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Constructive biblical hermeneutics: history and its afterlife

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Abstract
Constructive theologians wrestle with the Bible's authority in the life of faith and in their own work. While holding onto a central role for the Bible as a source for theology, they embrace the complexities of biblical interpretation, particularly attentive to the violence and exclusions such interpretations can yield. This article maps the history of constructive theological work with biblical texts in three modes—authority, liberation, and testimony. I suggest that there is a need for constructive theologians to register the ongoing presence of biblical authority with its decreasing visibility. I posit that future work lies in acknowledging the Bible's formational power, approaching it as a repository of body memories, and conceiving of interpretation as postmemory work.

The Bible is a critical part of the architecture of Christian theology. Alongside tradition, reason, and experience, scripture is recognized as a key source of authority upon which theological work is carried out. From its earliest stages, constructive theologians take the Bible's authority as a question, not a given, in their work; they raise a host of questions about the history of the Bible, its transmission in history, and its contemporary readers. Theological interpretations of biblical texts can be weighty, liberating, damning, and transformative. From projects that analyze the transmission of biblical texts within particular communities, to those that vivify biblical images to shed light on contemporary situations and decipher the deployments of the Bible in contested political spaces, constructive theologians pay serious attention to how biblical interpretations map onto the lives of persons and communities—to harmful or healing ends.

In this essay, I present three modes of constructive theological biblical engagement: authority, liberation, and testimony. These trace a history of biblical interpretation by constructive theologians (from the Workgroup in Constructive Theology to the present), but they also represent concerns and commitments operating when constructive theologians turn to sacred texts. Following this, I present a challenge unfolding for constructive theology, and claim that constructive biblical

work is uniquely positioned to track the subtle workings of biblical authority that sink below the surface of everyday life. I refer to this as the biblical "afterlife."[1]

Authority

Early constructive theologians grapple with claims about biblical authority and inspiration, in response to the epistemological revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries. They embrace, rather than reject, the challenges that the Enlightenment brings to the traditional sources of authority. In the 1982 inaugural textbook by the Workgroup on Constructive Theology, Edward Farley and Peter Hodgson, reflect this embrace by stating, "we want to understand how scripture and tradition can continue to function as criteria for church and theology outside the house of authority."[2] They accept that the Bible cannot be understood as a self-authenticating, divinely breathed, timeless document whose authority is immune to human touch. The critical consciousness of modernity rendered these views of the Bible naïve, contrary to scientific inquiry, and untenable grounds for human knowledge. They are aware of the need to articulate a view of the Bible that both affirms the project of modern historical biblical criticism and honors the normative status of the Bible for Christian communities. If the Bible is a source for theological work, the traditional claims to divine revelation in and through the scriptures need to be rethought. Knowing about the historical contexts in which biblical writings are produced challenges the notion that the Bible is a timeless document that can transcend history, even as it speaks about a particular history. With a new historical consciousness, the "biblical writings began to be seen as reflecting the particular outlook,

[1] Shelly Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma,* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2017). In *Resurrecting Wounds*, I reframe the eschatological concept of the afterlife to describe a way of living beyond events of trauma. I develop this notion of a biblical afterlife at the end of this essay.
[2] Edward Farley and Peter C. Hodgson, "Scripture and Tradition," in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 76.

assumptions, and attitudes of the people that produced them."[3] Christians do not need to retreat from this historical study, according to these theologians. Instead, they need new ways of understanding the relationship between the ancient world that birth the Christian scriptures and the reception of these scriptures that follow from them. The critical inquiry into the history *does* present challenges to an understanding of the Bible as divinely inspired and revealed. But these challenges are inevitable and worth taking up—faithfully, yet on different grounds.

In turning away from revelationist understandings of the Bible's authority, they point to scriptural authority on other terms. Farley and King write: "Our task. . . is to sketch *an alternative sense* in which biblical writings may be construed as "scripture," that is having a constitutive function in the shaping and nurturing of a community of faith."[4] One way of recasting authority is expressed through the term functionalism. Attention turns from the book itself and, instead, to its function within Christian communities. Authority is discovered and discerned within the life of the community of interpreters—the *ecclesia*. It is not surprising that Hodgson and Farley identify David Kelsey's work as an important theological pivot in functionalist approaches. This move is influenced by theologians aligned with narrative theology and post-liberalism. Such theologians are not saying that the Bible is not authoritative. Rather, its authority is more properly found in the living, breathing communities who seek to interpret God's revelation in and among them.

The Bible can no longer be approached as self-authorizing. Theological engagements with the Bible are to be framed in terms of hermeneutics, meaning that all of the sources of theology are subject to the art of interpretation. Hermeneutics presumes that there is movement between texts and interpreters, texts and contexts, and theologians wrestle with the claims of the Bible's unique

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[3] Robert H. King, "Introduction: The Task of Theology," in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, eds. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 76.
[4] Farley and Hodgson, "Scripture and Tradition," 62.

status without attributing its authority to a pure deposit of truth or to a divinely authored set of writings. The ancient setting of the Bible is brought into the context of present-day readers, and this interaction involves acknowledging the angle of the reader's vision.

