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fall 2020
Yale Divinity School
Women's Center

VOICE Journal of Literary and Theological Ideas is published biannually by the Yale Divinity School Women's Center. VOICE exists to honor the "dangerous memory" of women. When we use the word *women*, we make a conscious effort to uplift and acknowledge a designated space for the experience of womanhood in society today, while also being attentive to the fact that people of many gender identities and experiences relate to womanhood and femininity in empowering and complicated ways. We use *women* here less as a category of gender and more as a particular way of relating to the world.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Sarah Anne Ambrose

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Oana Capatina

MANAGING EDITOR

Emily Eckwahl-Sanna

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Moriah Lee, Nazanin Sullivan

COVER ART

Brooke Sheldon, *Hello, My Name is Mary* (front);
Sophie Beal, *Live Wire* (back)

GRAPHIC DESIGN & SPOT ILLUSTRATIONS

N. Weltyk

ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR

Yale Divinity School Office of Student Affairs

ALUMNA FUNDER

Debbie McLeod

EDITORS EMERITAE

Eleanor Applewhite, Kelly Burd, Lillian Fuchs,
Anne Martino (1997); Melanie Mowiniski,
Kate Ott (1999); Deborah Meister,
Stephanie Urie (2000); Tanya Atwood Hoover (2001);
Noelle York (2001, 2002); Katherine Dick (2002)

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Letter from the Editors

At the edge of campus within Fischer Hall, the Women's Center is a room from the past. Its dusty shelves are stuffed with minutes from long-ago meetings and mass-market paperbacks of *The Feminine Mystique*, while leather photo albums and vintage covers of *Ms.* magazine are strewn beside 70s-inspired decor. In the fall of 2019, our editor-in-chief stumbled across the archival copies of the long-lost literary journal VOICE when visiting the Women's Center during her first week on campus. This journal aimed to tell women's stories through the lens of their own experiences. Its issues, dated 1996–2002, each differed in size and visual aesthetic, but they all had one thing in common: they were written “for women and by women.”

This discovery coincided with the beginning of “50WomenAtYale150,” a celebration of Yale's coeducation anniversaries. At Yale Divinity School, “50WomenAtYale150” remembered and retold stories of trailblazing women from Yale's past and sought to inspire meaningful conversation about the future of women in theological teaching, doctoral research, ministerial formation, and community leadership. Lectures and exhibits transposed these memories of adversities and achievements into the present, kindling resistance against the sexist, misogynistic, and heteronormative underpinnings of Yale's educational institutions while, at the same time, acknowledging that business is unfinished and the fight for equality is not over. The power of these memories to reconnect us with the lives of those who struggled before us is what makes them so dangerous: they break through to reveal pre-existing injustices and recommit us to our shared mission of restoring justice in the future. Together, this year-long commemoration and the finding of the VOICE archive marked an unavoidable solidarity with the “dangerous memory” of the women of Yale.¹

1. “Dangerous memory,” coined by German theologian Johann Baptist Metz, concerns itself with memories that unsettle the status quo. These are subversive memories within our own lives or the lives of those before us that shock us into awareness and stir a future filled with both critique and hope.

In the case of VOICE, the danger lies not in remembering that women did not have a space for their voices, but in recognizing that they did in a remarkable way that no longer exists today at YDS. Its past issues manifested the previous existence of a feminist forum for women in which creative exchange through self-exploratory writings and talking circles appeared to be alive and vibrant. Coming into contact with the “dangerous memory” of prior student contributors to VOICE and the Women’s Center has moved us to recreate a space for women at YDS and in the larger Yale community.² We the editors feel called to uplift the voices of women in the present through our resurrection of VOICE.

In this inaugural issue, our writers and artists speak to what it means to come from somewhere and have that location shape and inform you. Each of our pieces highlight the embodiment of self as inseparable from the intersectionality of women’s identities. Underscoring the unearthing of their voices, as expressed by Dr. Kate Ott in her introduction, is an ever-evolving understanding of *reciprocity* and *accountability* (page 5). Through a variety of mediums and vantage points, VOICE is an emblem of feminist reflection within the religious domain. By engaging with past narratives of those left unheard, rendered invisible, emptied of power, and laid to waste by memory’s neglect, it is our hope that the revival of VOICE will reignite a space at YDS for women’s momentous expression.

* * *

Initially, VOICE was to be released in the spring of 2020. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic has radically upended our country, causing immense loss of life and stripping bare assumptions about gender equity and social justice.³ Media coverage of COVID-19’s disproportionate impact

2. When we use the word *women*, we make a conscious effort to uplift and acknowledge a designated space for the experience of womanhood in society today, while also being attentive to the fact that people of many gender identities and experiences relate to womanhood and femininity in empowering and complicated ways. We use *women* less as a category of gender and more as a particular way of relating to the world.
3. In this context, Brooke Sheldon’s cover art takes on a dual meaning: it represents both the silencing of voices and the responsible precautions we are taking to protect one another.

on women and communities of color has shed light on those bearing the brunt of this public health crisis: those who are more likely to work on the front-lines, to serve in essential jobs, to care for children or elders at home, to lose access to critical health care, and consequently, lose their lives and livelihoods. Yet at a time when our mouths are physically masked, women's voices have been amplified and unleashed. We have witnessed women's words form and reform movements: Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, to reference only a few. Each of these women have named where they come from, and what it means for them to be women and agents of change in this world. The #SayHerName campaign, launched in 2014 by the African American Policy Forum, of which Crenshaw is the director, works to elevate Black women's and girl's experiences within conversations about policing and police brutality. In the words of Crenshaw, "If you say their names, then you go on to learn their stories [and] you have more of a sense about what anti-Black police violence actually looks like."⁴ In naming marginalized stories, Crenshaw believes we speak in the spirit of protection. It is this principle that VOICE devotes itself to—protecting and asserting the voices, stories, and lived experiences of others.

4. Sheinelle Jones, "Kimberlé Crenshaw shares importance of the Say Her Name movement" *TODAY* video, 2:04, June 23, 2020, <https://www.today.com/video/kimberle-crenshaw-shares-importance-of-the-say-her-name-movement-85807685887>.



Introduction

Journals are a curious space, literally creating space for exploration, argument, and imagination. They materialize a community of strangers in conversation, some willing participants as authors and editors, others unknowing companions brought along in the text, and the rest, readers by choice and chance. When a group of female-identified students at YDS started VOICE in the late '90s, we were longing for just such a space. The Women's Center on campus, which once provided this space in the form of a physical location, had been shuttered along with both ends of the Quad and all the boxes moved to a janitorial storage closet in Fischer Hall that was the "new" Women's Center. That was and is not enough space. With a hodge-podge of backgrounds in art shows, newsletter production, and journal publication, an off-hand suggestion about publishing our own journal turned into VOICE. And we made our own curious space.

Each issue of VOICE, like this one, represents both an affective space and a concrete, hold-in-your-hand object that takes up space in a theological world overrun by volumes of heteropatriarchal, white, western writings and viewpoints. Taking up space is metaphorical and physical as Bostock reminds us in her writing on learning hula, as does Tsoulouhas in the poem "she" where claiming space manifests desire and identity. Making room for new voices does not make the works in past issues or future publications immune to reinscribing oppressions or alienations based on race, gender, class, theologies or geographies. The difference, however, is an awareness of and willingness to disrupt systems of oppression in their multiple forms, which is the initial ground for concrete practices of reciprocity and accountability. The work requires analytic precision of and ethical response to "slow violences" like those found in Snavelly's contribution.

VOICE is not a space of uniformity in style, conviction, or contributors. I find a beauty in the chaos of the first issues, disrupting academic legacies of knowledge production in favor of voluntary multiplicity. Some pieces arrive with clear, fixed identities and others house contradictions within them. They are as we are. VOICE invites us as writers and readers to wrestle with literary and theological ideas from the experiences of women, about women, and the nuances of gender and sexuality in very particular lives. This can result in an experience of gender at the intersection of race, nation, and childhood that leaves one, like Esquinca to declare "I was and I was not" as she describes the navigation of multiple identities at the la fronteras (page 8). Or Heath's retelling of an often hidden history of Mormon women's political activism and her claiming a place in that legacy. When Ford speaks of "re-authoring" through storytelling in the context of pastoral care, we are invited to write our own stories, a form of truth-telling, that can be healing as well as helpful. Likewise, the Interview by Ambrose and Capatina with Rev. Dr. Thomas weaves a narrative of her vocational path in the church and academy, and sets a vision for others.

Our identities as women are constructed by others and under construction by ourselves, sometimes with God and other times in spite of *Him*.¹ In scriptural narratives and current lives, women's choices and roles are conscripted by patriarchal desires as Van Donselaar makes clear in the comparison of cheerleading and biblical womanhood. The article pulled from the archives of VOICE, authored by Finton, does the same in her spiritual fiction account of Lilith and her daughters. Engaging New Testament narratives, Traverse's poetry for female characters in Luke grounds the reader in the daily embodiment of three women's experiences. In a mix of biblical allusion and concrete everydayness, Foreman unsheathes how abuse and power are part of *the* story and our stories.

1. I am intentionally using male, non-inclusive language here because the phrase "in spite of" is almost always a response to a male God.

I end where you as a reader will begin with Jefferson's work. She gathers a cadre of voices expanding the community that materializes in this issue. You will likely find yourself in her petitions as she weaves through common, shared seminary experiences. You may also find yourself missing as the particularities are uniquely hers. I hope, as the kids are able to do in her prayer, that VOICE continues to be a curious space to see "between the lines" and move "beyond the spectrum" (page 7).

For the brave editors, revitalizing this space, I share what my co-editor, Dr. Zayn Kassam at the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* recently reminded me after a completed issue went to print and we found an error: "A tiny imperfection, according to Indian lore, keeps the divinities from getting jealous and wreaking havoc." Producing journals is a labor of love and, in the case of the mission of this journal, justice. Do this work with grace, integrity, and honesty about your own fallible humanity; it will make the journey much more fun!

Dawn Jefferson

For Us, Near God

For those of us who would be closer to God were it not for the lies someone whispered decades ago against our promise and our callings, and the groping hands that separated innocents from nurture. For all of Jephthah's unnamed daughters who will never know their womanhood, for the children whom the disciples first blocked from Christ, and the tales they wrote down about Mary that were never true for her.

For Mother David who taught me to intercede and tarry and stood over me when I first spoke in other tongues; who modeled what it was to visit those boys in the AIDS ward when no one else would go, enduring the jealous gossip spoken under breaths that called her mean and did not understand her kind lovings that spoke the truth.

For the ways that this poem will strive to be a cohesive construction of many threads of varying cries or several stories of deferred dreams and deep "societal" problems and the consequences of sinful systems and years of hoping and making do with chitterlings.

For the new ways we will read and preach
2 Chronicles 7:14, longing for humility and healing for

our land, re-identifying with Ruth and Hadassah as prophetic female symbols, and marking the new anti-patriarchy, anti-Christian hegemony, anti-colonizing ages to come.

For Noel who valiantly tries to be the model of the Black father he did not know up close and who takes the time to know the prison inmates he guards in the Bernie Madoff ward before he refs the little Raleigh basketball game or attends his weekly class to discuss the healing cultures of an Africa no one explained to us in Sunday School.

For every long-skirt bearing, no make-up wearing, young black girl overwhelmed by the confines of Pentecostalism and enchanted by the prospect that God was/is speaking directly to her. She does not plan on birthing children and will fall in love with a woman who wears jeans and makes her giggle at the prospect of ever being unseen, while tasting her bottom lip as they kiss and pray to never part.

For all the names on the t-shirts from the rallies of the souls who were made ancestors far too soon and too violently from unpoliced white imaginings of

black dehumanizations. Names I want to speak that make me weep and fear for my own longevity, my own safety, my own traffic stops, my own unwritten poems and unprayed prayers for ~~my own~~ our resurrection.

For every denomination and disorganized religion represented by the bent and unbent knees underneath this table and the empty pews in chapel and unstacked chairs in Marquand. For what we would have wanted to say to God if we could get close enough and believed enough in what God does for people like us.

For every victorious GED earner who will not go to Yale or seminary but now constructs a spirit-transforming theology that will go unpublished but will curb gun violence on her corner and expose sex trafficking on their block.

For Ryleigh with her large scientist glasses, straight part and baby hairs around the edges of her round brown face, who wonders and questions and giggles loud into the evening after opening her mother's cell phone and who after watching Moana asked a compound question of her attorney mother, "What is a demigod, and what is the difference between a demigod and my God?"

For every Norwegian, French, British, Australian traveler who enters these fragmented states of America without question, derision, intentional annihilation of their identity, suspicion of their body, without degradation of their culture, defamation of their characters, impoverishing of their barriers or undervaluing of their work ethic.

