

*Literature and Theology* 20.2 (2006), pp. 91-106.  
Timothy M. Costelloe (ed.), *The Sublime from Antiquity to the Present*, 2012.  
Mary Ann Radzinowicz, *Toward Samson Agonistes: The Growth of Milton's Mind*, 1978.

**Irene Montori** recently completed her doctoral studies at Sapienza, University of Rome. Her research unites the twin discourses of aesthetic and ethical value in the seventeenth-century formation of the literary sublime, with particular emphasis on Milton's dramatic works.

**Dr Claire Warden** writes: How did expressionist transcendence appear on the modernist British stage, with its historical predilection for realism? Christopher Innes (*Holy Theatre: Ritual and the Avant Garde*, 1981) sees the ritualised elements of avant-garde drama as at once expressionist and spiritual, 'an aspiration to transcendence'. My paper explores the expressionist ecstatic in the final acts of plays about war, individual crises and politics: Velona Pilcher, *The Searcher* (1929); J.B. Priestley, *Johnson Over Jordan* (1939); Ewan MacColl, *The Other Animals* (1948).

**Claire Warden**, Reader in Drama at De Montfort University, is the author of *British Avant-Garde Theatre* (2012), *Modernist and Avant-Garde Performance: an introduction* (2015), *Migrating Modernist Performance: British theatrical travels through Russia* (2016), and is the co-editor of *Performance and Professional Wrestling* (2016).

**Dr Margaret Wiedemann Hunt** writes: As a dramatist Sayers is usually categorised within the 20th century verse drama movement, but her last stage play, *The Emperor Constantine*, written for the Festival of Britain, was a prose chronicle. Is the play essentially a historical pageant or could its realism reflect Sayers's response to post-war theatre and theology? What does the protagonist's onstage baptism suggest about the relationship between drama and worship? How does Sayers's understanding of sacramentality relate to that of her contemporaries, and to ours now?

#### Selected Reading

Crystal Downing, *Writing Performances: The Stages of Dorothy L. Sayers*, 2004.

Harold Hobson, 'Constantine: Christ's Emperor, St. Thomas's Church, Regent St.', *Sunday Times*, 10 February, 1952, 2.

Todd E. Johnson and Dale Savidge, *Performing the Sacred*, 2009.

**Margaret Wiedemann Hunt** is a retired teacher and adult education lecturer who has recently completed a PhD on the religious plays of Dorothy L. Sayers. She is the honorary archivist of Radius, the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain.

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DAY CONFERENCE

# Evidently Set Forth: God and the Human Stage

**Saturday 4 November 2017**

The Seminar Room  
Corpus Christi College  
Merton Street  
Oxford  
OX1 4JF  
Tel. (lodge) 01865 276700



## Programme

- 10.00 Arrivals and coffee  
10.30 Introductions
- 10.45 **Mike Nolan**  
*Female Witness in Elizabeth Cary's The Tragedy of Mariam and The Virgin Martyr by Philip Massinger and Thomas Dekker*
- 11.30 **Catherine Lisak**  
*From Scriptural Faces to Pauline Theodramatics in King Richard II*
- 12.15 **Irene Montori**  
*Performing Virtue: Joban Heroism in Milton's Samson Agonistes*
- 1.00 Lunch
- 14.00 **Claire Warden**  
*'No life without stigmata': ecstatic conclusions in British expressionist drama*
- 14.45 **Margaret Wiedemann Hunt**  
*From Sword to Sacrament: Dorothy L. Sayers's last festival play*
- 15.30 Tea  
Work in progress  
Plans  
Prayer
- 16.00 Close

**Dr Mike Nolan** writes: Jacobean plays featuring a female as the main tragic protagonist are quite rare; plays depicting the tragedy of a female martyred for her beliefs and actions are even rarer. The treatment of feminine Christian witness in the face of tyranny, as addressed by playwrights Elizabeth Cary, Philip Massinger and Thomas Dekker, is thus intriguing. What is the significance of the resonances of Biblical testimony in Cary's play? What are we to make of Dorothea's dynamic witness in *The Virgin Martyr*? This paper explores the ways in which the plays contextualise examples of heroic martyrdom.

### Selected Reading

Heather Wolfe (ed), *The Literary Career and Legacy of Elizabeth Cary 1613-1680*, 2007.

Ramona Wray (ed), *The Tragedy of Mariam*, 2012.

John D. Cox, *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama 1350-1642*, 2000.

Jane Hwang Degenhardt, 'Catholic Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* and the Early Modern threat of "Turning Turk," *ELH*, vol 73, no. 1, Spring 2006, pp. 83-117.

**Mike Nolan** teaches Renaissance Literature at La Trobe University in Melbourne and has authored a number of articles on Jacobean playwrights, including Shakespeare and Daborne. He has also translated the casket poems attributed to Mary, Queen of Scots and has written, performed and produced a CD of modern hymns.

**Professor Catherine Lisak** writes: Does Richard's use of the expression 'face-to-face' in the opening lines of Shakespeare's play (1.1.19), with its strong Scriptural connotations, spontaneously impact upon a contemporary audience's informed imagination? How does *Richard II* initiate an interdiscourse between the Shakespearean existential human stage and the confessional theatricality of Pauline rhetoric? This paper explores the narrative and metonymic paths that enable such hermeneutics to unfold, leading both characters and audience towards the infamous 'mirror scene' (4.1), itself resonant with St Paul's 'theodramatic' phrasing (1 Cor 13: 12).

### Selected Reading

John Coolidge, *The Pauline Renaissance: Puritanism and the Bible*, 1970.

Alain Badiou, tr. Ray Brassier, *Saint Paul: The Foundations of Universalism*. 2003.

Giorgio Agamben, tr. Patricia Dailey, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, 2005.

Maurice Hunt, *The Divine Face in Four Writers. Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Hesse and C.S.Lewis*, 2016.

**Catherine Lisak** is Professor of British Literature at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne. She is the current editor of Shakespeare's *King Richard II* for the Internet Shakespeare Editions. Her work, published both in French and English, is in the main concerned with early modern ethics and diachronic linguistics.

**Dr Irene Montori** writes: Milton's stated intention in the preface to *Samson Agonistes* is to 'vindicate tragedy' from its ongoing decline. In his rethinking of the genre, tragedy is considered in the light of the sublime as a vehicle to heroically express human magnanimity. But how does Milton reconcile tragedy with sublimity? How might the sublime be a tool for recovering the conflict between the human and the divine? The paper will argue for the centrality of the Book of Job in exploring Milton's sublime response to tragedy.

### Selected Reading

Dennis Brown, 'Moral Dilemma and Tragic Affect in *Samson Agonistes*',

## Booking Form

CLSG Conference 4 November 2017

Please return with fee before 30 October 2017 to:  
Dr Roger Kojecký, CLSG Secretary, 10 Dene Road,  
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- I am not a member and would like additionally to join the CLSG at the special rate of £12, valid to December 2018 when linked to this booking, and to receive *The Glass*, the journal of the CLSG. (All attenders pay a conference fee but joining is not a condition of attendance.)

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