

Valparaiso University ValpoScholar

Graduate Faculty Publications

Graduate School

Summer 2016

Performing Lydia(s)

Kari-Anne Innes
Valparaiso University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholar.valpo.edu/grad_fac_pubs



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Innes, Kari-Anne, "Performing Lydia(s)" (2016). *Graduate Faculty Publications*. Paper 2.
http://scholar.valpo.edu/grad_fac_pubs/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

Performing Lydia(s)

ABSTRACT *Performing Lydia(s)* is a mystory developed at Bowling Green State University and performed at the Patti Pace Performance Festival in 2010. This mystory uses Diana Taylor's response to Joseph Roach's theory of performance genealogy to examine pieces of my family archive—epistles in the form of scripture, blogs, emails, family letters, and memoirs—for how they have imprinted themselves on later generations' perception of gender identity. The vehicle for this exploration is my performance of the New Testament figure of Lydia in an original liturgical drama juxtaposed with the performance of my great aunt Lydia's memoirs. **KEYWORDS** Mystory; Biblical women; Performance genealogy; Archive and repertoire, Old German Baptist Brethren

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Performing Lydia(s) is the result of revisiting several academic projects that eventually culminated in a *mystory*, a form of autoethnographic performance that combines personal narrative, critical theory, and secondary texts in response to a research problem or question.¹ In this case, *Performing Lydia(s)* weaves together the stories of the biblical Lydia, a first-century convert of the Apostle Paul, and Lydia Kinzie, my great aunt, whose Old German Baptist Brethren (OGBB) faith upholds the values of the “primitive church.”

In response to Diana Taylor's writing on embodied knowledge,² I ask: What does it mean to perform women from our spiritual past? Either as Lydia Kinzie, who covers her head with a prayer bonnet as she imagines the women of Corinth did; or, as myself, a scholar–artist who researches performances of biblical women, including my own performance as the character Lydia of Philippi in a liturgical drama I wrote as a young woman?

My grandfather was born into an OGBB family as the eighth of ten children, four brothers and five sisters. As adults, all but my grandfather chose baptism into the OGBB. The OGBB is one of several conservative denominations of the Brethren Church. They refuse to take part in war, participate in government, vote, or use the courts. The women wear white prayer bonnets and identically

Departures in Critical Qualitative Research, Vol. 5, Number 2, pp. 47–75. ISSN 2333-9489, electronic ISSN 2333-9497. © 2016 by the Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. Request permission to photocopy or reproduce article content at the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints>. DOI: 10.1525/dqqr.2016.5.2.47.

patterned dresses. The men wear dark suits with a minister's collar and broad-rim hats.

Because not all OGBB participate in the government census, documenting family lineage is a priority and most OGBB are wonderful family historians. My grandfather has a vast collection of genealogies, stories, poems, hymnals, photos, etc. documenting our family history. In addition, the Internet has made it possible for family members within and outside of the church to trace family histories using genealogy blogs and social media groups. In my performance, I view these archives as an extension of the Pauline epistles.

While I had always been curious about women in the OGBB tradition, my interest was renewed in a New Testament theology course. In class, we studied Corinthians and the passages used to justify man as the head of the woman and exclude women from ordination. Both are foundational to the OGBB, which sees itself as restoring the "ancient order" of the early church. We also studied scholars who challenged these passages in a modern context, as well as scholars who tried to understand the ordinances by studying the historical and cultural context of the New Testament. Of these scholars, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza became a big influence on me and this piece.

The goal of my creative work is to approach theatre and performance as what Schüssler Fiorenza describes as a "hermeneutics of creative imagination" that "retells biblical stories and celebrates our foresisters in a feminist/womanist key."³ Similarly, Marjorie Procter-Smith cites the need for "not only remembering with the mind but also remembering with the body."⁴ While Schüssler Fiorenza and Procter-Smith do not extend their claims to include theatre specifically, the goal of my research is to argue that dramatic performance provides this type of hermeneutic. My research asks: How do theatre and performance provide an embodied "creative and imaginative hermeneutic" to reclaim and reshape female religious and social identity?