Constructive theologians are aware of accusations by conservative theologians that they dismiss the Bible's authority altogether.[5] American evangelical theologian Carl Henry specifically targets "functionalism" in *God, Revelation, and Authority,* deeming it important enough to dedicate a separate Appendix to refuting it.[6] The charges of Henry and others is that liberal theologians drain all authority from the Bible. If divine revelation and inspiration is contested, then theologians provide merely, Henry, states: "creative reconstructions of divine revelation and its implications."[7] To this, constructive theologians might respond, saying, "Yes—duly charged." But they would claim that these reconstructions are faithfully carried out in interpretive communities. Readings of scripture are mediated through the experiences of the readers and interpretive communities. Scripture is not an "objective authority," immune to human experience.[8] Rosemary Radford Ruether's now classic claim that human experience infuses all sources of authority, rendering the

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[5] Joerg Rieger, "Constructive Theology," in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religion*, eds. Anne L.C. Runehov and Lluis Oviedo (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer Netherlands, 2013), 483-486. Constructive theologian Joerg Rieger notes that the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* "accuses constructive theology of unwittingly deconstructing and demolishing biblical faith, implying that biblical faith is only supported by more conservative theological models (Elwell 1984, 269, 271)."

[6] Carl F. H. Henry. *God, Revelation and Authority,* vol. III, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 360. "Functional analysis, for example, contrary to verificational analysis, approaches each sentence of religious discourse as a separate phenomenon; it stipulates no preconceived significance for the sentences and seeks the meaning of language in its use. To clarify the diverse uses of language, functional analysts resort to the paradigm case technique, and to what Ferré calls the significant comparison technique. Functional analysis inquires into the intention of the user in using language. This approach has resulted in different theories of the function of theological speech. Does theological language, it is asked, have a function all its own? What is the proper role of religious language? Is it sometimes used to fulfill an improper role?"

[7] Carl F. H. Henry, "Inerrancy and the Bible in Modern Conservative Evangelical Thought," in *Introduction to Christian Theology: Contemporary North American Perspectives,* ed. Roger A. Badham, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 54.

[8] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

traditionally ascribed "objective sources"—scripture and tradition—themselves experientially constituted, is largely accepted by constructive theologians.

Constructive biblical work often seeks to counter the exclusions of persons and communities carried out in the Bible's name. This speaks to practices of invoking particular biblical texts in order to marginalize and exclude certain groups of people. When constructive theologians hear "the Bible says 'x,'" they are typically suspicious of the direct, simple, and authoritative appeal that this phrase tags, as if scripture justifies itself. What they hear in those statements is the authority of scripture located in scripture itself."[9] They find themselves responding to what biblical scholar Mary Ann Tolbert calls a "doctrine of biblical authority" that comes into play in ecclesial communities when issues of social liberation arise, she says. Tolbert writes: "It is not the Bible itself but the overt, often institutionally based appeal to an already formulated doctrine of biblical authority that displays this generally negative, exclusivistic pattern."[10]

Four elements are present in such invocations. First, the text is presented as transcendent and ahistorical. Second, the ancient worldview is directly applied to the contemporary worldview. Third, biblical texts are to be parsed, quoted, and used apart from its contextual realities. The words themselves hold authority as if they wield a certain power in and of themselves. The last is that there is a single meaning to which the text points. These comprise a "special hermeneutics" applied to the Bible.[11] She observes this in the theological classroom, in which the study of the Bible ("general

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[9] Mary Ann Tolbert, "A New Teaching with Authority," in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia and Marry Ann Tolbert. (Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis Books, 1998), 171.
[10] Tolbert, 171.
[11] "Special hermeneutics" refers to the practices of invoking biblical authority to support and sacralize particular perspectives. Mary Ann Tolbert writes: "Thus, the "special hermeneutics" of biblical authority or normativity is not the constant practice of any ecclesiastical community, but rather a practice employed in certain selected moments of division and debate," 175-176. "All readings are interested; that is, they are shaped by the advocacies and beliefs of readers, but this general rule becomes something much more dangerous in the "special hermeneutics" of authority. In that case, readers construct readings of the Bible according to their *own* perspectives and conventional practices and then endow those readings with

hermeneutics") can be at odds with a piety nurtured within faith communities. Constructive theologians may invoke the normative and authoritative status of the Bible, but they would counter these four elements at each point, insisting that: The Bible is a historical text. The ancient worldview is not immediately translatable into our own setting. The context of the biblical writings must be considered. The Bible yields multiple meanings.

Liberation

Reworking biblical authority in response to Enlightenment challenges, many constructive theologians were attentive to the role of biblical interpretations in justifying the exclusion of persons and communities from full participation in religious life. Biblical work aimed to liberate the Bible from its interpretive exclusions. Sallie McFague's work on religious language bridges the first and second phases. In her analysis of metaphor, she explains how biblical concepts such as Father, Lord, and kingdom congealed with theological force to keep women in subordinate positions within Christian traditions. Because of their power to narrate God's relationship to the world, privileged metaphors convey a series and ordering of relations that support patriarchal systems. They are not simply ancient words; they offer worlds, shaping a vision of what the present world can—and should—be. Many feminist theologians consider McFague's work on metaphor as foundational for their theological diagnosis of women's exclusion from full participation in their faith traditions.[12] A central theme of feminist theological work is that the Bible is used as justification for women's subordination and, at that moment in history, justification against women's ordination. Feminist

transcendent and eternal authority over the lives of others—hiding from others, and sometimes even from themselves, the degree of personal interest shaping their readings," 182.