For little Naomi, our bronze multiracial Bodhisattva, who saw herself in the Motunui princess and memorized the speech that demanded we "board her boat and return the heart to Te Fiti!" Who, in her three years of wisdom, sashays through the house singing "the cold doesn't bother her anyway" but also cries that her hair is not long like Elsa's. She is now content to swing high in her playground, scream worship songs out the car's back window, and conquer the balance beam.

For Nassir and every other squirming, blurting, overstimulated, anxious student who was afraid of being discovered as stupid or ignorant and who could not finish the reading or revise their papers enough.

For every other kid who saw between the lines and moved beyond the spectrum we tried to bind them to.

For my father, face-to-face with the anonymity of healthcare, waiting for me to call or for someone to visit in his too dark, urine-stained nursing home room in the middle of Yonkers. While glaucoma took the vision from his right eye, he can still see the ways his striving middle-class accumulations dwindled once he got sick and older. He would have designed a better house or sketched out a stronger tax shelter had he known, but he remembers all the plans he drew up and the measurements he took and the way it felt to swagger down St. Nicholas Avenue in the early afternoon.

For Ella and Keziah, my almost godchildren, who beam with the unconditional love of modern family constructions. They are allowed to touch my hair with their brown hands and climb on my shoulders in the pool because their two white moms (my dear friends) have invited me over to bear witness to the laughter and resolve that a black lady who loves Jesus may offer in response to their kindergarten questions. *Do you like grey foxes? Who taught you how to do handstands under water? Can we talk about Hitler? Do you kiss your wife? ewww. Will you pray with us?*

For we seminarians who did not know enough scripture or understand what exegesis would do for our mother's forgetting how to use the microwave or the remote control that helped her remain independently sufficient—what it would do for suicidal siblings, bodies ready to transition, and the infants who died during our CPE vigils.

For every contradiction and complexity that cannot be listed, enumerated, or comprehended because we did not chase down the rumor, sit down to listen, or choose to call over text. For all the stuff that did not get tweeted or scrolled through because someone did not think they were worthy enough to share the pain of it. For the love we received and did not return and the Scriptures we have yet to read and write.

For the black girl magic, fairy shine, queer couture, Boriqua envying, Blackfoot rhythm, gospel powered, Thurman love song I am trying to sing and for each ethnic, racial, gendered sacred I do not know

well enough to compose a poetic riff for, still, “Come Judge for Me!”

For us, we pray for the patient petitioning of one named after Grace, the desperate wrestling spirit of Israel, the strategizing of Mahatma, the precise diction of Morrison who honors everyone by speaking her self, and for every one of our great souls who dares

to live towards, linger in, and yearn for the nearness of God. God who knows the smell of dirt, the slick of blood, and who hovered over our waters, giving us breath in the first place.

For how much longer my prayers have been since I first looked for answers between my hands.
Amen.

Eréndira Jiménez Esquinca

To Live in the Borderlands¹

To survive the Borderlands.
you must live *sin fronteras* (without borders)
be a crossroads.²

I am standing before you today on a day that is federally recognized as Columbus Day yet has been subverted and reclaimed as Indigenous Peoples’ Day with actions that began to be taken in the early 1990s. These actions acknowledge the violent and oppressive history of European colonialism towards the bodies and lives, histories and land of the Native people of the Americas. I am also standing in front of you today in the middle of Latinx Heritage Month. A month that celebrates the unique stories created as various races, worldviews, and belief systems have intersected to form new cultures, people, and relationships to land precisely through that colonialism and conquest. The legacy of Latinx heritage is one both of beauty, joy, and resistance as well as distorted power, erasure, and suppression.

I begin by making this point because I find myself carrying both of these legacies as part of my own. You see, my family is from southern Mexico,

from a state called Chiapas, which holds the highest Indigenous population in the country of Mexico. The story of my family, and of many Mexicans, is this desire to separate oneself from the margins, to assimilate, to move closer to perceived power, whether that is through economics, religion, or, as in the case of my family, education. My family sought to leave the Zoque people of my illiterate maternal great-grandmother behind, to immerse themselves in educational pursuits, and remove some of the Indigeneity from their own skin through this process. This act was compounded by my parents’ move to the United States so that my dad could pursue his PhD.

And so I found myself as a young person in the space that Gloria Anzaldúa names in her poem—living in the borderlands—neither American, neither Mexican nor neither white, neither indigenous: “Neither *hispana india negra espanola ni gabacha*, era mestiza, mulata, half-breed caught in the crossfire between camps while carrying all five races on my back.”³ I was and I was not. In many ways it felt as if I was nothing. I was growing up thousands of miles

1. Sermon preached on October 8, 2018 with readings from John 19:17–18, 31–34 and “To Live in the Borderlands,” Marquand Chapel, Yale Divinity School.

2. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 194–195.

3. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 194–195.



Three of the author's weavings on display at a local coffee shop in Louisville, KY.

away from my family, from the land on which I was born, and from the histories that shaped me in ways I did not even know.

However, my parents were intentional about returning back to Mexico at least once a year, and so I found myself very much attached to Chiapas. On these trips we would always make our way up to a small town in the mountains called San Cristobal de las Casas, a unique city which has retained its indigenous identity. When you walk its streets there are women and men and children in traditional indigenous clothing, and the women in particular are known for their handcrafted goods, most notably their textiles. These textiles serve as material texts—ways to continue to tell their communities' stories, to mark themselves as different or similar from other indigenous communities. They also function as an act of subversion in the face of the Mexican government, which has continually tried to erase the presence of indigenous religion, history, and land.

I grew up surrounded by these textiles, unknowingly absorbing them into my spirit and

perhaps my body. When I was twenty-five, I decided to teach myself to weave. I constructed my first loom. I learned the terminology for the thread that runs up and down the loom: the warp. And then I learned that the yarn that moves back and forth is called the weft. You want to have a warp that is fairly tight so it can support the tension of the weft, the place where the image of the tapestry comes to life. Over time, as I weaved back and forth, I realized that the over-under motion of weaving begins to create a series of tiny crosses.

In our gospel reading of John 19:17–18, 31–34, we watch Jesus take up the cross, walk towards his crucifixion, and then, after his death has been verified, have his side pierced so that water and blood pour out. This moment where the water and blood pour out of Jesus' side is the culmination of the imagery John has been building. Throughout the gospel Jesus performs various signs—turning water into wine, the feeding of the 5,000, restoring the sight of the blind, raising Lazarus from the dead—all bridging the space between the earthly and heavenly.

The blood and water pouring from Jesus' side operate as the moment in which we are meant to recollect the signs he performed—markers of his divinity revealed in mundane objects, as his human body hangs on the cross. In John's imagination, Jesus is not any one material image yet the Word made flesh. John's imagery reveals Jesus as both human and divine, and in a multiplicity of identities, illuminating the complexity of what it means to be made in the image of God. On this particular idea, Harry Attridge says:

Images, especially living images, of the ultimate can serve a revelatory function; they can give one a glimpse, however fleeting, of ultimate reality. To catch a glimpse is to be transformed. That is ... precisely what the Fourth Gospel does with its image of the Cross, the revelatory point on which all the other cubist images focus, the particularity moment that reveals the universal.⁴

The crucifixion in the gospel of John serves as the moment where Jesus' humanity comes into contact with his divinity. It is the moment in which all his descriptors have been woven together, held on the cross, in order to reveal a new way of confronting power and oppressive forces.

So then, to live at the borderlands, to *survive* the borderlands, is to not only be a crossroads, as Gloria Anzaldúa understands it, but to stand at the intersection of both oppressed and oppressor, to allow your side to be pierced, and for your own truth and light to spill forth. It is to recognize the intersections of your story and identity, and through that, to recognize that you also have been called to take up your own cross, and walk towards your own crucifixion. It is in this act of recognizing our own multifaceted identities that we are able to transform our notions of power, service, justice, and love.

Living in the metaphorical and literal borderlands, for me—as a Mexican-American, Chicana, Episcopalian, evangelical, bisexual, cis,

educated, and so on, woman has given me eyes to see the world in a particular way. You also are a multiplicity of stories and identities. We sit in Marquand Chapel holding any number of privileged identities. We do not walk into this room as any one thing. You carry on your body, in your heart, both the story of the oppressed and the oppressor. You walk through the world feeling the tension of both the margins and the center.

When we turn our eyes to our warps—to the stories handed down to us by those who have walked before us, creating paths for us to traverse with strength and resiliency, so that we can build our own stories and walk our own paths—we weave the weft, the story of our own life, the one that no one else can walk because they do not live in our bodies. Here, we find ourselves standing on the cross with the invitation to look backwards, forwards, and to stand in *this* present moment, with willingness to open our own sides, our own bodies, our own stories for the transformation of the world.

In closing, I want to add there is a difference between bearing your body because it has been expected of you and because you have made the choice yourself. Some of us have been expected to share our bodies and our stories before we have been ready. But when we find ourselves a bit more healed, a bit more whole, and bit more ready, the call still remains. It is no easy task to do the work of recognizing your own power and privilege alongside your own marginalization. It is painful at times and difficult always. But we do it knowing we have been woven into the story of the Word made flesh, and trusting that our bodies and stories hold the keys to the liberation of the world.

To survive the Borderlands
you must live *sin fronteras* (without borders)
be a crossroads.

Take up the cross.

Amen.

4. Harold Attridge, "The Cubist Principle in Johannine Imagery: John and the Reading of Images in Contemporary Platonism," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language*, ed. Jorg Frey et al. (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2006).

Leatherman Wingman

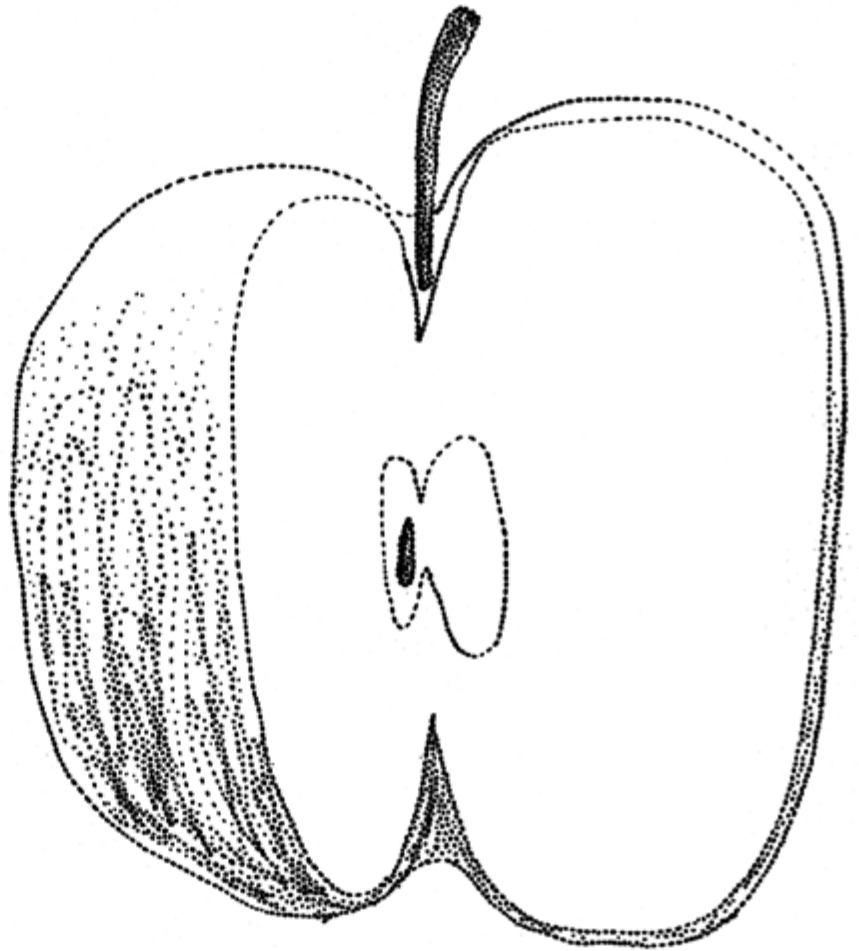
I told my best friend
what I wanted for my birthday
and she went to the man
who hurt her for advice.

I take it out of its sheath
and in its wings are the things
My carpenter father used:
pliers, screwdriver, file,
scissors, wire stripper, knife.

The bolts holding it all together
gaze at me with owl eyes.
They know something about me.

