

Newsletter of the International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture

April 2010

Feature Website on Literature and Religion/Theology

www.isrlc.org

We finally have our **own domain for the ISRLC website**. Although there are still some changes to be made and further material to add, we encourage you to bookmark the link above and let all those interested in our new address know about it. We'll update the site as we go along.

www.alalite.org

The ALALITE (Association of Theology and Literature of Latin America) has launched a new website with up-to-date information about their history, structure, conferences etc. The website is in both English and Spanish.

Call For Papers

- **Re-writing the Bible: Devotion, Diatribe and Dialogue**

Date: June 14-15, 2010

Place: University of Glasgow

Submission deadline: April 17, 2010 to rewritingbible2010@gmail.com

Further information:

Keynote speakers include Sara Maitland, Michelene Wandor and Michael Schmidt

"Scripture [...] has always been a radically layered, plurally authored, multiply motivated composite, full of fascinating mysteries, gaps, and inconsistencies, a garden of delight to the exegete."

- Alicia Suskin Ostriker

"...there is no reading of a work which is not also a 're-writing'."

- Terry Eagleton

A recent exhibition at the Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art consisted of a bible, laid open alongside a supply of pens, with the invitation, "If you feel you've been excluded from the Bible, please feel free to find a way to write yourself back in." The comments scribbled in the margins, and the very notion of 'writing in the Bible' became the subject of a widespread controversy, resulting in the gallery's decision to place this bible inside a perspex cube, effectively sealing it off and protecting it from what might be deemed 'undesirable' commentary. Visitors were still invited to write comments, but now they were written on sheets of paper that were then selected and inserted between the bible's pages every evening by gallery staff.

In light of this very present debate, **Re-Writing the Bible: Devotion, Diatribe and Dialogue** invites poets, writers, and scholars to engage with interdisciplinary questions surrounding the phenomena of retellings or revisions of Bible in creative writing. Such retellings may represent 'faithful' readings - attempting to access biblical material for deeper understanding, prayerful reading, or theological exegesis; or they might be 'furious' readings, arguing against the Bible's injustices

and absences. Retellings are readings become writings, and display a number of interrelated issues concerning how the Bible is imagined, whether as literature, Scripture, or post-theological text. These include how readers imagine themselves in relation to such texts, and how, through the act of writing, these biblical stories are sustained and re-imagined in times very distant from their own writing and compilation.

The symposium seeks **20-minute papers** from a variety of disciplines and perspectives, including but not limited to: literature, theology, biblical studies, critical and cultural theory, history, politics, and so on. It is hoped that 'creative writing' will be interpreted broadly, incorporating poetry, novel, short story, sermon, liturgy, prayers, songs, political writing, theatre, and so on, in order to trace some of the forms in which the 'afterlives', or reception histories, of the Bible may now be found. Our emphasis is on twentieth and twenty-first century works, but we will also consider abstracts on 'retellings' from other periods. We would be particularly interested in papers looking at spaces that often go unexplored by research in retelling and revisioning, such as biblical romance novels, evangelical speculative fiction, biblical archetypes in autobiography, contemporary liturgy, or popular music.

Please send abstracts (approx. 250 words) to rewritingbible2010@gmail.com, by no later than 17th April 2010

- **Visions and Revisions: Putting God into Writing (CLSG autumn conference)**

Date: November 6, 2010

Place: Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Submission deadline: May 31, 2010

Further information: <http://www.clsg.org/html/conference.html>

Visions and Revisions: Putting God into Writing

**Corpus Christi College, Oxford
Saturday 6 November 2010**

Whether you are thinking revelation or inspiration, expressing the ineffable divine is a challenge, and interpreting such utterances may not be without difficulty. A number of devices are used by Biblical and other writers to express the divinity, including prosopopeia, metaphor, symbol and story. In the Bible the voice of God is everywhere, though he is and is not actually seen. Auerbach noticed 'universal-historical claims', 'multiplicity of meanings, need for interpretation', and 'preoccupation with the problematic'. Theophanies, the experiences of seers and mystics, and epiphanies are expressed in writing. Allegories and re-tellings of old stories refer to God even if they do not attempt to define him. Most periods of Western literary history bear this witness, and modern novels are no exception.

Offers of papers to be read at the conference (and subsequently printed in The Glass) are invited before the deadline 31 May 2010.

Fuller details are on the CLSG website at
<http://www.clsg.org/html/conference.html>

The page will be progressively updated as details are known.

Announcements

- 6th Annual Religion, Literature and the Arts Conference: “**Malicious Intentions and Wicked Deeds: Challenging Evil in Thought and Practice**” (Co-sponsored by *Literature and Theology*)

Date: 9-11 April, 2010

Place: University of Iowa

Further information: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~relgrad/RLA.html>



As previously announced, the **2010 Biennial Conference for the International Society of Religion, Literature and Culture** will be hosted by Oxford University Theology Faculty and take place at **Oxford University between 23rd and 26th September 2010**. The topic for the conference is "**Attending to the Other: Critical Theory and Spiritual Practice**".

Keynote speakers: Paul Fiddes (Oxford University), Amy Hollywood (Harvard University), Toril Moi (Duke University) and Graham Ward (Manchester University).

Registration details are available on our website (www.theology.ox.ac.uk/ISRLC).

New Publication



Mack, Michael. *Spinoza and the Specters of Modernity. The Hidden Enlightenment of Diversity from Spinoza to Freud*. London: Continuum, 2010.

Details:

<http://www.continuumbooks.com/books/detail.aspx?BookId=136565&SntUrl=152488&SubjectId=1043&Subject2Id=1461>

*Information for the following Newsletter?
send it to Marie.Holdsworth@uclouvain.be*