[12] Laurel Schneider, "Re-Imagining the Divine: Challenges of the Backlash to Feminist Theology" (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1997), http://search.proquest.com/docview/304420991/?pq-origsite=primo.

biblical interpretation and the method of naming, retrieval, and recovery—provided not only biblical method but a method that defined the work of feminist theology.[13]

These moves are still present in constructive theological work that employs biblical texts: to contest a particular reading, to point to ignored parts of the biblical story, and to contend with the texts that terrify or that are used instrumentally.[14] They expose the canon within the canon and affirm the expansion of non-canonical materials that are, themselves, products of exclusion, such as the Gospel of Mary and the Gospel of Thomas, which both feature women as prominent disciples.[15] In this phase, constructive theologians actively work against theological interpretations that deny inclusion to particular groups of people, on the basis of race, gender, and sexuality. Working from inside, they forge other ways of interpreting passages continually used against particular communities—i.e. endorsements of slavery or condemnations of homosexuality. They use their own exegetical and theological expertise to show that biblical passages affirm the very communities that other theological interpreters condemn. For example, in *God, Desire, and a Theology of Sexuality*, Dave H. Jensen, rejects approaching the Bible as a moral guidebook for sexual behavior and, instead, invites Christians to view Scripture as providing readers with "glimpses (of) divine desire" that allow

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13 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "In Memory of Her," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 35, no. 1 (2019): 129–130.

14 Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives.* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1984), 3. "A third approach. . . recounts tales of terror *in memoriam* to offer sympathetic readings of abused women."

15 Rosemary Radford Ruether draws attention to the canonizing process. She writes: "At a certain point a group consisting of teacher and leaders emerges that seeks to channel and control the process, to weed out what it regards as deviant communities and interpretations, and to impose a series of criteria to determine the correct interpretive line. The group can do this by defining an authoritative body of writings that is then canonized as the correct interpretation of the original divine revelation and distinguished from other writings, which are regarded either as heretical or as secondary authority. In the process the controlling group marginalizes and suppresses other branches of the community, with their own texts and lines of interpretation. The winning group declares itself the privileged line of true (orthodox) interpretation. Thus a canon of Scripture is established," 14. Karen L. King, *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003).

us to view our relationships in light of God's desire in and for the world.[16] Appealing to tradition, he present an affirmative Christian sexual ethic rooted in ancient Christian reading practices.

One of the central insights shared by constructive theologians, drawing from the rich resources of feminist and black liberation theologies, is that experience shapes biblical interpretation. The Bible is a source for communities of faith. But the norm for reading the Bible is determined by the community. For African-American communities, God is the God who liberates the enslaved peoples. The biblical vision of a God who situates Godself on the side of those who are oppressed and marginalized. James H. Evans writes: "One cannot do theology in and for the African American community without coming to terms with the influence of the Bible."[17] But he also notes that the experience of black communities with the Bible is unique and particular. This experience *conditions* biblical interpretation.[18]

Theological attention turns to the those who are reading the Bible within their particular settings. The field of hermeneutics and works by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur proved helpful to theologians to claim that the truth of the Bible does not reside behind the text or in the text but, rather, in *front of the text,* amidst the "with the vicissitudes of flesh-and-blood interpreters."[19] Theologians from around the globe were narrating the role that the Bible and biblical translation played in western Christian missionizing-colonizing practices. Naming the Bible as a tool of western

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16 David Hadley Jensen, *God, Desire, and a Theology of Human Sexuality*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 8.

17 James H. Evans, *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 33.

18 Evans, *We Have Been Believers.* He writes: "It is still the case that the social, political, economic, and aesthetic marginalization of African-Americans—that is, the social dislocation of black people in the United States and elsewhere—conditions their approach to and use of biblical imagery, precepts, and motifs," 35.

19 Paul Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text." *New Literary History*, Vol. 5, No. 1, What Is Literature? (Autumn, 1973), pp. 91-117. "Therefore, what we want to understand is not something hidden behind the text, but something disclosed in front of it. . . . (113); Mark Lewis Taylor, "Reading from an Indigenous Place," in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourse and Politics of Biblical Theology*, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 120.

expansionism, they expose the violent and deeply problematic legacy of Christianity outside of western Europe. Recognition of the Bible's fraught transmission and reception is central to the constructive biblical engagements. The Bible fueled a vision of mission, evangelization, and civilization.[20] There is a problematizing of the missionizing legacy of Christianity, and a naming of practices of cultural erasure. Indigenous sources of revelation and traditions that provided identity and spiritual connection were replaced by the God of the Christian Bible and what Kwok Pui-lan calls its "politics of truth."[21] Kwok captures the dynamics of theological appropriations of the Bible from non-Western contexts and directly rejects Christian claims to biblical authority—canon, sacred, norm-- in light of colonial histories. To simply accept the Word as authoritative is a colonizing logic. [22]

Constructive theologians are interested in what happens to the Bible when it is situated within these cultural contexts. Communities subject to colonization appropriate biblical images and significantly reshape them. They find their experiences named with the narratives of the Bible, and the images of exile, exodus, crucifixion provide routes for liberation. Biblical texts not only became sites for reflection; they also provided authorization for protest against the colonial Christian Bible wielded against them. The belief that God is on the side of enslaved peoples and frees them from bondage to those in power is a biblical vision that supports movements for liberation across the globe. A newly alighted consciousness of the politics of interpretation brings together biblical scholars and theologians committed to projects of liberation.

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[20] For a compelling constructive theological work on missions, see Marion Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion* (London, New York: T & T Clark, 2011).

[21] Kwok Pui-lan, "Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World," in *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*, eds. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel, Revised and expanded edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 278. Kwok expanded these reflections in a full-length manuscript, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

[22] Kwok Pui-lan, "Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World," 276-288.

Testimony

A wave of theological writings turn to biblical language and rhetoric to testify to the ethical failures of modern theological projects and to imagine theology otherwise. Authors share deep concerns about the violent apparatus of modernity—war, violence, nuclear arms—and see this violence operating in theological systems, expressed in the textual traditions themselves. Although this theo-biblical work is carried out under different names—such as postcolonial, post-Shoah, theopoetics, trauma—it reframes the theological task in terms of *testimony*. Influenced by a range of critical theories, the work reflects careful and attentive textual work that contends with the limits of language, discursive systems of thought, and the dominant forms of theological writing and discourse.