I flip out the blade
and play with the safety button,
clicking it on and off on and off,

like my father did around my mother.
The man sitting across the table
is surprised I know how to use it,
cutting into apples with ease.
He looks into the nail nick eye
and it watches back,
waiting.



she

This is how she learned to survive
in the wilds: she
pretended to be a forest dweller
living miles away from the nearest walmart
uncontacted by couth and civilization.
wept with the weeping willow
twisting its stringy branches into braids.
spoke in strange tongues
only trees and trolls understood.
fished out leaves
from the stream in her backyard
(the one she called a swamp
because it sounded spookier that way)
for a supper of brown and muck.
crouched like a huntress
waiting for her kill
but she killed nothing.
only hid from fauns and fairies and fossilized ghouls
who wanted to kill her.
carried a staff
a long-forgotten branch
of toadstools and baneberries.
murmured mimetic spells
as a primeval witch
siphoning power from spectral familiars.
made mischief with robin goodfellow
in the twilit lands of hollow earth.
she grew up
she grew down
roots reaching for the bedrock.



Interview: Rev. Dr. Gabrielle Thomas, YDS Women's Center Advisor¹

What factors and experiences led you to pursue ordination?

I grew up in a small rural parish. There were probably only twenty people in the church—I was the only child. I went every week with my mother, sitting through the service with my books, which she'd brought along to keep me quiet. During the Eucharist, I was always absolutely fascinated by what was happening, even as a small child. Most weeks I would go home and take out my dolls to re-enact what I'd seen. I played the role of the priest, handing out bread and "wine" to my "congregation." At the age of seven, years before women were ordained I remember telling the parish priest that I was going to do what he did when I grew up, and he just smiled and patted me on the head. I began to seriously think about ordination after my undergraduate degree, during which I'd begun to understand myself as a leader. I spoke to my parish priest about it and his response was to shake his head and say, "Dear me, no, Gabrielle, possibly prime minister, but never a priest." That said, numerous people suggested I think about ordination and their encouragement helped me pursue this path. It was not until my thirties though that I said, "I think it is time for me to get on and start thinking about doing something with this."

Along your path to both professorship and the priesthood, which undertaking came first, and perhaps why so?

These two strands form a broader vocation which, in ages past, was known as the "scholar-priest." The Church of England fund a few people each year so that they can combine ordination training with a PhD. I was one of these, so in many ways these two aspects of vocation worked in tandem.

How has the Anglican Church shaped your understanding of your own womanhood and vice versa?

It has shaped my understanding profoundly because I've had to reflect a great deal of what this means for me in light of my vocation. I did not spend a great deal of time thinking about being female before taking on a formal leadership role in the Church of England. I am much more aware of sexism than before I was ordained, mostly because of the sexism that filters through the church.

Did you have female mentors you could turn to?

My two closest female mentors are Catholic and Orthodox, respectively. They are brilliant, and both full-time academic theologians. Since they belong to churches that do not ordain women, neither of them are ordained. It's only recently that an ordained female mentor has come my way, which is one of the reasons why I am passionate about mentoring younger women—there was definitely a big gap for me.

What dynamics and/or tensions emerge while holding a position that ostensibly makes space for both your professor and priest identities?

My current job, which stretches across Berkeley and YDS, suits me very well. I am very happy working with students in these contexts—teaching is one of my greatest joys! In terms of who I am and my own integrity, this job ties together different threads. In this way, I do not feel torn, or find myself having to say, "today I am a priest and tomorrow I am a professor." When I am teaching History of Early Christianity, I am a priest; when I am presiding over the Eucharist, I am still a professor.

1. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Like any academic that cares about her students, the tension lies in how I spend my time. I am intentional about setting time aside for research and writing articles/books, yet at the same time investing in students so that those—with whom I am journeying—flourish. It is a constant discernment each day regarding which aspects of my career take priority, which is why I find I need to pray. There is no one way to be a priest. God calls us where we are and this is where I am now, and I am thankful!

As a YDS Women's Center advisor, you are naturally concerned with the female identity within the religious domain. This is evident through your new co-edited volume of essays, The Ordination of Women in the Orthodox Church: Explorations in Theology and Practice. Could you speak to its becoming?

The Ordination of Women in the Orthodox Church sprang out of some good relationships with Orthodox academics. I never at any point in my career thought I would edit a book on this particular subject because, in a sense, I do not really have a right to start telling the Orthodox they should ordain women, given that I am Anglican. It began in Oxford, England with a group of Orthodox academic theologians and priests gathering together to look at different aspects of being Orthodox. I had come to know them through Early Christianity conferences because of my work on Gregory of Nazianzus. This group had decided they wanted to look at the ordination of women in the Orthodox Church and my friend, Dr. Elena Narinskaya, invited me to talk at a conference they were hosting to explore the question of what it means to be ordained as a woman. When I first began praying about it, I thought that it could potentially be very complicated since there are many Orthodox who do not think change should occur in their Church. The conference went well and I suggested we expand talks to form a book. It was a huge privilege to be invited into another church's conversation and was an experience which I shall treasure.

Do you think the questions around the #MeToo movement within the US have translated to the UK, and especially in the Anglican Church/tradition?

[Laughter] No, not at all [more laughter]. The #MeToo movement definitely hit England, but within the Church of England, not even a tiny little bit. We are nowhere near the stage where this is being taken seriously.

Through your research, what have you discovered regarding the relationship between structural equality and female empowerment? In other words, within the Christian sphere, have progressive institutional structures truly bred freedom for the female voice?

I would definitely say, very confidently, no. Not in England, at least. My next book *For the Good of the Church: Theology, Women, and Ecumenical Practice* aims to foster ecumenical imagination and identifies the potential learning when women working across diverse Christian traditions gather to practice receptive ecumenism, asking, "What do we need to learn and receive from another tradition to help us address challenges or wounds in our own?" It explores some of the difficulties that women face when they work in a church. The big takeaway from the research was whether women work in Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, or Pentecostal churches, they have experienced sexual harassment, racialized abuse, challenges through being a mother, and/or through being single. This project solidified my conclusion that structural sexism disempowers women working in churches. On the one hand, it sounds obvious, yet not a lot is changing.

As an ordained woman, theologically and practically studying the absence of women's ordination within other denominations, what lasting thoughts or takeaways do you have for those fighting for this structural change?

When you get there, I mean when this change happens—albeit it might be in 50 or 100 years—do not give into clericalism. The idolatry of the priest is a serious sin in so many established churches and it feeds clericalism. *Don't* sell out to clericalism and the idolatry of the priesthood. You are gifts to the church and there's an opportunity here to think differently about ministry in ways which empowers all those involved in working in churches.

Searching for Eden: Neocolonialist Desires and Slow Violence in the Dominican Republic Tourist Industry

Soy enemiga a tiempo completo... I am the enemy of full time...

HASTIADA
del mundo patriarcal,
del optimismo,
del cielo azul,
sin nubes ¹

WEARY
of the patriarchal world,
of optimism,
of the blue sky,
cloudless ²

The Dominican Republic has long been a place of dreaming: Dominicans dreaming of life off the island and foreigners dreaming of their own bit of paradise. The Caribbean islands, in their offerings of eternal sunshine and postcard-perfect beaches, have a good the globally rich desire as well as purchase through international vacations. At the same time, Dominican dreams fade as they are subjected to the forces of the global economy that limit their ability to establish a life free of poverty, machismo, and the influence of foreign power. Tourists, particularly those from North America and Europe, continue arriving on the island with little thought as to how their brief existence on the margins of Dominican

1. Peña Solano, "Manifiesto," en *Abyecta* (Santo Domingo: Santuario, 2018), 39.

2. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

society may impact the lives of those who permanently live there. Driven by their transnational and transtemporal neocolonialist desires, foreign tourists today enact what scholar Rob Nixon labels “slow violence” in the Dominican Republic through the commodification of the land and the Afro-Caribbean female body.

Rob Nixon’s work on slow violence sets the stage for an analysis of the foreign transnational, neocolonialist desires that play out in the Dominican Republic. Nixon defines slow violence as “... a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all.”³ This violence is enacted on both the earth and towards humans: Nixon understands that the two are intertwined and interdependent, meaning that violence against the land has profound human impacts and vice versa. In the New World to be explored, the Spanish colonizers were among the first to commit slow violence as they dreamed of a static, fixed Eden.

Searching for the Bible paradise written about centuries ago, and driven by a nostalgia for a land that never truly existed, the Spanish colonizers laid claim to what is now called Hispaniola in hope that their desires could take the form of a green, fertile island.⁴ The newness of the land, in combination with the potential realization of Eden, led to what could only be described as “hyperbolic misinterpretations of tropical fecundity.”⁵ A one-to-one relationship between land and woman was assumed from the beginning as early travelers praised the fertility of the soil, the womb of the Caribbean, as “a receptive woman’s body that ‘rejoices’ at the insertion of the male seed.”⁶ Yet soon the colonizers discovered that the land was wild and began their subsequent attempts to tame it through environmental violence disguised as “improvement” and

3. Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2.

4. Ana Elena Castillo Viquez, “Desde las Crónicas de Colón hasta nuestros días: El imaginario del paraíso en el nuevo mundo,” *Revista Artes y Letras*, Káñina, xxxi, no. 2 (2007): 35–47.

5. Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey et al., eds., *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2005), 6.

6. DeLoughrey et al., *Caribbean Literature and the Environment*, 6.

permitted by their original metaphors of the feminized land.⁷ The land itself as Eden was not enough: the desire to gain riches and to *sacar provecho* in whatever way possible would make this island both the locus and telos of the colonizers' ultimate happiness.⁸ In their literal and figurative search for gold, the Europeans desecrated land and communities through settlement, human and botanic migration, and racial violence.⁹

Today, like the original European colonizers, North American and European tourists flock to the Dominican Republic in search of paradise.¹⁰ Over the past half century, the incremental onset of the increased tourist sector in the Dominican Republic, with its lack of visible violence and ambiguous boundaries as both foreigners and Dominicans travel to and within the country, has created a tourist industry that slowly but violently impacts marginalized Dominican communities.¹¹ Intentional branding of the Caribbean islands as "natural edens," combined with economic growth, and the fact that the Dominican Republic is a convenient location for travelers from the Americas and Europe, have all worked together to create a nation that claims itself to be the Caribbean leader in "sun and beach" tourism.¹² By offering this type of vacation, the Dominican Republic has been reduced to a land of beautiful beaches and blue waters for the foreigner's happy hour enjoyment.¹³

Meanwhile, and unbeknownst to many of the sun and beach tourists, countless North American and European men arrive on the island as

7. DeLoughrey, 6.

8. Castillo Viquez, "Desde las Crónicas de Colón hasta nuestros días," 42–43.

9. DeLoughrey, *Caribbean Literature and the Environment*, 1–2.

10. Although other foreign tourists come to the Dominican Republic to vacation, North American (defined as Canada and Mexico) and European tourists are the focus of this paper due to their historical maintenance of power over the Dominican Republic and because of their stark economic differences.

11. James Rice, "Slow Violence and the Challenges of Environmental Inequality," *Environmental Justice* 9, no. 6 (2016): 176–80, 177. Rice's essay on Nixon's book identifies three characteristics of slow violence: an incremental onset, ambiguous boundaries, and the lack of salience.

12. Bolívar Troncoso Morales, *Geografía del Turismo en República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Sección Nacional de República Dominicana, 2012), 23, 263.

13. Jana Evans Braziel, "'Caribbean Genesis': Language, Gardens, Worlds (Jamaica Kincaid, Derek Walcott, Édouard Glissant)," in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2005), 116.

sex tourists.¹⁴ They choose their destination within the country knowing where to best find accessible, cheap Afro-Caribbean women. Beach towns serve as “sexscapes,” a term coined by Denise Brennan, leading scholar in Dominican sex tourism, to describe such towns that are “inextricably tied up with transactional sex” through the multiple perspectives and imaginations of those spaces.¹⁵ These towns serve as both sexscapes and reflections of the greater globalized economy, defined by international travel from the developed world to those towns, the consumption of paid sex, and the staggering inequality between the sex tourist and the commercial sex worker.¹⁶

In the Dominican Republic, both sex work and solicitation in public spaces is legal, creating almost limitless locations for the purchase of sex.¹⁷ However, pimping is criminalized, giving greater autonomy to the commercial sex worker.¹⁸ Research has indicated that financial need is the driving force for women to enter the commercial sex industry, many even migrating to specific sexscapes to work in this profession, finding it preferable to other options for economic opportunity.¹⁹ Between the legalized nature of sex work, the autonomy of the commercial sex worker, and the prevalence of informal economic opportunity within the Dominican

14. For the purpose of this essay, I will focus on sex tourism that includes a financial exchange between predominately white North American and European men and Afro-Caribbean women. This is not to dismiss the complexity of the sex trade in the Dominican Republic: Dominicans travel within their own country for the purchase of sex, female tourists from developed nations travel to the island to interact with *sanky pankys*, many foreign men move for lengthy periods of time to the island and enact sexual relations with Dominicans that includes both a relationship and financial exchange, and there is an evident but understudied queer sex tourism industry. The situation is further complicated by issues such as the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the trafficking of persons within the country and across borders. Although not wanting to ignore such complexities, the choice to address only the arrival of white North American and European male sex tourists is made to maintain cohesiveness throughout the paper and is in alignment with much of the sex tourist research conducted by the academic, NGO, and government communities.

