

Volume 10 of Kierkegaard's *Journals and Notebooks* is a treatise on theodicy which spans from meditations on empathy (255–6) to an attack on the Enlightenment (362–3). Throughout this volume, we have Kierkegaard writing of the need to suffer because he correctly sees suffering as the only way to commune with God and in particular, Christ. It is, as it were, the entire cosmos worships God while intensely suffering. It is this theme of cosmic suffering that we find in the Hebrew scriptures and in the New Testament.

This service to God as equivalent to suffering is a form of theodicy that is ignored by philosophers. Suffering is not caused by God but is itself the solution to the problem of evil. One suffers because to suffer is to become mystically one with God. In the *Psalms*, the Psalmist writes of this need for the worshipper to suffer for and with Yahweh. Within the Christian worldview, unlike within the Hindu worldview, God is weak. God participates fully in human pain. It is from this understanding of pain in the Bible, to Anti-Climacus's, Kierkegaard's pseudonym, writings (256), to the explicit writings of Kierkegaard himself collected in this volume, we have the same symphony on suffering which will be later picked up by Edith Stein and Simone Weil.

Both Stein and Weil would later stress on the primacy of suffering in their works. Stein, of course, had to struggle with what has come to be known as the problem of empathy or the problem of other minds. Strangely, Stein does not elaborate on Kierkegaard too much and stresses on phenomenology in her corpus. This is perhaps because she was not too well versed with Kierkegaard's works. As this volume proves, Kierkegaard is the ontic origin to not only Stein and Weil's intellectual moorings but he is also the base from which Western theodicy takes a modernist turn. Hannah Arendt and now, Susan Neiman, owe a lot to Kierkegaard's oeuvre.

Here, we need to pause and reflect why Kierkegaard is not taught in many Christian seminaries, why he is not part of the philosophy syllabi in many university departments of philosophy—if he is, then only a small part—and why he is not considered a literary theorist. This is where these Princeton editions of

Kierkegaard's *Journals and Notebooks* come into the picture. Kierkegaard's output is vast and earlier, was not available in English. Had they been available then certainly Stein, Weil, Arendt, and Neiman would have constructed their theodicies around Kierkegaard more fully, abandoning the charlatanism of Martin Heidegger's Nazi histrionics.

These Princeton hardbacks, handsomely bound, with appealing fonts and meticulous notes will help disseminate Kierkegaard's writings to a broader audience. The endnotes are copious and without pedantry. Doctoral work can be done referring to these volumes. Congratulations are due to both Princeton University Press and, to the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre, Copenhagen for undertaking such a project which they have been able to meticulously execute with nary a typos.

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### **Poetry and the Religious Imagination: The Power of the Word**

Edited by Francesca Bugliani Knox and David Lonsdale

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During this COVID-19 pandemic, as had happened before during global epidemics and as will happen ages hence, we can only find solace in poetry and the discourses of 'theology, philosophy ... [and] spirituality on the other' (1). After all, true theology, philosophy, and spirituality are all poetry. What is not poetry will never soothe and heal our souls. The anthology of essays under review does its cultural work through acts of remembrance and faith-building. Thus, Francesca Bugliani Knox reclaims 'the "truth-bearing" potential of the poetic imagination' by referring to

poets (for instance, Blake, Coleridge, Wallace Stevens and Seamus Heaney), by literary scholars (notably, Northrop Frye, Frank Kermode and George Steiner) and by theologians (such as John Henry Newman, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Paul Tillich, Karl Rahner and Karl-Josef Kuschel). This volume addresses not so much the 'truth-bearing' potential of the poetic imagination as the relationship between poetry and the religious imagination. Indeed it identifies the religious imagination as the appropriate common ground for a new conversation between poetry, philosophy and theology (ibid.).

This anthology is the best in its domain. The essays range from interrogating the literary qualia in the works of Romano Guardini, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Paul Tillich (31–49). Pages 40–1 are very crucial for its clear delineation between the 'reception(s)' of literature by Guardini and von Balthasar. Such a lucid account is non-existent till date in any anthology. It is another matter that Hans Urs von Balthasar is one of this reviewer's favourite writers.

'Dante and the Indispensability of the Image' by John Took (91–107) and Chapter 6 titled 'Law and Divine Mercy in Shakespeare's Religious Imagination: *Measure for Measure* and *The Merchant of Venice*' by Paul S Fiddes (109–28) are original contributions to Dante and Shakespeare studies, respectively. It is not easy to be original in either of these literary domains.

'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' These words of Jesus (Matthew 7:1) presented a problem to the rulers and lawyers of the Elizabethan age. Perhaps they still do for Christian believers called to the judicial bench, faced with the apparently stark command, 'Judge not'. How can judges *not* judge? This text is followed immediately by another, which elaborates it: 'For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again' (Matthew 7:1–2). It is to this that Shakespeare refers in the title of his play, *Measure for Measure*. So, in its immediate context, the command warns that those who set out to judge others must expect to receive an equivalent condemnation for their own faults. The warning is echoed in the Epistle

of Paul to the Romans, a book that had a weighty impact at the time of the English Reformation: 'in passing judgement on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the same things' (Romans 2:1).

Elizabethan jurists coped with the direct command of Jesus not to judge by making a distinction between private and public spheres of life. Princes and other rulers were 'Gods by office' not 'Gods by nature'; as God's deputies, they were entrusted with the divine prerogatives of justice and mercy. Their authority to judge came from their public office, not their private opinions. Perhaps this is what is intended by Angelo in *Measure for Measure* when he says, 'It is the law, not I, condemn your brother' (109).

My reader, only if I could say to those authors I have condemned in the last ten years of *Prabuddha Bharata* and in this issue: 'It is the law, not I, condemn you my brother'. For, I only wish, that I had 'shadows offended' and think but of COVID-19, and all sadly, forever 'is mended' (William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 4, Scene 1).

American Studies students will benefit from reading Chapter 7 on Wallace Stevens by John McDale, and the most scintillating essay in this volume: it is by Sarah Law on the poetry of the underappreciated Denise Levertov. Law's is Chapter 13, beautifully titled "'The Pulse in the Wound": Embodiment and Grace in Denise Levertov's Religious Poetry' (221–36). Law ends her chapter with this sentence which in April 2020, in Kolkata, has taken on a rich, new, and strange meaning: 'It is human activity which continues to be the pulse in the wound of the world, and it is only an incarnational mysticism which allows for the reception, and beholding, of mystery' (234).

It is indeed human will arising from the mystical impulse that perchance we will look back ages hence and then the wound of this world would have healed. Till then, let us be content echoing John Keats and know that beauty is truth and truth, beauty; for the beast that had begun slouching towards Jerusalem is born at last. Of course, I refer here to W B Yeats (William Butler Yeats, 'The Second Coming').

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