

Susanne Sklar writes: 'Blake's sublime allegory engages more than the rational mind. Like an icon it invites viewers to enter into it. The medieval fourfold approach to allegory can help illuminate *Jerusalem's* mythopoetic complexity, as can the apocalyptic reading tools devised by 17th century exegetes such as Joseph Mede or Sir Isaac Newton. Like the Book of Revelation, *Jerusalem* can be read synchronically and in terms of historical allegory; it claims to be written from an eternal perspective. A Newtonian allegorical approach may reveal *Jerusalem's* contemporary geo-political resonance.'

Selected Reading

William Blake, *Jerusalem: the emanation of the giant Albion*, edited with an introduction and notes by Morton D Paley, Princeton, NJ: William Blake Trust/Princeton University Press, c.1991, especially plates 1-11; 77-80; & 94-100.

Paul Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty* (translated by Fr Steven Bigham), Redondo Beach, California, Oakwood Publications, 1990, especially Section I.

Susanne Sklar's theology D Phil (at Queen's College, Oxford) explores William Blake's long poem *Jerusalem* in an apocalyptic context. Before coming to Oxford she worked in the peace movement (in America, in Sweden, in Jerusalem, and in the former Soviet Union), as an actress, and with the humanities faculty at Shimer College, north of Chicago.



LSG

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DAY CONFERENCE

Idem in alio:
Allegory from
Bunyan to Pullman

Saturday 13 November 2004

The Seminar Room
Corpus Christi College
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Programme

- 10.00 Arrivals and coffee
10.30 Introductions
- 10.45 **Roger Pooley**
Confessions of a Christian Bakhtinian
- 12.00 **Margaret Kean**
'Is this the Way?': the improving fictions of Bunyan, Milton and Philip Pullman
- 1.15 Lunch
- 2.15 **Susanne Sklar**
Sublime Allegory in Blake's *Jerusalem*
- 3.15 Tea
Work in progress
Plans
Prayer

Dr Pooley writes: 'Not long ago a colleague asked me after a theory seminar, "What are you, then?" My kneejerk reply was "A Christian Bakhtinian who hasn't recovered from Raymond Williams." This is an attempt to work that out: as a confession, a personal statement rather than a formal argument.'

'Bakhtin himself was a Christian, an unorthodox Orthodox, a neo-Kantian and a utopian marxist; and his ideas have been taken up in any number of critical pursuits, and few of them bear any obvious Christian traces. I wonder why Bakhtin has been so attractive and fruitful. I want to look at some of the big ideas in Bakhtin – dialogue, carnival, novelisation – and what they have to offer the Christian critic, or, at least, the critic trying to be Christian in their calling.'

Selected reading:

First rule: always read the theorist rather than his explicators first. So, especially, see these translated texts:

M M Bakhtin, 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity' in *Art and Answerability*, Austin, Texas 1990.
— *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin, Texas, 1981.
— *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Minneapolis, 1984.
— *Rabelais and his World*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968.

See also:

Ruth Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin*, Cambridge, 1998.
Susan M Felch and Paul J Contino, eds., *Bakhtin and Religion*, Evanston, 2001.

Roger Pooley's publications include *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century*. He is co-editor of *The Discerning Reader*, Apollon, 1995, and is currently working on a new edition of *Pilgrim's Progress*. He is Lecturer in English at Keele University and a former Chair of the CLSG.

Dr Kean writes: 'In his recent trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, Philip Pullman has turned to the allegorical mode in order to present an adventure story which holds a deeper, polemic, meaning. His revision of the central Christian motifs and types seems to me to present a specific and direct challenge to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the conventional Puritan narrative of grace. By paying close comparative attention to the workings of these allegorical narratives we may come closer to understanding why Pullman's novels have caused such a furore. *His Dark Materials* presents a real threat to current orthodoxy not because of its Miltonic frames but because of the adept manipulation made by Pullman of an allegorical method of educating the (child) reader. This is a method which secures its truth by involving the reader in an elite interpretative process. In effect, the "simple" truths of an allegorical adventure narrative get under the skin. It is a technique which has for the last 300 years privileged the story of the spiritual journey undertaken by a Christian pilgrim but Pullman has now questioned that prerogative and has produced a defiantly counter-Christian allegory.'

Selected Reading

John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667).
John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).
Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials* (2001).
Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory: defining the genre*, Cornell University Press, 1979.
Kathleen Swaim, *Pilgrim's Progress, Puritan Progress*, University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Dr Margaret Kean is the Dame Helen Gardner Fellow in English at St Hilda's College, Oxford. She has published a number of essays on John Milton's poetry and her *Paradise Lost: a sourcebook* will be published by Routledge in December.

Booking Form

CLSG Conference 13 November 2004

Please return by 6 November 2004 to:
The CLSG Secretary, 10 Dene Road, Northwood
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I enclose my fee for the conference (includes refreshments and sandwich lunch in college):

	£
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Student	12

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