15. Denise Brennan, *What's Love Got To Do With It? Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15.

16. Brennan, *What's Love Got To Do With It?*, 16.

17. Anna Pienaar and Andee Cooper Parks, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Dominican Republic* (Washington, DC: International Justice Mission, 2015), 33.

18. Pienaar and Cooper Parks, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Dominican Republic*, 11.

19. This has been studied and asserted by scholars utilized herein: Pienaar and Cooper Parks; Cabezas; Brennan.

Republic, the elements of sex tourism in this country are inherently ambiguous. Dominican women often work within the service sector at hotels and resorts and befriend foreign men who will buy them goods rather than being paid directly for their services. At times the women will maintain long-term and long-distance relationships with foreign men; yet, even when a reciprocity of feelings is present, these relationships are defined by the combination of intimacy, pleasure, and economic support to the Dominican sex worker.²⁰

Of course, foreign sex tourists do not come to the Dominican Republic simply to purchase sex. This is, after all, a vacation, and the men can generally find access to Afro-Caribbean sex workers for comparable prices in their home countries.²¹ Brennan describes the tourist industry in the Dominican Republic as the sale of fantasies; that is, foreign men come to spend time in paradise, tropical drink in hand and sex easily attainable with anyone of their choosing.²² The desire for an environmental paradise alongside the desire for easily accessible relations shows how the conflation of the female body with the land is still present in the Dominican Republic.

What both foreign sun and beach tourists and sex tourists to the Dominican Republic have in common is their Edenic desire for beauty, familiarity, and wealth. Through these desires and the subsequent commodification and consumption of the Caribbean land and female body, foreign tourists enact their power as the literal, present day embodiment of seemingly peaceful neocolonialism. Each of these desires directly reflects the original colonizers' dreams. First, there is the quest for Edenic beauty. Just as the first Spanish colonizers were searching for an abundant land defined by flowing water and green vegetation, tourists come to the Dominican Republic to experience the unspoiled beauty of the beaches and ocean.²³ Second, sex tourists and sun and beach vacationers are

20. Amalia Cabezas, *Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 20.

21. Denise Brennan, *What's Love Got To Do With It?*, 28–29.

22. Brennan, 72, 74.

23. Castillo Viquez, "Desde las Crónicas de Colón hasta nuestros días," 40.

searching for familiarity within their perceived Eden as they stay in cushy resorts and seek out tourist services in their first language. Finally, both categories of tourists desire wealth, or rather, the desire to *feel* wealthy. Money goes further here, giving tourists the chance to not only experience and consume more of the landscape but to also feel wealthier than they would doing similar activities in their homelands.²⁴

European and North American men travel to the Dominican Republic as sex tourists specifically because of this desire for wealth. Brennan's research on the sexscape of Sosúa proves these desires: because everything is cheaper than at home, including the sale of sex, the male tourists, primarily members of the working class or lower middle class in their home countries, get to feel rich as their money goes further.²⁵ Brennan's interviews with male sex tourists indicate that most of the men are profoundly misogynistic as they come to the Dominican Republic in search of freedom from the "liberated" women in their home countries, and the ability to play at being "big men" around the Afro-Caribbean women.²⁶ In their own figurative search for gold, male sex tourists choose the Dominican Republic as the locus of their Eden because it is here that they can feel wealthy and powerful.

Yet North American and European desires for beauty, familiarity, and wealth in their perceived paradise do not simply reflect the colonialist desires of their ancestors. Rather, foreign tourists act as present day colonizers of the Dominican Republic. They too desire Eden: acting on that desire by going to the island, consuming with little thought of what impact it will have on the land or the Dominican population, and returning home having fulfilled their dreams for paradise. Just as colonialism was brought about by how those with power imagined space, the tourist industry in the Dominican Republic is driven by how those today with relative transnational power imagine the global space and go about taming

24. Beyond the literature that supports this, I have spoken with numerous individuals who chose the Dominican Republic as their vacation destination for these same reasons. While living there myself, I could travel much more frequently than in the US because of the comparatively cheap hotels, food, and touring options.

25. Brennan, *What's Love Got To Do With It?*, 37.

26. Brennan, 29, 33.

it through their purchasing practices.²⁷ These desires are both transnational and transtemporal in nature: transnational because they involve the crossing of national boundaries and reflect a global capitalist economy that destabilizes those in the majority world by providing space for foreigners to extract more benefits than locals, and transtemporal in the fact that, centuries later, the tourists are acting as the physical manifestation of the European colonizers.²⁸

These transnational and transtemporal desires, coupled with a global economic system that makes travel to the Dominican Republic relatively easy, have created a consumerist tourist industry that directly relies on the commodification of the Dominican land and the Afro-Caribbean female body. Larry Rasmussen defines commodities as “goods and services placed at our disposal without burdening us ... we know almost nothing of who produced the goods at what cost to themselves and the rest of the ecosphere: all that is hidden from view. Nor does that matter.”²⁹ Dominican land is presented as commodity to the foreign tourist who consumes sun and beach without thinking of any of the consequences of using the good nor understanding that their very existence on the island as a tourist could burden or be costly for someone else.

In the same way that the land is commodified, the commercial sex workers live as the modern day commodification of the Afro-Caribbean female body.³⁰ Given the complexities of the commercial sex trade in the Dominican Republic, it would be unfair to say that individual Afro-Caribbean sex workers are being commodified simply for sexual relations. This not only discredits the amount of autonomy the commercial sex workers have fought to achieve over the past decades, but additionally ignores the intimacy that characterizes many foreign-Dominican relationships. Amalia Cabezas uses the term “multivalent commodity” in her research of the sex tourism industry in this country.³¹ Meaning, there are

27. Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 65.

28. Brennan, *What's Love Got To Do With It?*, 31.

29. Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 269.

30. Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*, 268.

31. Cabezas, *Economies of Desire*, 119.

multiple interpretations to the commodity of the female sex worker in this context. For example, it could be argued that the woman herself is not being commodified through any single act of transactional sex, but rather that commercial sex workers in the Dominican Republic are commodified through the transnational forces that work to shape their local livelihoods and dreams, allowing space for them to be physically consumed by the foreign tourist.³² The fact that foreign male sex tourists can enjoy the commodity and leave without any strings attached to the individual or to the island only serves to emphasize this sort of systemic commodification.

Hidden from the tourist, and beyond the foreign ownership and destruction of physical places within the Dominican Republic, the foreign tourist industry serves to enact slow violence against the average Dominican. This is true for almost all Dominicans living in impoverished situations but is most relevant to the marginalized groups who rely on sun and beach tourism and sex tourism for their primary source of income. In Nixon's chapter on tourism as a form of slow violence, he emphasizes that the "labor and commodity dynamics invisibly shape the local" through the transnational economic pressures of the tourist industry in developing nations.³³ The increase in tourism over the past few decades has made the Dominican economy into one that relies on transnational desires to continue to grow and develop. It is, therefore, an economic necessity to commodify the land and the dark female body; Dominicans have nothing to offer to the tourist *but* their land and bodies.³⁴

In response to the slow violence of the tourist industry, Nixon calls for a transnational ethics of place that fights against the temporal and spatial legacies of colonialism.³⁵ In the context of the Dominican Republic,

32. Much can be said about the transnational forces that lead Dominican women into this realm of work. Although primarily economic, they are also greatly influenced by the Dominican desire to get off the island in whatever way possible.

33. Nixon, *Slow Violence*, 45.

34. This is not to equate the commercial sex industry as a form of violence against women, but rather demonstrates that impoverished Dominican women, being presented with few other options for perceived economic stability, are victims to a violent system that hardly benefits them in the ways they expect. Brennan's text expands on this and presents examples of commercial sex workers' economic dreams versus realities, specifically within the context of Sosúa.

35. Nixon, *Slow Violence*, 198, 245.

this means that it is the responsibility of all foreign travelers to recognize the roots of their desires and the ways those desires may be manifested in how they interact with the Dominican environment and its inhabitants. For Caribbean writer Jamaica Kincaid, this is a call to stay home. When discussing the Europeans who have colonized and who continue to travel to the Caribbean for vacation, she writes, “There must have been some good people among you, but they stayed home. And that is the point. That is why they are good. They stayed home.”³⁶ Maybe, for once, it is the foreign tourist’s turn to stay home and search for Eden where they are, rather than where they might be.

36. Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1988), 35.

Kayla Ford

Re-Authoring Our Stories: The Aesthetics of Narrative Pastoral Care

Believing in the connection between pastoral care and narrative, Carrie Doehring likens storytelling in pastoral care to art: Just as drama, literature, and film use images, metaphors, and symbols artistically to convey what is unique yet also

universal about life and death, storytelling in pastoral care often searches for ways to connect with God, humanity, and creation amidst pain, suffering, and the everyday trials of life.¹

Pastoral care provides the space or the canvas, so to speak, needed to give an account of oneself. In telling stories about heartbreak, grief, sickness, and the myriad of ways in which life challenges and disappoints us, we utilize similar tropes and techniques of artists and writers alike. The literal space of the canvas and the temporal space of the narrative both function as the stage in which the careseeker, as author, can sift through the landscape of action (Doehring's "images, metaphors, and symbols") to arrive at the landscape of consciousness (ways of connecting with "God, humanity, and creation").

Consider the case of Sheila, a woman in her early thirties who was life-flighted to the hospital after surviving a car accident which left the other passenger seriously injured.² Sheila was inebriated while driving and was therefore charged with driving under the influence. Sheila was then recommended to her caregiver by the hospital social worker, to whom she confessed that she has been drinking heavily for the past four months in order to cope with the depression that ensued after her partner of five years, Evan, left her after a long-term affair with one of her good friends, Alex. In her account of the story, Sheila portrays herself as the protagonist, but also as the antagonist—she blames herself for the car accident, feels shame for Evan's cheating, and feels hopeless now that she has hit "rock bottom." In her story, Evan and Alex are the antagonists, though also slightly the protagonists because they have what she wants: a happy relationship and no misdemeanors. Motifs of heartbreak, betrayal, anger, and jealousy underlie Sheila's story. Perhaps, according to Sheila, her story belongs in the genre of tragedy—she injured another person because of her recklessness, she lost a meaningful relationship with Evan,

1. Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), xv.

2. "Sheila" is a character inspired by the real-life careseekers the author encountered during her chaplain residency in New York City. Sheila's narrative is a composite of many individuals, their life stories, and lived experiences.

with one of her good friends, and maybe worst of all, she lost a sense of herself. Her story follows a plot organized across time (her devoting too much time to her career, Evan's pulling away, the affair, the break up, the drinking, and then the wreck), according to themes, and is received by an audience, her chaplain.

Sheila's experience represents just one account of "women's experiences." Though what it means to be a woman varies vastly from person to person, Sheila's account of feeling "un"-loved, -worthy, and -equal, and most empathically, feeling like her true sense of self has been lost, is intimately connected to her identity as a young, white, straight, cis-gender woman trying to feel her way in a world riddled with gendered expectations and far-reaching disparities. Storytelling is the means by which careseekers self-craft narratives or construct identity; Sheila's interpretation of her own story reveals what she values, what she intends for her life, and the sort of person she hopes to become.

Unsurprisingly, many theorists and practitioners in the field of narrative therapy draw a connection between the work of narrative therapy and of literary criticism.³ The task of the narrative caregiver becomes like that of a literary critic in that she evaluates narratives and guides the storytelling efforts of the careseeker. The primary goal of the caregiver is to guide the careseeker in re-authoring a "thicker and richer" alternative story that more fully captures her values, skills, and hopes, and leaves her with an empowered sense of self and a reclaimed identity. The metaphor between caregiver and critic is not exact, of course. The caregiver has concerns beyond merely critiquing the existing narrative because she is interested in helping the careseeker re-author an original narrative. Regardless of its exactness, the metaphor between narrative therapy and literary criticism allows the discussion to consult new fields. It is because of this similitude that knowledge of aesthetic theory can inform narrative pastoral care.

More like a "delicate art" than a hard science, pastoral care requires deep listening, sensitivity in handling delicate situations, and an intuitive

3. Stephen Madigan, *Narrative Therapy* 2d ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2019), 110.

knowing that transcends rational understanding. Jerome Bruner draws a distinction between the logico-scientific and narrative modes of thought, the latter of which views experiences as particular, varied yet connected, and in subjunctive terms.⁴ Pastoral care, whether narrative or not, more closely resembles Bruner's narrative mode, opening it up to aesthetic evaluation. Consideration of aesthetic theory can help connect careseekers with the types of qualities, values, and expressions of self they deem beautiful, worthy of attention, and fit for re-creation. Bruner tells us that "the great writer's gift to a reader is to make him a better writer."⁵ When we read good stories, we write good stories. When we see beautiful art, we create beautiful art. What is beautiful has a magnetic, invitational quality that greets us and asks us to dwell in its wonder, to bask in the immortal sphere if only just for a short while. Practically, the narrative nature of pastoral care invites us into an encounter with a story that ultimately empowers us to better tell, and in turn live, our own.