Biblical scholars and theologians wrestling with the legacies of colonization beyond Europe begin to distinguish their method of interpreting biblical texts from a "liberationist hermeneutics."[23] In *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, the authors (Keller, Rivera, and Nausner) note that a "liberation hermeneutics" attempted to name the imperial forces at play in biblical studies and Christian history and claimed, in scripture, an "anti-imperial thematics."[24] Postcolonial readings, by contrast, "operate with a more troubling ambivalence, tracing both decolonizing and colonizing themes within scripture."[25] These readings attest to the ambivalence of interpretations. Biblical scholars like Musa W. Dube and Tat-siong Benny Liew provide models for reading biblical texts that emphasize the nuances of the biblical rhetoric under the conditions of empire.[26]

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[23] Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera, *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2004), 10. Keller, Rivera, and Nauser emphasize: ""Postcolonial theory facilitates new readings of scripture and of the history of the interpretation of scripture, helping to uncover their complex ties to empire," *Postcolonial Theologies,* 10.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(Con)Textually*, Biblical Interpretation Series, v. 42 (Leiden ; Boston, Mass.: Brill, 1999); Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Colonialism and the Bible: Contemporary Reflections*

In another trajectory of testimony, biblical scholars and theologians within the West were taking account of the legacy of anti-Semitism within biblical studies and actively engaging post-Holocaust literatures. A wave of biblical scholarship emerged in response to the Holocaust and to the role that Christian biblical interpretation played in carrying out violence against Jews in Europe. The central question was: How can—and should—the Christian Bible be read in light of the genocide of the Jews? A stream of biblical scholarship confronted the problematic and potentially irreparable legacy of biblical interpretation. Tod Linafelt's *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible After the Holocaust*, published in 2000, brought together representatives of both Jewish and Christian thought to provide reflections on the biblical texts, yielding a critical interrogation into biblical theology.[27] Careful review of particular texts accompanied reflections on the traditioning and transmission of biblical texts. These writings unearthed the testimonial dimensions of both traditions, but it precipitated, for the scholars of Christianity, a posture of humility, reverence, and sobriety in interpretation—registered in the tone of scholarship.[28]

Rebecca Chopp weds this work of Holocaust testimony to projects of liberation and testimonies springing up from other communities. She sheds a spotlight on modern theology and its pursuit of truth. The modern pursuit of truth puts witnesses on trial, asking them to defend their testimonies in front of the judge of reason. The twentieth century, and its horrors, shows the limits

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from the Global South, Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies in Religion and Theology (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018); Musa W. Dube. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000); Don H. Compier, Kwok Pui-lan, and Joerg Rieger, eds., *Empire and the Christian Tradition: New Readings of Classical Theologians* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

[27] Tod Linafelt, ed., *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). There was a subsequent collection: Tod Linafelt, ed., *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[28] Timothy Beal, Yvonne Sherwood, and Tod Linafelt were among a group of biblical scholars who were involved in the discussions between biblical scholars and theologians about how to read the Bible in postmodernity. The "Bible, Theology, and Postmodernity" group of the American Academy of Religion, served as a site of constructive biblical engagement, featuring biblical scholars and theologians grappling with the legacy of the Holocaust for Jewish and Christian scriptures. The group is now constituted under the title, "Sacred Texts, Theory, and Theological Construction."

of reason to judge truth. Modern theology has followed the rules of the modern courtroom. In the courtroom of modern theology, Chopp warns, the testimonies of survivors may be deemed irrational when voiced and brought under the judgment of theological reason. Chopp says that, moving forward, theology must reposition itself to hear the "moral summons" at the heart of witness testimonies. She names the new mode of theology in terms of a "poetics of testimony."[29] The appeals to imagination bear liberationist commitments in that they expose a mode of theological engagement in which reason was given ultimate value to determine the coherence or plausibility of religious expressions. Imagination is connected to practices of unearthing experiences of colonization detailed in strains of postcolonial discourse.[30]

Biblical writings provide a counterpoint to theological systematizing; the Bible is unsystematic, pluriform, and thus cannot be so simply folded into a system of thought. Systematic theologian Jürgen Moltmann opens the door to consider whether the very form and structure of systematic theology is implicitly coercive in totalitarian systems. He writes::

> Every consistent theological summing up, every theological system lays claim to totality, perfect organization, and entire competence for the whole area under survey. In principle one has to be able to say everything, and not to leave any point unconsidered. All the statements must fit in with one another without contradiction, and the whole architecture must be harmonious, an integrated whole..[31]

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[29] Rebecca Chopp, "Theology and the Poetics of Testimony," in *Converging on Culture: Theologians in Dialogue with Cultural Analysis and Criticism*, eds. Delwin Brown, Sheila Greeve Davaney, and Kathryn Tanner, Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Chopp planted the seeds, in this invitational essay, for trauma-directed theologies. The work of Serene Jones, Flora Keshgegian, and others, including my own, takes biblical texts as witness texts depicting the early Christian community as witnesses to the trauma of crucifixion. The insights from trauma theory resonate with biblical testimonies and yield doctrinal innovations—salvation, resurrection, and the meaning of the cross as the central symbol of Christian faith. Christian theology has the capacity to witness difficult truths, but familiar paths of theological interpretation must set on a different course. Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009); Flora Keshgegian, *Redeeming Memories: A Theology of Healing and Transformation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000); Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

[30] Theological work must take new form. Chopp's appeal to poetics aligns well with Kwok Pui-lan's articulation of the importance of imagination in a postcolonial context. Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 1st ed.. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

Thus, turning to biblical testimonies may provide a corrective to the modern theological enterprise.