As an alternative to writing a research paper, I asked my professor if I could finish a play that the university's liturgical drama troupe had started, but abandoned. *First Witnesses* tells the story of Faith, a contemporary woman visited by four women of the New Testament. One of these characters is Lydia, a commercially successful woman whose household in Philippi was the site of one of Europe's first Christian congregations.⁵

Years later, I found myself at a performance of the play, sitting uncomfortably in a small theatre scattered with Lutheran pastors and lay people as part of the university's *Liturgical Institute*. I cringed at certain lines in the dialogue, especially those of Lydia, the part I played and was responsible for writing. The

lines seemed so wooden, so pointed, my agenda so obvious, line after line. Reflecting back, I now recognize that my discomfort may have stemmed from writing the play as a substitution for a research paper. Robert Scholes, Nancy Comely, and Gregory Ulmer distinguish between research papers and research texts in terms of voice and agency. Research papers are written in either the passive voice (being acted upon) or the active voice (acting upon an object).⁶ My original liturgical drama relentlessly acted upon the biblical text by imposing my feminist research; the performer seemed disconnected from the content. The mystery, however, is written in the “middle voice,” which is more “reflexive [and] self-conscious.”⁷ This middle-voice was missing from my original performance. I had wanted the liturgical drama to be what Scholes, Comely, and Ulmer define as a research text, with the effect of discovering the feminist voice within the biblical text and its performer, not to impose feminism on the text or the performer.

When I entered a doctorate program at a state university, I thought that the secular environment might weaken my attraction to the performance of biblical women. However, my performance studies course, taught in a vacated sanctuary of a former church, only stimulated my interest. As a final project, we composed mystories, which seemed to offer the possibility of a “homeopathic embracing of identification” for my liturgical drama.⁸

Contemplating “my story” while reading Taylor’s *The Archive and the Repertoire*, I began to question whether the practices of the OGBB, in restoring the “ancient order,” “primitive church,” and “old paths,” might be considered performances of the archive. Could the daily lives of OGBB women be considered performance? If so, why perform the silenced women of Corinth and not the New Testament women teaching and leading alongside Paul in Philippi—Lydia, Phoebe, Dorcas, Priscilla?

Could my compulsion to perform women of the Bible be an extension of my extended family’s performance of the early church? Are my extended family and I merely performing models of different biblical women in different cultural contexts? They in their daily lives within a community performing an ancient past, and me outside of the community performing in a modern and secular world? Corinth and Philippi? If so, may we still be considered sisters, or sistren? The mystery form allows me to ask these questions by juxtaposing my performance of the Philippian Lydia in *First Witnesses* with my great aunt Lydia’s Corinthian performance of biblical womanhood, mediated by the theory of Taylor.⁹

The performance of these texts and the “correspondences that emerge in the intertext” provide me, the performer, with insights into my questions. Gregory L. Ulmer describes such “eureka insights” as “aris[ing] out of the peculiar way

memory stores information in ‘emotional sets,’” or in the case of the mystory, dramatic expressions of these emotional sets. He adds that “the trigger or catalyst causing ‘recentering’ (creating a pattern of redundancy between two unrelated sets) tends to be a . . . Psychological Gesture.”¹⁰ My physical performance of these competing discourses, then, becomes the Psychological Gesture to recenter or locate myself within the disparate faith and feminist traditions that shape my identity.¹¹

In this way, the mystory provides a vehicle for Schüssler Fiorenza’s and Procter-Smith’s embodied “creative and imaginative hermeneutic.” Michael S. Bowman and Ruth Laurion Bowman note similarities between the mystory and the *herstory*, “which seeks to excavate and represent the collective story of women suppressed in patriarchal history.”¹² The mystory functions similarly to Schüssler Fiorenza’s project to “[celebrate] our [biblical] foresisters in a feminist key,” while fulfilling Procter-Smith’s entreaty to remember with both the body and the mind.¹³ My project, therefore, considers the mystory as a possible embodied hermeneutic of feminist theology. Furthermore, I extrapolate Taylor’s applications of performance studies to postcolonial cultural studies, as a shift from “written to embodied culture,”¹⁴ the “archive” to the “repertoire,” and the “scenario,” for what they may offer this hermeneutic.

Inspired by Ulmer’s notion of a “strange attractor,” a “detail or prop . . . in the setting”¹⁵ that unites the multiple discourses of a mystory, my piece takes place at a well, or cistern. My liturgical drama *First Witnesses* includes the biblical story of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at a well and questions him about her role in his ministry. In my own family history, my great aunt Lydia uses the family well as a hiding place for a personal secret.