Augustine's view of art as "a plank amidst the waves of the sea" further reveals the way in which art can breathe new life into us.⁶ Art, for Augustine, is a vessel whereby God offers life and salvation. Human art-making, including narrative self-crafting, is holy work. Alternative stories in narrative care can be seen as "planks" that rescue people from drowning in cultural narratives which oppress, limit, or restrict them.⁷ Alternative stories can transform the pain and sorrow of dominant, problem-saturated stories into hope-filled, resilient, and life-giving ones. Additionally, narrative therapy views life as multistoried, which means there is a certain indeterminacy or ambiguity that allows for many interpretations across a "spectrum of actualizations."⁸ The stories we tell about ourselves are full of gaps, thereby providing openings for new stories to be

4. Michael White and David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: w.w. Norton & Company, 1990), 77–78, drawing on the work of Jerome Bruner in *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

5. Michael White, *Maps of Narrative Practice* (London: w.w. Norton & Company, 2007), 76, which quotes Bruner's *Actual Minds*, 5.

6. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, eds., "Selections from De Musica," in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 196.

7. Madigan, *Narrative Therapy*, 35.

8. White and Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*, 13.

told, even about the very same events. This sense of indeterminacy is what allows for the creation of alternative narratives.

Similarly, beauty to Elaine Scarry is that which incites replication, is invitational, and is sacred and unprecedented.⁹ What is beautiful inspires us to share and reproduce it—if our alternative stories are anchored in community and connection, as narrative care intends them to be, they will become contagious. Just as beauty “lifts us away from a neutral background as though coming forward to welcome you,”¹⁰ so too the making of alternative stories welcomes us to dwell with a new understanding of ourselves, and in turn, of others. Alternative stories foster relationships because they are hopeful and grounded in love; they are not devoid of sufferings, rather they are strengthened because of them. For Scarry, beauty is bound up in the realm of the immortal because it draws us out of ourselves and invites us to glimpse into what is true. Just like Scarry’s search for the unprecedented, narrative care reconnects careseekers with the parts of their history that are true yet buried or denied. Remembering that which has been forgotten resurrects an unprecedented and renewed sense of self.

Guided by the principles outlined in Doehring, Bruner, Augustine and Scarry’s work, the practice of narrative care should allow for conversations to begin with the act of externalizing the problem in a way that separates it from the person’s identity.¹¹ Then it should continue to explore the moments, memories, events, relationships, feelings that are associated with the problem, sometimes re-authoring conversations in the process or reinforcing alternative stories by incorporating outsider witnesses. In Sheila’s case, she names her problem *Worthlessness* because she doubts whether her life is worth anything after everything she has endured. In light of this problem, the caregiver should explore how the person relates to the problem: the relationship between Sheila and *Worthlessness* is like a pesky little sibling that follows her wherever she goes and does not leave her alone. Thus, the focus of conversation is on her

9. Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). Scarry borrows from Augustine and expands upon his theory in her series of literary essays.

10. Scarry, *On Beauty*, 25.

11. White, *Maps of Narrative Practice*, 9.

relationship to *Worthlessness*, and the quest becomes about how she can break free from *Worthlessness*.

The second phase of the conversation includes mapping the problem's influence. That is, discovering how the problem has manifested itself in the person's life, tracing its history, and evaluating its impact. At this point, the dominant problem-saturated story will become more apparent. "Thin conclusions," or conclusions about one's identity that are flat, one-dimensional, and do not fully reflect complexities and contradictions of life, might also come to light at this point. Perhaps in Sheila's story, the thin conclusion is that she is a failure and embarrassment. The dominant storyline might be that she feels worthless after being cheated on, being duped by her friend, Alex, having injured someone in the accident, and getting charged with a DUI. She feels like she can never recover from all the ways her life has "tanked." Perhaps she even looks back on how her relationship with *Worthlessness* started at a young age. She recalls two memories when she felt *Worthlessness*' presence: when her mother would make comments about her weight in high school, and when she was sexually assaulted by a teacher in college. When invited to evaluate how she feels about *Worthlessness*' impact on her life, Sheila breaks down in tears, regretful of how long she has struggled with it, and desperate to re-take her life back from it.

Once the dominant story has been identified and evaluated, the project then becomes reconstructive. The third phase involves identifying "unique outcomes" or "sparkling moments."¹² Unique outcomes refer to memories, experiences, events, relationships, feelings, statements, qualities, desires, abilities, that defy or complicate the dominant storyline.¹³ They showcase the person's abilities, skills, and values and reflect a time when the problem had less power over the person. Sheila recalls the following unique outcomes to her caregiver: the first time she met her best friend in college, the job promotion she received a year ago, and the moment she reported her abusive teacher in college. These unique outcomes complicate

12. Alice Morgan, *What Is Narrative Therapy?* (Adelaide: Dulwich Center Publications, 2000), 52.

13. Morgan, *What Is Narrative Therapy?*, 52.

the thin conclusion she had reached earlier by bringing to light a richer and fuller picture of her skills and abilities.

The fourth phase of the conversation includes the re-authoring of an alternative story. This phase utilizes unique outcomes as that which “open an avenue” towards a new future.¹⁴ As Michael White notes, “there is a significant gap between the naming of unique outcomes and ... figuring out what these unique outcomes reflect in terms of what people intend for their lives and what they give value to.”¹⁵ The job of the caregiver is to help “bridge the gap” between the two.¹⁶ By mapping the influence of unique outcomes and evaluating their influence, an alternative story with a “thicker and richer” conclusion might be reached. In Sheila’s case, her unique outcomes reveal that she is capable of healthy relationships with people, that she is a dedicated worker when she puts her mind to it, and that she values justice in the case of her teacher. She reflects more on her relationship with her family, and she comes to understand that her mother is caught in the same vicious cycle she is: lashing out and “injuring” others because of feelings of worthlessness. At the time, she did not know of any coping mechanism better than drinking because that is what she had observed her mother doing while growing up. She also delved deeper into her relationship with Evan, understanding it was not her worthlessness that caused him to cheat, but that he had his own problems to work through. Sheila evaluates the influence of the unique outcomes on her life as good, and she says she wants to continue to move in this direction.

A “thicker and richer” conclusion to her story reveals that she had been doing the best she could, and that her mother and Evan were both victims in their own way. This portion of the process anchors the unique outcomes in real time and thus strengthens their influence.¹⁷ With time and patience, Sheila can start to have compassion for herself and can begin to live into this new narrative. It is important to note that the goal of the caregiver is to support the creation of many-storied lives. The

14. White, *Maps of Narrative Practice*, 221.

15. White, 233.

16. White, 233.

17. White, 220.

opposite of a thin conclusion is not another thin conclusion. The point is to recognize the complexity and ambiguity inherent in our lives, and to empower careseekers to compose new stories that are rooted in historical events and events that project into the future.

The final phase of narrative care practice includes reinforcing the alternative narrative through the incorporation of outside witnesses. This phase is optional, but it can encourage support and accountability from the person's community by inviting outsider witnesses and leading conversations between the caregiver, careseeker, and a friend or relative of the careseeker. The outsider witness then reflects how she sees the alternative story at work in the person's life and commits to supporting it. These practices are designed to anchor alternative narratives and new identities in the careseeker's existing social network.

Sheila's life narrative illustrates how aesthetic theories can guide narrative caregivers as the "literary critics" that they are, assisting careseekers in co-authoring alternative narratives and self-crafting identities. Caregivers are given the task of "making a way out of no way"—that is, their work is one of improvisation as they help connect careseekers with new paths forward where there were previously none.¹⁸ Like Augustine's plank and Scarry's vision of beauty, "thicker and richer" conclusions draw us into communion with God, as we reconnect with an unprecedented sense of self, to that which has been silenced deep within us. Narrative pastoral care asks us to choose what to remember and what to forget about ourselves; it knows that beauty forges new life and lifts us from the shadows of the forgotten. Though wrought with trials and hardships, there is a certain and consistent beauty contained within Sheila's story: a woman searching for identity, perseverance through life's twists and turns, and what it means to rise again.

18. Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 12.

We Love, Hate, and Love to Hate Cheerleaders: Biblical Womanhood from the Sidelines

When I was in high school, I joined the cheerleading team. Upon hearing this, many people imagine that I must have been popular with straight, blonde hair, perfectly winged eyeliner, a football-player boyfriend, and a coveted table at lunch. This vision makes people laugh, since none of it matches the person who I present as today: a master's degree student studying religion, ecology, and gender. Cheerleaders are not often feminists in the popular imagination, nor do they willingly tromp through the mud in search of rare plants.

In reality, in high school I was neither popular nor unpopular; instead I was a well-known nerd who was largely unathletic. Most of the cheerleaders at my small private Christian high school were like me; we did not make the volleyball team but still wanted to be included in some sort of team. Cheerleading gave us community, a group of girls to which we could belong, and a task at school sporting events so that we did not feel awkward sitting on the bench.

As a fifteen-year-old girl, there was something to be said for getting up in front of a large crowd in a miniskirt and imploring others to join you in support of the boys' basketball team. I was young and awkward, but to be a cheerleader one has to at least perform a dose of confidence, and I learned how to project my small voice to the back of the bleachers. Usually the crowd either ignored us or jeeringly joined in.

When I was a cheerleader, I found that while we were praised for presenting ourselves as desirable, we were never celebrated for our own competitions (except, perhaps, by our parents) and were constantly defending our sport. We were ridiculed for being

too "girly" and were not taken seriously as the athletes we aspired to be. This was not the case only for my cheerleading team; even teams like the All-Star Great White Sharks, a three-time world champion competitive cheer team, claim to have a hard time being respected as athletes. Cheerleaders really cannot catch a break, and yet they continue to choose their sport and put on the costume.

Being a "biblical woman" is very much akin to being a cheerleader: there is no way to do it that pleases everyone, and it is incredibly performative. Of course, no one in the Bible dressed up in miniskirts and white sneakers (and most likely did not wield pom-poms), but in the Bible the male gaze highly polices public presentations of women. Women in the Hebrew Bible are often supporting characters, using their limited agency in ways that ultimately uphold the patriarchy.

PROVERBS

Proverbs is sometimes touted as a handbook for biblical womanhood. And yet, it uses women as a plot device; women are on the sidelines of this book, cheering on the predominantly male actors. The book, while today weaponized against young women, was actually not written with a feminine audience in mind. It is full of instructions, but these instructions were written for the classic biblical audience: young men. There are several women mentioned throughout the Book of Proverbs. These women can be categorized as follows: (1) the dangerous, foreign woman (Prov 7), (2) the wise, feminine type (Prov 8) (i.e., *Sophia*/Wisdom),

and (3) the Prov 31 woman (clothed in strength and dignity, laughing, etc.).

Many of the descriptions of these women suggest that they are not real women but rather caricatures. In Prov 7:12, for example, the foreign woman “lurks at every corner,” something real women do not do. “Lurking everywhere” suggests a category of women, not a single woman: I have only been able to lurk in one place at a time, in my experience. If these women are not real, what is going on here?

Remember, Proverbs is a book of instructions for young men. These women are metaphors for desire, helping to illustrate the challenge of desiring correctly and making good choices. Just as it is hard to choose between women and select a God-fearing wife, so is every choice difficult and confusing. The women of Proverbs are constructs: imaginary cheerleaders encouraging men to make the best possible choices.

Like the women in Proverbs, real-life cheerleaders are often called on to fulfill certain stereotypes of what it means to be a woman. They are public figures known for kindness, beauty, and hard work, with the primary goal of encouraging others to win by making good choices. In a reflection of International Women’s Day, Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader Miranda states:

Every day, I am fortunate to be surrounded by women who exude the characteristics of an empowered woman. . . . Embarking on the journey of becoming a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader takes a woman who dares to dream big. A woman who isn’t deterred by those who don’t believe in her. A woman who relies on hard work and dedication. A woman who strives to better herself every day, knowing that there is no such thing as perfection. Each woman that I am lucky enough to call my teammate is an inspiration to other women who also dare to dream big.¹

Here, Miranda’s words about being an “empowered woman” and a “Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader”

mirror the description of the ideal biblical woman in Proverbs. Her description of a cheerleader as “a woman who isn’t deterred by those who don’t believe in her” and “a woman who relies on hard work and dedication” sound an awful lot like the Prov 31 woman, for whom:

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her:

“Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all” (Prov 31:25–31).