Bringing together strains of feminist, liberationist, postmodern and process theologies, Catherine Keller's biblical poetics gives way to a theopoetics that ripples across the theological landscape.[32] Her work demonstrates a sophisticated interplay between recognizable Christian terms and tropes and the wordplays and rhetorical dances of French philosophers. Her work revels in the uncertainties, the inconclusive, open, porous, oozing dimensions of religious language and imagery. Her biblical work captures a rhythm to theological inquiry that refuses the closed interpretive world of patriarchal interpretation. Concerned with how biblical authority is wielded against women, Keller urges feminist theologians to sustain engagements with biblical writings. "While unimpressed by the patriarchal 'authority of scripture,' I do understand my task here as a scripturally grounded narrative engagement, indeed a form of 'narrative theology.'"[33] Keller takes the apocalyptic genre of biblical literature and tracks its transmission, asking how does, a genre related to disclosure become, through the history of theological interpretation, a universalized Western narrative of closure.[34]

Recognizing that biblical texts are often employed to secure truth, Keller and others turn to biblical texts to do just the opposite—to release the hold of particular theological claims. Mayra Rivera theologizes the biblical concept of glory in order to resist claims to a dominant account of divine transcendence, one that envisions God as radically separate from the world. [35] In Rivera's

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32 Catherine Keller, *On the Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008)*;* Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003).

33 Catherine Keller, *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 25-26.

34 Catherine Keller, *God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).

35 Mayra Rivera, "Glory: The First Passion of Theology?", in *Polydoxy: Theology of Multiplicity and Relation*, eds. Catherine Keller and Laurel C. Schneider. (London: Routledge, 2010), 169. Thus my exploration does not aim to retrieve a univocal scriptural meaning of doxa at the intersection of Greek and Hebrew senses. Instead it seeks to honor the term's complexity by keeping visible in doxa all of the associations named above—and thus its indeterminacy—and by attending to the cosmic winds and

reading, kabod-doxa reveals a mode of engaging the world that is elemental and earthy. Her biblical work opens up a tightly-bounded theological claim. In turn, I reclaim the Johannine term *menein,* i.e. to remain, to speak of a certain vision of living in the aftermath of trauma. In *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining,* the Johannine iterations of "remaining" bring the ancient witness of the Jesus followers to the cross into conversation with present-day communities gathered in witness to various forms of trauma in the present. The Johannine text contains a witness to survival."[36]

This phase approaches the Bible for its testimonial function, seeking within the biblical writings a witness to historical violence. The biblical texts are important, even authoritative, for their capacities to witness the losses of modernity and the dissolution of binary ways of structuring thought and action. Theologians find linguistic routes around dogma; biblical literatures are not uniform and, thus, theology cannot be either.

The Future of the Bible in Constructive Theology

Whereas discussions of biblical authority have largely dropped out constructive theological texts, biblical authority is not a thing of the past..[37] Speaking within the U.S. context, biblical authority lives on in the broader collective, in unanticipated forms and occupies persons at a level that yet to be theologically accounted for.[38] This authorizing is neither exclusively external or

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magnetic perturbations that afflict and lure us today. . . I seek to unsettle theological reifications of doxa and to quicken the relationships latent in it.

[36] Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*, 1st ed.. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 104. "Menein is a way of communicating a different kind of present that will be required in the wake of Jesus' death. It is a presence that takes the form of bearing with, of enduring, of persisting."

[37] Note this absence of specific attention the 2016 book, produced by the workgroup. Laurel C. Schneider and Stephen G. Ray, eds. *Awake to the Moment: An Introduction to Theology*. First edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016, 2.

[38] Although there are many theories of the secular/secularism, I am interested in the analysis provided by social scientists such as Courntey Bender and Wendy Cadge who track the ways in which religion is operating in public spaces. Courtney Bender and Pamela Klassen eds., A*fter Pluralism*: *Reimagining Religious Engagement*

internal. Instead, it is operating through a constellation of images and biblical archetypes that form the fabric of American life.[39] Historian Jonathan Ebel describes this as the "theological substructure of American civil religion and its complexities as a lived religion."[40]

The language in trauma literatures, and more recently in affect studies, is helpful in envisioning what I refer to as the *afterlife of the Bible*. "Afterlife" refers to the ongoing traces of biblical authority and influence that continue long after visible structures are gone. The Bible inspires and triggers, but it often does this outside of authorized interpretive communities. Biblical texts continue to offer a repository for navigating life's rhythms, but religious leaders may be nowhere in sight. To assume that it has lost its status is a failure to account for how the Bible adheres and the degree to which it has shaped the western collective imagination, not simply within Christianity—but more broadly. The afterlife also captures the lingering impact of biblical teachings on those who no longer profess a relationship to a biblical faith tradition.[41]

The study of trauma provides a working vocabulary for conceiving of modes of biblical transmission that operate apart from traditional authorizing channels. Trauma researchers set out to assess the impact of violence on persons, communities, and even countries.[42] A central insight of

(New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Courtney Bender, Wendy Cadge, Peggy Levitt, and David Smilde, eds, *Religion on the Edge: De-centering and Re-centering the Sociology of Religion.* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

39 Jonathan H. Ebel, *G.I. Messiahs: Soldiering, War and American Civil Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

40 Ebel, 2.

41 One potential route for exploring this is through Richard Kearney's conception of *anatheism*. Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God After God* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011).

