and Critical Theory Seminar* is taking a hiatus this year, incoming editors Robert Myles and Caroline Blyth will be hosting a two day colloquium at the University of Auckland on the theme of *Radicalism, Violence and Religious Texts* from the 10th-11th September. Invited international speakers include Roland Boer, Tat-Siong Benny Liew, Erin Runions, and Johanna Stiebert. Further details and abstracts of papers can be found on Robert Myles' blog here:

<https://bibleandclasstruggle.wordpress.com/2015/07/28/radicalism-violence-and-religious-texts-auckland-abstracts-rvrt/>

In the current issue we have four articles. First, a lengthy piece by Itzhak Benyamini "On the Self-Creation of God: A Critical Theology of the First Verses of Genesis, Following Leibowitz and Hegel". Benyamini's article explores poststructuralist exegetical possibilities for rethinking or rewriting of the meaning or concept of "God" in light of the pliable function of Abraham in the book of Genesis. In what Benyamini describes as "an experiment in theology", and drawing on various philosophical traditions, he explores how the supposed paradigmatic function of Abraham as an emblem of submissive or fearful faith

clashes with the confrontational Abraham of the text who feigns innocence and repeatedly scoffs before God's presence.

Second, in "Homi K. Bhabha and the 'bene yisrael': Postcolonial Probing into the Chronicler's Construction of Northern Israelian Cultural Identity", David J. Fuller applies the postcolonial theory of Bhabha, in which "identity" is conceived of as a liminal concept fractured by the convergence of contested discourses, to the ambiguous ways in which northern Israel is constructed in a number of texts from I and II Chronicles. In doing so, a number of possible explanations for the text's curious positioning of the Other are developed.

The contested construction of identity resurfaces in Christopher B. Zeichmann's "Rethinking the Gay Centurion: Sexual Exceptionalism, National Exceptionalism in Readings of Matt. 8:5-13//Luke 7:1-10." Zeichmann responds to recent articles which argue for and against the suggestion that the male centurion and his slave in Matt. 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 might have been engaged in a sexual relationship. The article detects in both sides of the argument a shared assumption that Jesus' Judaism should somehow be treated as unique with regards to sexual mores. Zeichmann applies the concept of homonormative nationalism to demonstrate how the readings appeal to certain logics of neoliberal imperialism in their respective interpretive claims.

Finally, in "Encountering the Song of Spring in Ralph Hotere's and Cilla McQueen's *Song of Solomon*", Joanna Osborne engages in a fascinating exploration of the manifestations of the Song of Songs in contemporary art, in particular, the joint work of New Zealand artist Ralph Hotere (1931–2013) and poet Cilla McQueen (b.1949). Osborne reads the multifaceted appropriation of the biblical Song of Songs in conversation with both the "original" poem in the Hebrew Bible and with theories of visual and material culture, observing the artistic rhythms that can be found within both the visual and literary forms.



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