TAMAR

The 2018 documentary *Daughters of the Sexual Revolution: The Untold Story of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders* detailed the testimony of former Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders who made waves in the 1970s by presenting themselves as overtly sexualized: they wore short shorts and bikini-like tops and leaned fully into the vision of the male gaze, as was expected of many cheerleaders in that era. The Cowboys cheerleaders were criticized on all sides, by feminists for catering to the male gaze and by conservatives for being too promiscuous. “We were women doing what we wanted to do” said one former cheerleader in an interview. “If you really want women to do what they want to do, then you cannot judge them once they choose.”

Like these women, other biblical women take their identities into their own hands, working to uphold the patriarchy as they make choices within their own limited agency. A classic example of this is Tamar from Gen 38. This story begins with a narrative of the patriarchal family formation and a description of Judah’s family. He marries and has three sons.

1. Miranda Buechel, “DCC [Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader] Miranda Reflects on International Women’s Day,” n.p. [cited September 2020]. Online: <https://www.dallascowboys.com/news/miranda-reflects-on-international-women-s-day-as-a-dcc>.

He secures a good wife for his first son Er—Tamar. But this son dies before he and Tamar are able to have a child, which would secure the stability of the family, protection for Tamar, and the legacy of Er. As is traditional, Judah tells his second son, Onan, to marry Tamar. Society dictates that Onan impregnate Tamar and provide an heir, thus extending the bloodline of Er and providing security for Tamar. But before Tamar and Onan can have a child, Onan dies. Luckily, Judah had a third son, Shelah, who is Tamar's final chance to have a child and social security. However, Judah tells Tamar to go home to her father's house and wait for his son to grow up before their marriage. This seems reasonable, but by the time Shelah grows up, Judah has forgotten Tamar.

Without a child or a husband, Tamar has no security. A widow in this culture was without any social power or resources. Women could not own property and were at the mercies of the men in their lives. So Tamar needed a plan. When she hears that her father-in-law, Judah, will be traveling nearby, Tamar dresses up in her most provocative outfit. She sits by the city gates, and when Judah comes by, he hires her as a prostitute, not recognizing her as his daughter-in-law. "What will you give me, that you may come into me?" Tamar asks. He answers, "I will send you a kid from the flock." And she says, "Only if you give me a pledge, until you send it." When he asks, "What pledge shall I give you?" she replies, "Your signet and your cord, and the staff that is in your hand" (Gen 28:17–18).

Tamar ends up pregnant after this exchange. When Judah goes to repay who he thinks is a prostitute, he cannot find her, because Tamar has put her normal clothes back on. He begins to ask around but eventually gives up, embarrassed. When he eventually finds out that Tamar was pregnant, he is angry and calls for her to be burned for "whoredom." However, Tamar sends him his cord and staff, saying, "It was the owner of these who made me pregnant." Judah is trapped and acknowledges her claim, saying, "She is more in the right than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah" (Gen 38:26). Tamar gives birth to twins, and thus the line of Er and of Judah is maintained.

In this story, Tamar uses her limited agency to both save herself and maintain the patriarchal bloodline, thus upholding existing power structures. Tamar acts from the sidelines, working to secure her own safety and respect; however, she does so in ways that uphold the very structures that limit her. She does not have much choice—her body is only valuable in the service of maintaining the bloodline of male heirs. Her actions maintain the same patriarchal systems that make it impossible for her to have any sort of social capital. Tamar is complicit in her own limitation, yet can we blame her?

Cheerleaders, and most adolescent girls, face similar challenges. They act in ways that will earn them social capital, but their options are limited. Being on the cheer team allows young people to perform femininity, to gain confidence, and to be part of a team. But being a cheerleader sets rigid expectations for dress and behavior, solidifies the options available to a young person, and subjects them to the male gaze.

CHEERLEADERS AND BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

Like the female characters in the Bible, teenage girls today—cheerleaders or not—are forced to make decisions about how to live their life within an often-restricted set of expectations. And while Christian culture might try to argue that there is only one way of being a "biblical woman," the stories of women in the Hebrew Bible show that biblical womanhood is not simply following the 10 Commandments or seeking to live as the Prov 31 woman, following a laundry list of attributes that will win God's favor. There are many different presentations of womanhood in the Hebrew Bible and extracting any one model from the text is impossible.

Being a former cheerleader offers me perspective into different paths towards womanhood. I recognize that women and girls make choices all the time and are often limited in their decision-making. I also understand the immense scrutiny that girls face when they choose to perform femininity.

Let the cheerleaders cartwheel. Let them have a team where they otherwise would not. Recognize that womanhood is broad, and performing femininity is not the enemy. Patriarchal expectations ask girls to perform womanhood both in the Hebrew

scriptures and today. Sometimes it is harmful, sometimes it allows for survival. Instead of critiquing performances of femininity, let us examine what led a young woman to make those choices in the first place.

Jasmin Bostock

'oli

“*Pa’a i ka leo!*” my kumuhula calls out. I am standing barefoot in my classroom, which is littered with hula instruments—drums, *ipu*, *’uli’uli*, and *pu’ili*. Everything makes this a space set apart, a space that celebrates a different kind of beauty. The roundness of the *ipu* and the swishing of our skirts, which buck against a standard of thinness. Here we are invited to be round and curvy and take up space. The colors of the *’uli’uli*, red and yellow feathers standing proudly, give us permission to stand out and to be loud. Here there is no hiding behind neutral color palettes. We are learning a new *’oli*, a new chant—one that claims our space and welcomes others into it.

In the practice of hula, chant is used for many things. It is an instrument to which we dance; it is a way to invoke the ancestors who watch over us into the space; it is a way to center ourselves and connect with our hula sisters; and it is a way to claim our voice and our power. There are many different types of chants—from those asking for permission to enter, to those introducing yourself, to those dedicated to specific deities or monarchs. They all center from a different place in the body.

In Hawaiian thought, our bodies have three points of connection: three *piko*. The tops of our heads connect us to the realm of the gods and to the wisdom that comes before. When babies are born

and their skulls are not yet fused, we understand their connection to the past as still being open; the ones who have most recently arrived into the world are also the ones who are closest to those who are no longer with us. Our second *piko* is our belly button. This *piko* first brought us food, breath, blood, and life. It connected us to our mothers and to the generation in which we live. It connects us to the world as it exists now. Our third *piko*, our genitals, connect us to the next generation and those who will come after us.

When we *’oli*, or chant, the chants are centered at different places of connection—different parts of our bodies and different centers of gravity. When my *kumu* calls “*pa’a i ka leo*,” he is calling for us to firm up our voices. We are learning an *’oli kahea*: an entrance chant. It is a traditional part of protocol, particularly before entering a *halau*, or place of learning. The students stand outside of the doors and chant to their teacher. These chants are written in many different ways and with different words, but their essential messages are the same. They give a version of, “Here I am! This is who I am. I am ready to learn. Can I come in?”

In response the *kumu*, the teacher, chants back a chant of welcome. Again, there are many different compositions, but the essential message is the same: “Come in! This is a place of learning, and you are welcome here.”

There is a responsibility in asking to enter a place like that and in proclaiming yourself ready to learn. There is a strength in using your voice to proclaim who you are and to declare your worthiness to take up space—asking for permission to be somewhere but with the full expectation that permission will be granted.

Too often in the Western world, there is a meekness in asking. Women have to ask, “May I?” and the expectation is that we will be demure and

not take up too much time, space, energy, or resources. I love the way that hula is teaching me something new: to claim my space and my voice. In hula, when we ask for permission we do so with strength and confidence. We do so with firmness in our voice and centered in our *piko*, in our points of connection.

Hula teaches me to make firm my voice. “*Pa’a i ka leo*,” my *kumuhula* calls. My hula sisters and I inhale, center in our *piko*, and begin.

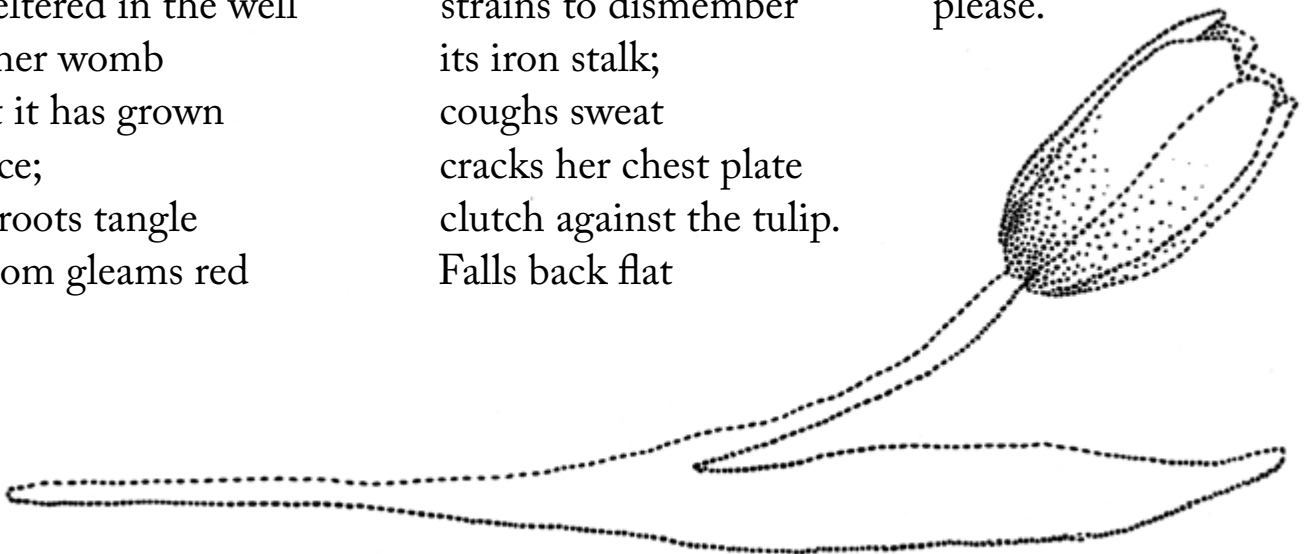
Laura Traverse

Prayer

The flower
must go.
she kneels
whispers
against a tulip
her rib cage grew
months ago. Its seed
sweltered in the well
of her womb
but it has grown
since;
its roots tangle
bloom gleams red

behind her tied-up bones.
She smells the rib
cage clad
in musk.
Reek that haunts
must go.
She stands
strains to dismember
its iron stalk;
coughs sweat
cracks her chest plate
clutch against the tulip.
Falls back flat

flings arms wide
tired, Lord, she is
tired: if the flower
won't leave
Lord,
take it
take it
please.

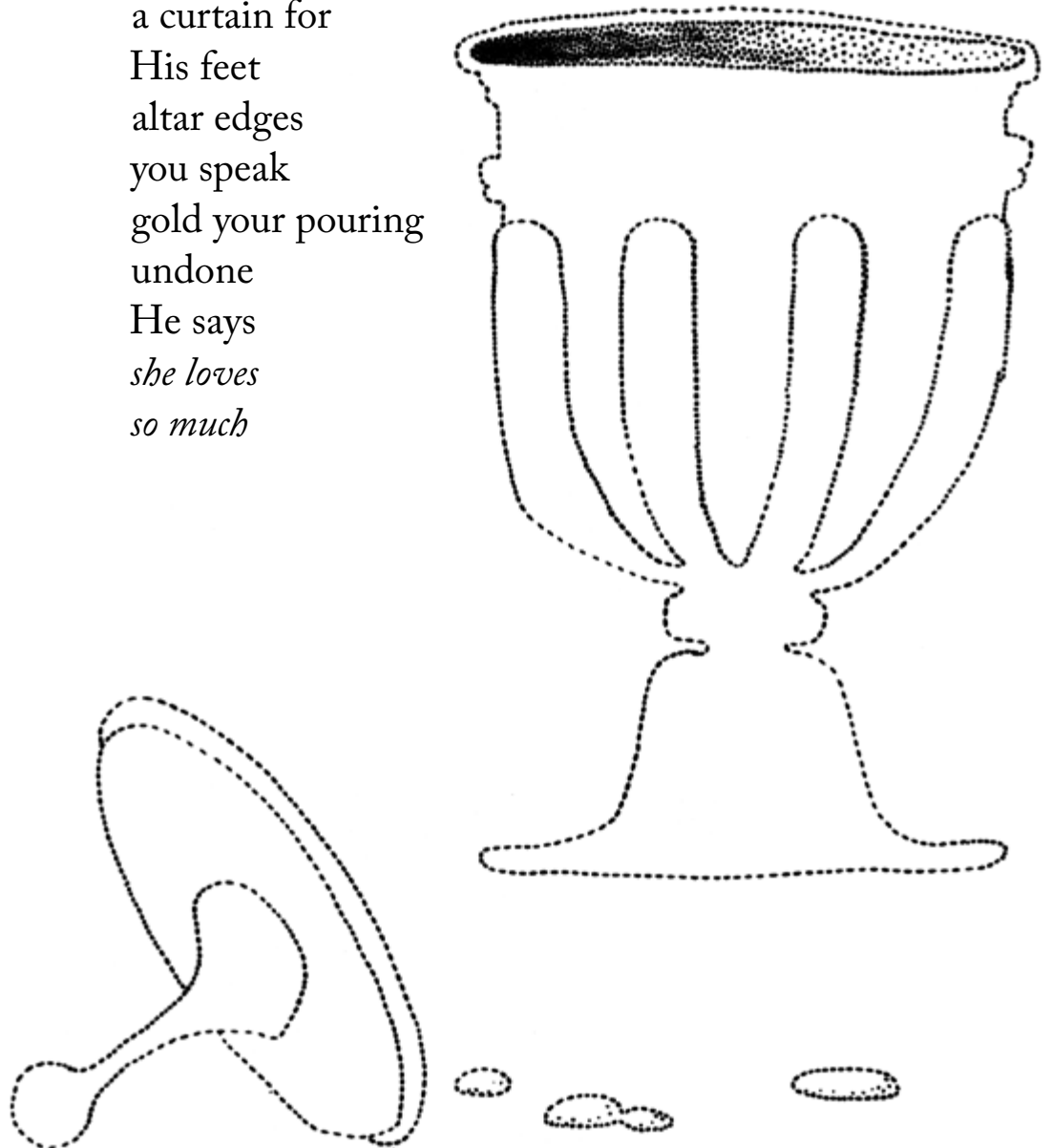


Woman in Luke

And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment...