42 The interdisciplinary study of trauma began in the late 1980's, and was named explicitly in Cathy Caruth ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). John Briere and Catherine Scott writes: "As compared to other areas of psychology and behavioral science, the systematic study of the human response to trauma is relatively new. The new modern field of studying traumatic stress was born in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, and the term *posttraumatic stress disorder* (PTSD) was introduced into the mental health lexicon only in the mid-1980's," John N. Briere and Catherine Scott, *Principles of Trauma Therapy: A Guide to Symptoms, Evaluation, and Treatment,* 2nd edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 1.

trauma is that events are not over when they are declared, or even appear to be over. Speaking on an individual level, because of the impact of violence on human systems, adaptive processes shut down. The system goes off-line. Because of this, a timeline of past, present, and future is altered. Traces of the event surface at other points in time, but it is difficult to directly trace a clear line back to it. The past occupies the present world; it is somehow alive in the present, though appearing in forms that are no longer directly tied to the places and persons in the past. Psychologically, these traces are described in terms of symptomology. Symptoms tell a story of trauma somatically. Triggered by the senses, the past flashes into the present, awakening the body to mobilize to respond to danger. The body rallies to protect, but this sensory vulnerability means that events can be reexperienced outside of the time and spaces in which they occurred.[43] These dynamics extend to the collective, in terms of social or political bodies.

Constructive biblical hermeneutics is well positioned to track the "substructural" theologies that thread through public speech and authorize particular political ends. This is present in early constructive biblical work, but its authorizations are less evident and no longer traced to explicitly religious institutions or representatives.One trajectory for imagining constructive biblical interpretation in the afterlife of biblical authority is to *approach the Bible as a repository of body memories.* While the Bible is composed of words and narratives, it offers rich images that target the senses and attest to primary affective experiences of communities who are contending with life's vicissitudes: shame, guilt, envy, revenge, etc. If these writings witness to root experiences of ancient communities, contemporary communities, by reading, receiving, and re-enacting these biblical texts

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[43] These are important books in the articulation of the impact of trauma on the body: Babette Rothschild, *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000)*;* Peter Levine, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1997)*;* Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2015)*;* Pat Ogden, Kekuni Minton, and Clare Pane, eds., *Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006).

are shaped across time. Something like collective memory is inscribed into the life of the community, but it is not done through oral or written means alone. Instead, it is transmitted, as well, as body memories. Hodgson writes: "In relation the potential radicality of all experience is thematized in central root experiences by which everything else is illuminated."[44] These root experiences are not anti-rational but may follow along other lines—other ways of knowing that were not, until recently, brought to light. The biblical texts transmit the collective memories of a people reckoning with God and with each other, wrestling with the vicissitudes of life. These are certainly recognizable through certain *events,* but the experiences conveyed are affective. The events narrate life's rhythms. The Bible is a living, breathing repository for our deepest affections. For these and others, affect, and affect theory, provide a route for constructive theologians to talk about the somatic dimension without separating it from words. Affect theory attempts to provide a corrective to the "linguistic turn" represented in much poststructuralist theory in order to resist the mind/body split that continues to be enacted in critical theorizing.[45]

As those working in the area of trauma envision what it looks like for persons who have experienced trauma to 'come to life again,' biblical texts spur visions of what it looks and feels like to

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[44] Peter C. Hodgson, "Constructive Theology and Biblical Worlds," in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998)*,* 49. Hodgson writes: "Theology is a constructive activity that correlates root revelatory experiences, traditioned textual expressions, and contemporary social locations through the interaction of critical-interpretative and practical-appropriative thinking," 48. He acknowledges that claims to primary revelatory experiences are under scrutiny in postmodernity. The linguistic emphasis in poststructuralism made it difficult to speak about accounts of anything prior to language—anything 'root.' More comfortable with the claims of *mediated* knowledge, constructive theologians tended to emphasize textual expressions and social locations above claims to immediate experience. However, Hodgson wants to hold onto root revelatory experiences, arguing that there is something lost in removing these experiences from the data of theological work. In this sense, he shares concerns with affect theorists that there is something lost in folding everything under the umbrella of linguistic operations. Studies in affect could turn constructive theologians to biblical accounts of how experiences provide their own data for interpretation.

[45] Jennifer L. Koosed and Stephen D. Moore, "Introduction: From Affect to Exegesis," *Biblical Interpretation* 22 (2014): 382.

do this.[46] Bodies hold memories of trauma. Various stands of trauma research suggest that memories process differently in experiences of trauma. They are not stored as declarative memories but as non-declarative ones; these cannot be accessed by talking-out trauma.[47] Instead, they store somatically as *sensations*. Traumatic memories can be transformed only by helping a person to reorient to the world somatically—to work trauma out of the body. Restoring a person's capacity to regulate their breath and to notice their sensations is a primary goal of trauma healing. Words and narratives are higher level functions that are important for helping someone integrate the experience of trauma, but sensory work is first-order business.

When communities come to Christian worship spaces to receive a fresh word from God, this is not typically registered as an invitation to renew the senses and to generate, in neurobiological terms, new mirror neurons to create alternative pathways of bodily response. But interpreted affectively, we could think of the body's wisdom and creativity at play. Somatic work attempts to re-route the senses. Christian theologians often speak about salvation history as narrated in scriptures. This is a composite of biblical stories, thematized in order to tell a larger story of God's redemption of the world. This history is composed of root experiences of guilt, shame, anger, envy, grief, trust, empathy. When this salvation history is taught, it begins to shape certain affects. The sensorium in biblical texts guides and shapes the senses of those who receive and interpret these biblical texts. When communities read these passages, there is more than understanding and comprehension taking place. I have argued elsewhere that eschatology, the teachings about end things, targets the

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[46] Ronnie Janoff-Bulman asks: "How can we understand the psychological impact and aftermath of these traumatic experiences? How do people come to terms with these events and go on with their lives?", 3. Studies in trauma often speak about the challenge of integrating experiences of trauma into what one knows of themselves as a process of death and re-birth. Living is not a return to a prior self but a process of coming into a new relationship with life. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2002).