His feet
undo you:
toes of road
dung callous
stink under
the table
you want
to touch
Him.
you cannot
explain this.
naked in
his eyes
but you
are safe
this, the first
time He sees
your swollen
soul purple
& heavy
like the alabaster
jar you tip
& weep,
soak his heel
chafe, your tears
ribbon oil

on dust
your hair
a curtain for
His feet
altar edges
you speak
gold your pouring
undone
He says
*she loves
so much*



“When Silence is No Longer a Virtue”: Mormon Women and the Vote¹

The rain fell steadily as I drove through the mountain pass away from my Utah home—the new haven my people created in the shelter of towering mountains and lofty ideals of justice. I took the rain for the presence of God, a confirmation of Divine approval of my chosen adventure: Yale Divinity School. Having learned since my early childhood in the Mormon Church that I was the recipient of my own personal revelation and that I must seek out God’s will and follow it, I have always made my own choices.²

To me, Missouri will always evoke remembrance of the Extermination Order, state-sanctioned genocide.³ As I drove across the plains over which my people had fled and passed through Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and New York, I felt the familiar unease emerge out of the collective memories of my people.

CONFUSING QUESTIONS AND SILENCE

“Do ‘they’ know you’re here?” “Did ‘they’ let you come?” “Are you going to be okay?” Confusing questions plagued me as I began walking the New England halls of Yale Divinity School. I could make neither head nor tail of them. It was precisely my Mormonism that inspired my choice to come here; I saw it as part of my sacred duty to live out the fullness of my creation. So why would I need permission or approval to attend school? And who is this “they”? I was part of “they.” I thought the questions severed me from my people as if I were not one of “them.” The questions assumed

I was someone in need of aid, in need of rescue, in need of free will. It was as if a Mormon woman endeavoring to right injustice was an anomaly.

An authority figure offered to put me in touch with someone who had successfully left Mormonism. It was jarring and unsettling. I responded politely, trying not to make the person feel uncomfortable. In fact, that has been a pretty accurate description of much of my time here: try not to make other people feel uncomfortable. Do not shake people from their stereotypes. Do not disturb their worldview, even if that means acting as if my people are guilty of accusations fundamentally incompatible with both Mormon theology and practice.

I was rendered silent by accusations of my voicelessness and placed into a murky, foreign history devoid of Mormon women who made willful, intentional choices. But it was not Mormonism from which I needed to escape; it was the skewed world in which I now resided. Partially in desperation and partially in preparation for the approaching 150th anniversary of Utah women gaining the right to vote, I embarked on a pilgrimage into history, seeking out supposedly voiceless women.

* * *

By January 3, 1870, news of the Cullum Bill, a bill calculated to deprive Mormon polygamists of political rights, had reached Utah and evoked widespread indignation.⁴ Mormons had been persecuted,

1. Jill Mulvay Derr et al., eds., *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History* (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2016), 3.13.
2. Mormon is an epithet, often used derogatorily, for a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint. I choose to use it as a way of reclaiming power over this appellation, which has been commandeered from our scripture and weaponized against us. However, many members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints prefer the longer title.
3. Missouri Executive Order 44 was signed October 27, 1838, declaring, “the Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state.” It was revoked June 25, 1976.
4. Derr et al., *The First Fifty Years*, 3.12. Only a small portion of the Mormon Church practiced polygamy between the early 1840s and the early twentieth century.

slandered, murdered, and silenced and had even tried unsuccessfully to escape the United States in order to finally gain political and religious freedom, much of which occurred prior to the church beginning to practice polygamy. The Cullum Bill, under the guise of protecting female church members, was merely the latest in the anti-Mormon crusade, and it was met with horror by the already-traumatized people.⁵

AN ORGANIZED UPRISING INTO ENFRANCHISEMENT

Mormon women had, by their own estimation, remained silent to the anti-Mormon slander that painted them as choiceless victims of a patriarchal church. "But," they rallied, "there is a point at which silence is no longer a virtue ... We have arrived at this point. Shall we—ought we to be silent when every right of citizenship—every vestige of civil and religious liberty is at stake?"⁶ No, they would not. They hosted "indignation meetings," which were attended by over 25,000 Mormon women over the course of three months.⁷ They responded to the claims of Mormon women being oppressed and voiceless: "Our enemies pretend that in Utah, woman is held in a state of vassalage—that she does not act from choice, but by coercion—that we would even prefer life elsewhere, were it possible for us to make our escape. What nonsense!"⁸ Mormon women further challenged:

That if those sensitive persons[,] who profess to pity the condition of the women of Utah, will secure unto us those rights and privileges

which ... the Constitution of the United States guarantees to every loyal citizen, [then] they may reserve their sympathy for objects more appreciative.⁹

To show their support, the Mormon-dominated Utah territorial government unanimously and forthrightly voted into law female enfranchisement. On February 14, 1870, Utah women became the first women to vote under equal suffrage laws in the United States of America.¹⁰

"THE RIGHTS OF THE WOMEN OF ZION AND THE RIGHTS OF THE WOMEN OF ALL NATIONS"¹¹

With the eyes of the nation upon them, Mormon women voted against anti-polygamy legislation. Yet the public gave the women's choices no credence, refusing to believe that Mormon women were acting in free will.¹² Anti-polygamy and women's suffrage organizations, Eastern churches, and politicians began campaigning for Mormon women to be stripped of the franchise.¹³

In response, Mormon women began the *Woman's Exponent*, a magazine of Mormon women's voices. Its motto was "The Rights of the Women of Zion, and the Rights of the Women of all Nations."¹⁴ They traveled the nation campaigning to uphold their rights and to secure female suffrage nationwide.¹⁵ With undaunted faith, Mormon women insisted that their voices be heard, considering it a sacred religious duty to use those voices to fight for the rights of

5. The Cullum Bill did not become law.

6. Derr, *The First Fifty Years*, 3.13.

7. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 382.

8. Derr, *The First Fifty Years*, 3.13.

9. Derr, 3.13.

10. Rebecca Clark, "First Woman to Vote in Utah and the Modern Nation," n.p. [cited February 2020]. Online: <https://www.utahwomenshistory.org/bios/seraph-young/>. This law was not exclusive of race, only citizenship. As such, black women could legally vote in the Utah territory beginning in 1870. Yet due to Utah's lack of voting records during this time, there is no conclusive evidence that black women voted until 1896. For more information on early black female voters, see Katherine Kitterman, "Black Women's Political Participation in Early Utah," n.p. [cited September 2020]. Online: <https://www.utahwomenshistory.org/2020/01/black-womens-political-participation-in-early-utah/>.

11. Katherine Kitterman and Rebekah Ryan Clark, *Thinking Women: A Timeline of Suffrage in Utah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2019), 42, 90. Motto of the *Woman's Exponent* from 1879 to 1897.

12. Kitterman and Clark, *Thinking Women*, 23.

13. For example, the Methodist Episcopal Woman's Home Mission Society drew up a petition to disenfranchise Utah women, which was signed by 250,000 women in 1884. See Kitterman and Clark, *Thinking Women*, 25, 29–31, 33, 38, 42, 46–47, 50, and 51.

14. Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, xiii.

15. Kitterman and Clark, *Thinking Women*, 36–37, 41, 43, and 48. See also "Frequently Asked Questions," n.p. [February 2020]. Online: <https://www.utahwomenshistory.org/explore-the-history/faq/>.

all women.¹⁶ They campaigned, drew up petitions, and sent their pleas to Washington to preserve their voting rights.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the majority of Mormon men in positions of political and ecclesiastical power endorsed women as political actors. They invited women to serve on the 1872 Utah constitutional convention and the Utah territorial legislature subsequently voted for women to be able to run for public office in 1880.¹⁸

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
RETALIATES

Tragically, the enfranchisement of Mormon women would be short lived; in 1886, they were informed of the looming Edmonds-Tucker Act.¹⁹ This Act would disenfranchise all women living in the Utah territory regardless of their religious affiliation or marital status.²⁰ Under this impending horror, Mormon women once more met in indignation and decisively published a ninety-one page pamphlet of the proceedings, including their defense to allegations that their voting choices were being controlled by men, an invitation to investigate voting within the territory, and an examination of their experiences consequent of the federal government's interference.²¹

The pamphlet was delivered by hand to President Cleveland and read before Congress, to no avail. The Edmonds-Tucker Act became law.²² Among other fundamental rights, Utah women lost the right to vote.²³ But Mormon women had memorialized their plea: "If it does no other good," they said, "it will be a matter of history, to be handed down to our posterity, that their mothers rose up in the dignity of their womanhood to protest against insults and indignities heaped upon them ... and will have to be met by those persons who are waging

this bitter crusade against us."²⁴ The women of Utah would wait almost ten years to be once more enfranchised when Utah entered the nation with guaranteed female suffrage.

REMEMBERING THE WOMEN WHO "ROSE UP
IN THE DIGNITY OF THEIR WOMANHOOD"

This year, as we continue to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment and the 150th anniversary of the first time women voted in the United States under equal suffrage laws, it is my hope that we can acknowledge and honor Mormon women and their role in this pivotal matter of history: Mormon women not only paved the way for all women in the United States to be guaranteed the right to vote, but also paved the way for women to vote in any way they wish and without fear of the federal government revoking that right in retaliation. Similarly, I hope that we might be able to finally address the long history of silencing and erasing Mormon women identities with accusations of oppression and voicelessness.

My pilgrimage into history provided me with the comfort and voices I sought, including my own. My foremothers claimed that "women's faith can accomplish wonders," and they showed me that this is indeed true. Their legacy inspires me to boldness as I too struggle in a world that claims being a Mormon woman makes me voiceless and unable to support my church while being empowered. As I also fight injustice, I aspire to emulate my foremothers' perseverance when the world refuses to hear me because my experience in the Mormon Church is not what others believe it to be. My polygamous foremothers are those who teach me that I have a voice, not because they did not, but rather because they did.

16. At what is known as the Great Indignation Meeting, they claimed that the "mission of the Latter-day Saints is to reform abuses which have for ages corrupted the world, and to establish an era of peace and righteousness." See Derr, *The First Fifty Years*, 3.13, 4.24.

17. Kitterman and Clark, *Thinking Women*, 33, 36, 37, 39, and 41.

18. Although the 1872 constitution was the first in the Union to incorporate female voices, the federal government rejected it. See Ulrich, *A House Full of Females*, 384–85. The 1880 bill passed by the Utah territorial legislation allowing women to run for and hold political offices was treated with "silent contempt" by the federally appointed Governor Eli Houston Murray who refused to sign it into law. See Emmeline B. Wells, "Legislative Proceedings," in *Woman's Exponent* 8, no. 19 (1880): 145.

19. Derr, *The First Fifty Years*, 4.15.

20. Kitterman and Clark, *Thinking Women*, 45.

21. Derr, *The First Fifty Years*, 4.15.

22. Derr, 4.15.

23. Derr, 4.15.

24. Derr, 4.15.

What Ever Happened to Lilith?¹

From the archive, VOICE, spring 1997

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; ... in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:26–27).

Painful awareness. Slow opening of my eyes. The light, the brightness, so sharp. What is happening? Where am I? Who is that speaking? Such a comforting voice, so soft, so loving. "Rise to your feet" the voice urges, "behold the beautiful creation which I entrust to you."