[47] Although many trauma researchers describe this process, a helpful overview can be found in "Part Two: This is Your Brain on Trauma" in Bessel van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score*, pp. 51-102.

limbic system by fostering images of final judgment, periods of trial and tribulation, and high-stakes conditions for the securing of one's salvation.[48]

We can think of this in another way, as well. Biblical phrases can trigger a host of memories. The biblical imaginary can be awakened with the simple recitation of a biblical phrase. The words can mobilize a host of sensations from the past. Consider these:

The wages of sin is death.

Wives submit to your husbands.

I am the way, the truth, the life.

Love is patient; love is kind.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Sedimented body memories, they are messages engrafted onto the body. And they are not just words. They evoke worlds. They do not merely come to mind. They stir the affections. They can be tribal calls, sealing the contours of community identity. They can hold people in pain, with the assurance that they are not alone in the valley of their suffering. They can fill someone with terror, as the consequences of an action is mapped onto eternity. They can mobilize resistance, becoming platforms for assurance that the rulers of this world will not prevail. They stir the biblical imaginary in way that cannot be written off. Biblical stories tell the stories of our lives with a strange combination of proximity and distance. But it is their rhythm, their imagery, rather than their propositional force that explains its sustaining hold on the imagination. They live within the imaginary at some level and do their work on and in us.

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48 Shelly Rambo, "Salvation in the After-Living: Reflections on Salvation with Joshua Ralston and Sharon Betcher," in *Comparing Faithfully: Insights for Systematic Theological Reflection*, ed. Michelle Voss Roberts (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2016), 296-315.

We can also see this in action when biblical images and tropes appear on public protest signs. [examples, "Act Justly, Show Mercy, Walk Humbly," "If God is for us then who can be against us." "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," "Love your neighbor as yourself," or a statement like "God hates gays" that includes a biblical reference to Leviticus 20] They invoke biblical authority but in an after-life mode; there is enough public recognition that they carry weight—but the weight circles around fundamental affirmations of rights, about life. They carry authority, but mobilized toward particular ends. They remain, as fragments of sacred traditions that can carry multiple meanings—for those with deep understanding of those traditions and for those with very little. Something lingers in the structures of society so that when they are used, they surface a biblical imaginary that resides below the surface of things. If we think about the Bible as the site of mobilizing the collective limbic system, we can make sense of a resurgence of reading along bloodlines and with aim of igniting tribal fervor are possible.[49]

Returning to the biblical texts over and over again, constructive theologians may want to think in line with a "carnal hermeneutics," about how biblical passages may be employed to reroute affects and moving them forward differently.[50] The biblical texts feature characters and communities coming to terms with feelings of shame, desires for revenge, incalculable regret, wonder, guilt, and empathy. And practices emerge from these—practices of lament and restitution, commemoration and sacrifice. Interpretive communities can find resonance with these affects, can find express themselves through them, and they can also serve as cautionary tales. For example, awakening readers to the experience of the witnesses at the foot of the cross in the Christian gospels may be a way of training a community to work with disgust. Sharon Betcher purports this posture of biblical

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[49] See Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998)*;* Sebastian Junger, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (New York, NY: Twelve Books, 2016).

[50] Brian Trainor and Richard Kearney, eds., *Carnal Hermeneutics*, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy series. (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2015).

witness, suggesting that Christian bodily practice can orient Christians to behold what is disgusting. Christians are invited, through meditations on the cross, into practices of working through disgust—of practicing spiritual muscles that are essential for engaging in liberatory work.[51] Wendy Farley points to Buddhist practices as counterpoints to narratives of sin and guilt that can put moral freight on experiences of suffering. Operating with a different diagnosis of the human condition, these contemplative and meditative practices, she says, can orient persons in more helpful ways to suffering.[52] I revisit the gathering of disciples in the Upper Room, suggesting that it is an invitation to a new sensorium. The Upper Room narrative is a somatic scene in which the risen Jesus returns to train them in a way—that has to do with bodies, breath, and touch.[53]

In light of this, *constructive biblical hermeneutics could be reframed as postmemory work.*. In *The Generation of Postmemory,* Marianne Hirsch sets out on a theoretical journey to discover how she, as a second-generation Holocaust writer, can conceive of her place in history.[54] She is pressing beyond notions of survival and transmission to think about post-generational healing and how the work of subsequent generations may inscribe the past differently—to remember *forward.* Instead of viewing a historical rupture and repetition of the violence, Hirsch posits that the next generation can "create an opening in the present to something in the past that goes beyond their indexicality or the

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[51] Sharon Betcher, *Spirit and the Obligations of Social Flesh: A Secular Theology for the Global City,* First ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), chapter 4. "The images to which canonical Christianity returns again and again—to Christ as corpse or on the cross—suggest both a way of meditatively employing the images of the scorned, disfigured, abused, imperial torture victim, and a way to break through transcendentalist metaphysics. Religious images are but icons for redirecting our aversions so that we might more mindfully engage those bouts of aesthetic nervousness, unique to each of us, that grip us on the streets of our mongrel cities," (122).

[52] Wendy Farley, *The Wounding and Healing of Desire: Weaving Heaven and Earth* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

[53] Shelly Rambo, *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 80-84.

[54] Marianne Hirsch, *A Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012). Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA; Perseus Books, 2004).

information they record."[55] Given the fact that intergenerational experiences of violence are rarely conveyed in straightforward narratives, postmemory work is often work done with material remnants (diaries, letter, photographs) or through engaging the senses. I imagine sorting through photographs, catching a whiff of perfume, noticing something that was always there but registers only decades later. Through the objects and materials that remain, children encountering these ask how they are positioned in relationship to history, not as passive recipient to this history nor disconnected from it, but as agents of healing the past. These modes of encounter are neither purely conceptual nor exclusively material.

Hirsch is talking about family memories. And she develops the term "affiliative" to conceive of the ways that families connect across generations. The mediations of memory assume that communication is disrupted and entangled. She imagines this family collective in an "organic web of transmission."[56] It is not unlike how theologians imagine Christian traditions. While not overlooking the damage enacted by Christianity, constructive theologians imagine the *ecclesia* as a family. They claim a thread of intimacy and belonging through attachment to the memory of Jesus, bonded by the Spirit in their differences. It is a family created through time that also cuts across time.

Considering constructive biblical interpretation as post-memory work is a way of witnessing the transmission of biblical texts forward. The concern with tradition, understood as repetition, is that it entrenches and secures the boundaries of Christian identity. But there is equal concern, on the other end, that connections and ties to the past are severed. The earlier interpretations do not go away and are not erased; instead, subsequent interpretations are superimposed, and even carry the earlier interpretations into different contexts. The displacement and layering create something new

[55] Hirsch, 74.
[56] Hirsch, 36.

out of the old without presuming to erase the earlier inscriptions.[57] Post-memory work is more like collage. It works in mixed mediums. It tracks the history, not simply as the history of ideas, but as the material practices of biblical transmission. This invites new partnerships with scholars working on provenance and manuscript curation and dissemination.[58] Such scholars highlight the relationships that people have through the texts, the connectional pathways made possible or impaired by the Bible is a web of exchanges—second-hand, third-hand.

The method, I think is productive for conceiving of constructive biblical hermeneutics. Hirsch refers to "aesthetic and ethical practices of postmemory, practices that situate themselves in the specific aftermath of historical catastrophe."[59] It is precisely because there is distance that a creative space can open up to receive that history for the "truths that it tells"[60] in that someone can meet it differently, potentially open it up to a different iteration. The alteration of past memories does not need to be received simply as distortions; instead, the positioning of another generation—intentionally and creatively—toward the past may produce an alternative future. There is critical distance from that history, enough to recreate the routes that those memories can travel.

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[57] This process of textual layering is known as palimpsest. Rita Nakashima Brock uses it to describe the experience of moral injury for military veterans. See Rita Nakashima Brock, "Moral Injury, Soul Repair, and Congregations," FCC Minneapolis, accessed August 12, 2019, http://www.fccminneapolis.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Moral-Injury-Handout-May-2016-MN.pdf.

[58] The work of my Boston University colleague, Jennifer Knust is noteworthy here. Knust, a scholar of the literary and history of ancient Christianity, is interested in the practices of provenance. She and other biblical scholars are also tracking how biblical history is employed in political projects, such as the creation of the Museum of the Bible. The museum is a good example of how, in contemporary public life, biblical authority is mobilized for particular ends—to tell a single uninterrupted story of Christian nationalism. See Jennifer Knust, "Editing Without Interpreting: The Museum of the Bible and New Testament Textual Criticism" in *The Museum of the Bible: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Cavan Concanon and Jill Hicks Keeton (London: Lexington Books, 2019). See also Katherine Stewart, "The Museum of the Bible Is a Safe Space for Christian Nationalists," *New York Times,* Jan. 6, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/06/opinion/sunday/the-museum-of-the-bible-is-a-safe-space-for-christian-nationalists.html

[59] Hirsch, 228.

[60] Caruth, "Preface," *Trauma: Explorations in Memory.*

We could say that constructive theologians have always been invested in tracking the traumatic reception of biblical texts; but it is provocative to think about tracking positively, with an eye toward reparation.[61] A hermeneutics of suspicion gives way to hermeneutics of repair and resilience. In interpreting biblical transmission, it may be productive to think about theological interpretation of biblical texts as a means of 'working through' past trauma toward certain ends.[62] Venturing new readings is not, therefore, a departure from the past or a break from it but, instead, a gapped continuity that makes possible a different outcome. The ongoing reading and writing and ritualizing and liturgical, offers opportunities to heal the past *forward.*

Conclusion

Constructive theologians insist that the Bible is not one thing. It is not a single text with a single message to be received across time. They loosen the hold of damning interpretations, insisting on the multiplicity of modes and contexts of theo-biblical interpretations. But it is often experienced for its singular force, when tied to primary affections. It is not a single text, but it can be experienced as such. I suggest, here, that constructive theologians should consider more fully how biblical authority *lives on* affectively, often apart from explicit claims or visible religious practices. Old systems, old houses are not gone but, in fact, are returning--even resurging. . The challenge is to account for its afterlife. The house returns in unexpected times, places, and forms. If theologians account for the adherence, attachments, they will think about how to work constructively with the

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61 Nod to Eve Sedgwick's notion of reparative readings. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You," in *Touching, Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 123-152.

62 Perhaps this is akin to the "counter-apocalyptic spatial therapeutics" that Catherine Keller was forcecasting in *Apocalypse Now and Then,* in which she writes: "If I grew up apocalyptic, I have since had the luck or instinct to stay put and begin to heal from this dislocating spatiality, to revitalize bit by bit my numbed sense of habitat. Likewise, in the interest of counter-apocalyptic spatial therapeutics, this chapter will consider certain trans-historical, indeed transcontinental, dislocations of Western sensibility," 141.

ingredients of formation: bodies, affect, and imagination. The future may point beyond a focus on how biblical texts are explicitly functioning and attempt to account for the afterlife of the Bible that lives on in persons, communities, and nations. Building upon the three phases of constructive engagements with the Bible, the current moment may operate with all of the muscle memory of these previous modes to take account of the biblical remains.

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