I slowly rise to my feet. Next to me, so beautiful, so scared ... Adam. Again, the voice, but not from this being next to me but from the air around me, no source. "Lilith," it speaks to me.

"YHWH," I reply. The awareness of my origin floods me. I know that name, that force, it is the place, the space from which I come.

I turn to look around me. So beautiful. This is the garden, Eden. Adam takes my hand and together we begin to wander.

I look next to me, the bewilderment on the face of Adam mirrors my own. I reach out to touch him. Then I know it is okay.

Life takes shape, the beauty of the world around me, this garden. These days are peaceful and happy. God is there spending much time with Adam. I am free, I roam as I please.

The world outside the garden is exciting and dark. Night is there, with so many new and different creatures each day. When I lay down to sleep, the call of the owls soothes me, yet beckons me.

Things are changing. My body is becoming slow and sluggish. A swelling has begun in my stomach,

so soft and strange. Adam is afraid, I can sense it. He is distant and I am afraid. More and more time he is spending alone under the most beautiful tree in the garden, talking with YHWH. I can no longer lay with him, my body is so uncomfortable. More and more of my time is spent outside the garden. As many wonderful things to be explored.

Then the movements began and from my body came a beautiful child, a small woman, like myself. I lift her to show to Adam. He turns and runs. In anger? In fear? I too am fearful, fearful for my child. I take her and fly off to the woods.

Bewildered, confused. I sense the bad feelings he has for me. Alone, I sit under a tree. "YHWH? ... YHWH?" No response. Three beings before me. Without speaking, I know they have been sent to watch over my child. I must return. For a while I must remain.

The next night I return. Silence. "Adam?" So alone here. Then I see him watching me. He is up in the tree, the tree of Good and Evil. Slowly, he comes down. Approaching me. I shiver, afraid. "Why?" he questions me. "How?" he questions me. "I do not know," I reply. "I WANT TO KNOW," he demands. "Reveal to me now. How did you make that happen?" I stand silent. I do not know.

Adam approaches me. He gently pushes me to the ground. Again, the warmth, the desire floods me. I sigh with relief. Have I been forgiven?

The time passes and I yearn for my daughter, for the safety and comfort of the woods. Again I start to swell. Adam withdraws. So much time with YHWH. Soon the release floods from between my legs. This one different, like Adam. Slightly imperfect. I take the child to him. "See, one like yourself." He stares at me

1. Lilith is a character of Jewish mythology and rabbinic teachings, commonly considered to be the first wife of Adam. The only biblical reference to her is Isaiah 34:14. She is also found in the Talmud and the Alphabet of Ben Sira, written between the eighth and tenth centuries C.E.

in silence. I hesitate. No response. He withdraws again.

I leave for the forest, fearful. I take my son to safety. The three, ever vigil, embrace him. I know that my two are safe. YHWH has determined this. Soon comes the summons, I must return to the garden.

I find Adam there. He grips my arms. "How?" he demands, "I must know how." He pleads now. Roughly this time, he pulls me to the ground. I push him off and fly to the woods. Back to my home. Silently I weep. I do not know...

Much time passes and I feel broken, un-whole. I long for the garden where the sun shines. Here, it is always the moon. So lost.

I must return to the garden. I lift each of my children. In turn, I breathe the breath of life of into their mouths, as was done to me. "I, like YHWH, will never abandon you," I whisper. I move along the path to the garden, walking this time. Steps slow and heavy. I hang my head. I do not understand...

Suddenly in my path, a wall. Where did this come from? I stop at the boundary. How do I cross? Do I cross at all? I slowly trace its path, lingering in my indecision. I come to a gate. As I push it open I am aware of someone watching me. After my eyes adjust to the sunlight, I realize there is someone standing very near. I can sense her, smell her. I know it is a female, like me. My body begins to rage with anticipation. The beating in my chest moves to inside my head. Suddenly I see the movement off to my side. I turn and see her withdrawing behind a tree, the tree, good and evil. I step forward and reach out to touch her breast. She shivers and moves towards me.

We embrace and fall to the ground. Side by side we lay. So peaceful, so beautiful.

Suddenly Adam is there. "EVE," he yells. My beautiful one is grabbed by the arm and thrown away from me. The ache inside me begins. Eve. Adam turns to me, the anger in his eyes warning me of danger. "Get out," he yells. "You and your children that you took from me, that you controlled." His words are so loud. They sting. "Woman," he says in a low voice, "take your dark power and be damned to have a hundred children a day. And may none of you ever see the light of the sun again." I try to push past him and go to Eve. He reaches for me again. I fly into air to get away. I am in the tree now, looking down at him. Such sadness. I do not understand.

I return to the forest. I begin to make my life. Several times I return to the garden at night. I look in and see Eve, so beautiful, so sad. There are chains around her heart.

Next evening, I am walking towards the garden to look in on her. I see her on the wall, looking down at me. I stop and reach out my hand for her to come. She sadly shakes her head. No. "But you are a woman just like me," I reply.

Sadly, she shakes her head. No. "He said you will come and take my children away from me. You are evil, I must not speak to you. He has even made me wear these strange coverings to hide my shame."

I can do nothing but look at her. Slowly, I say, "But you are a woman just like me..."

Again, she shakes her head. "I must go," she says. Slowly, she turns and my world becomes dark again.



Photographs from the YDS Women's Center Archive

While each of these photographs belong to a different time and location, they portray the zest for life and sense of camaraderie the students of the YDS Women's Center possessed. The women identified are those whose names were inscribed on the back of their photographs. We acknowledge the Black women, among others, who have been left unnamed—

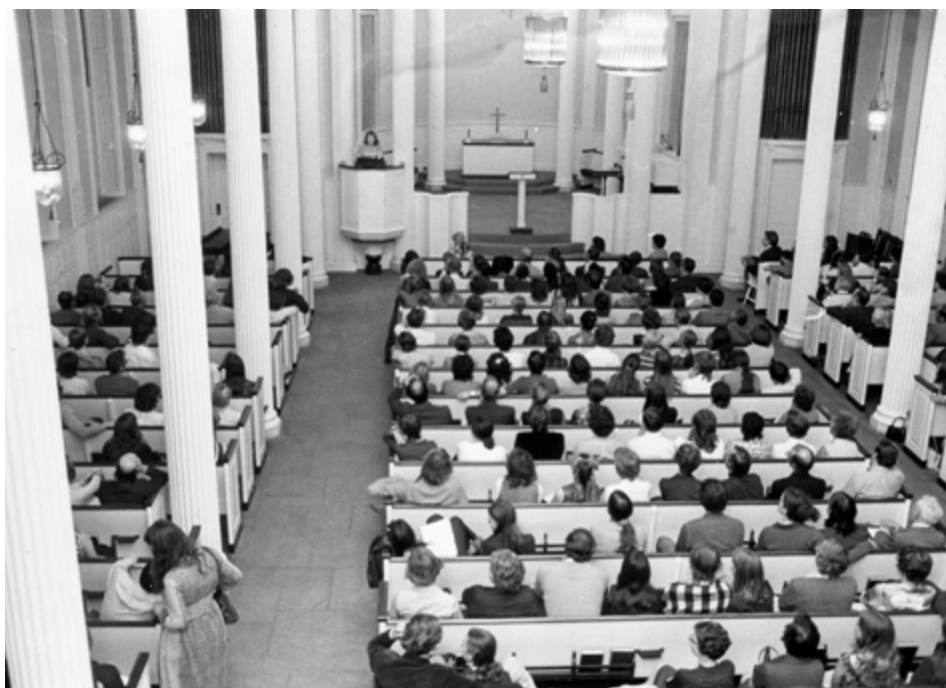
providing a reflection of the underrepresented history of women of color within the Women's Center's papers. We invite our readers to help us identify those unnamed. These women can then be identified in our subsequent issue. Please submit any information to: ydsomenscenter@yale.edu.



Caroline Bird and YDS Women's Center members peering through *New Woman* magazine.



YDS Women's Center students at a roundtable discussion.



Caroline Bird speaking on "Why Women's Liberation Now?"
in Marquand Chapel, 1971.



YDS Women's Center students gathering in common room.



YDS Women's Center students gathering in common room.



Rev. Joan Bates Forsberg,
YDS Women's Center Founder.



Rev. Dr. Letty M. Russell,
YDS Women's Center Advisor.



YDS Women's Center Advisor Letty M. Russell, Cynthia Walton '79, Regina Mooney '79, and Martha Morrison '79 at the Fifth Annual Women's Inter-Seminary Conference, February 1977.



Barbara Lundblad '79 and Regina Mooney '79 at a B-1 Bomber demonstration, spring 1977.

A note from Debbie McLeod '09, alumna donor to the YDS Women's Center and the founder of Grant Me the Wisdom Foundation:

I found my people at Yale Divinity School...
I found my people at the Women's Center at
Yale Divinity School...

Thank you to all the professors, staff, and students who make YDS alive, relevant and constantly evolving to prepare her students for God's ministry. Thank you to Sarah Ambrose and Oana Capatina for the countless hours they have put into giving life to the revival of VOICE. Thank you to Dean Gregory Sterling and the Associated Faculty of the YDS Women's Center (Teresa Berger, Yii-Jan Lin, Joyce Mercer, Mary Clark Moschella, Kate Ott, Gabrielle Thomas, and Almeda M. Wright) for their continuing support.

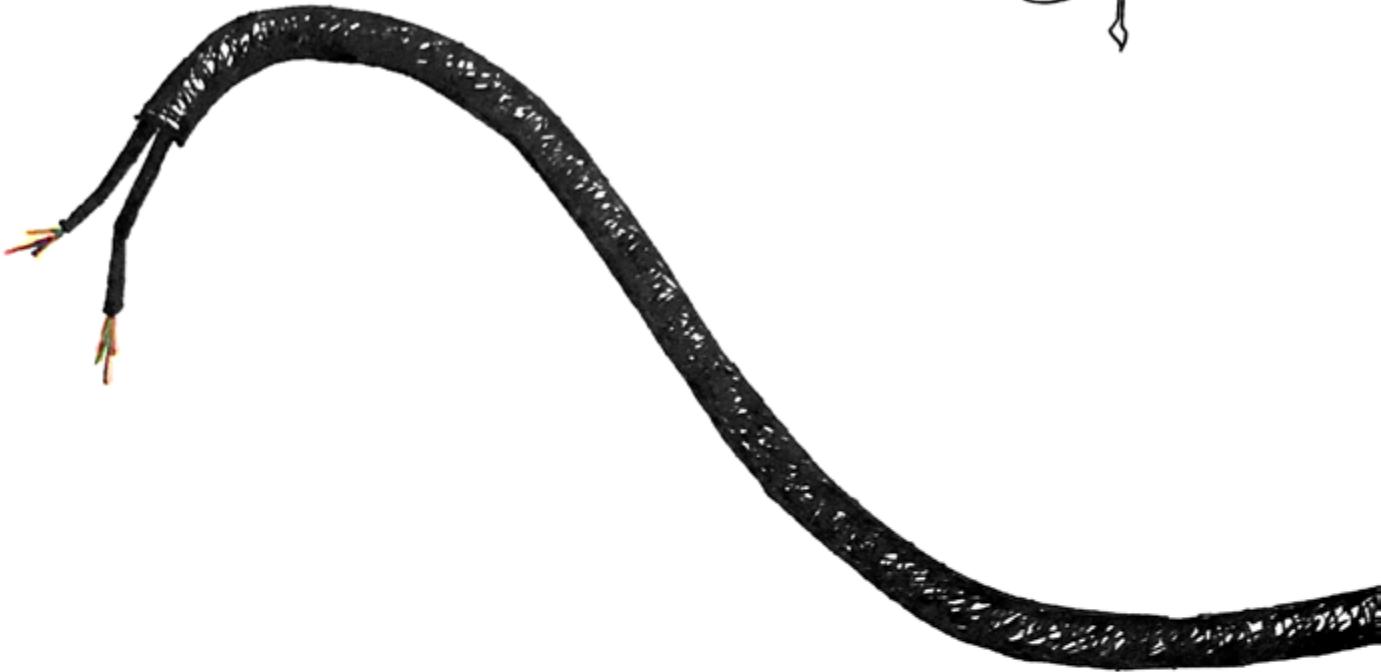


YDS Women's Center member walking into the
Fifth Annual Women's Inter-Seminary Conference,
February 1977.

WomenInTheBible.org is a new source for resources that are empowering to those interested in how women in the Bible were led by God and in turn led others. Another great resource is Women in the Bible in the Yale Bible Study portal:
<https://yalebiblestudy.org/courses/women-in-the-bible/>

Debbie McLeod
YDS 2009
Grant Me the Wisdom
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FOUNDATION



I live my life like an exposed wire.
Careful – or I'll show you
what's flowing through my veins.