By dictionary definition, a “cistern” is a “covered reservoir” that provides water for daily functions such as drinking, cleaning, and bathing.¹⁶ In the Bible, such wells are meeting places for women who come to draw water for these tasks. Symbolically, Kathleen Fisher views the well as the source of inner wisdom and a “wellspring” of power informed by generations of women who have gathered there.¹⁷ In *Performing Lydia(s)*, I use the mystory genre and the symbol of the well to gather two of my spiritual foresisters, the biblical Lydia and my great aunt Lydia, to ask: “What are the secrets of Lydia’s well?”

PERFORMING LYDIA(S)

A well made of books and papers from a family archive. Letters are scattered on the floor near the well, as if they are water that has spilled from the well. Some of the letters and papers are intact, while others are wadded as if they have been discarded.

There are a music stand Stage Right (SR) from which blogs are read and a music stand Stage Left (SL) from which a liturgical drama is read. Lines performed from Family Memories are delivered in the playing area downstage of the well.



Stage Floor plan. Image by Kari-Anne Innes.

Performer enters from the back of the house with a suitcase and slowly walks upstage during the following voiceover. She ends at the front, below the well. She sets the suitcase downstage.



The well. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

RECORDED VOICE

Imagine yourself in the Samaritan town called Sychar in central Palestine. It is noon on a warm day and you have come to draw water at the well. This well is dear to you because your foremothers drew water from it . . . You pause as you approach the well and look out at the broad fertile plain around the town. Feel the warmth of the noonday sun on your face. Take in the sweep of the plain.¹⁸

Performer takes a cell phone from her back pocket. She speaks as she texts.

PERFORMER

Dr. Paul,

Made it to the well today! Do you remember the play we wrote? *The First Witnesses*?

PROJECTION 1: The First Witnesses description, stays up under the following action and dialogue to be read silently by the audience. Not spoken.

The First Witnesses John 4: 7–42

A play for the Lenten and Easter seasons. . . It is six o'clock on Holy Saturday evening and Faith, a member of the Altar Guild, rushes into the sanctuary. She is late for the second meeting in a row. The other members of the guild who she expected to meet have all gone, but soon she is visited by four other women, each of whom have come from another time and place and have had a life-changing encounter with Jesus. The first is Martha, the sister of Lazarus; the second is the Samaritan woman, whom Jesus met at Jacob's well. The third is Mary, Jesus' mother, and the fourth is Lydia, a cloth merchant who was converted by the Apostle Paul in Philippi. Each woman tells her story; each must decide whether she will go to the tomb to prepare Jesus' body for burial. Finally, the question is put to Faith, "Will you come with us to the tomb?"¹⁹

PERFORMER

Do you still perform that? If so, I'd like to suggest some rewrites. Can we do lunch when I get back? I'm sending pics of Jacob's well over my phone.

Performer takes pictures with phone.

Why don't we call it Rachel's or Leah's, or Bihlah's, Zilpah's, or Dinah's well?

Take care,

Kari-Anne

Performer crosses to SR music stand.

Send pictures. Check ancestry blog.

PROJECTION 2: Projections in this sequence not spoken unless otherwise indicated.

RootsWeb BRETHREN-L Archives²⁰

From: Dee Bechtel Howard <deeh@pacbell.net>

Subject: Women and the Church

Date: Thu, 20 Jan 2000 23:39:00

PERFORMER AS DEE

Reads blog from SR music stand.

Dear Listers,

Even as I address this message, I realize how exclusive is the name of our list. Does not the male noun Brethren ignore the “Sistern” on the list?²¹

PERFORMER

Responds to the blog as she circles the well.

Dee, do you mean Sis-TREN or CIS-tern?

Sistren: An obsolete or dialectical plural of sister.²²

Cistern: A receptacle for holding liquids, usually water. . . (effectively covered reservoirs).²³

One is a woman, the other:

[is] commonly used in areas where water is scarce, either because it is rare or because it has been depleted due to heavy use. Early on, the water was used for many purposes including cooking, irrigation, and washing. . . . To keep a clean water supply, the cisterns must be kept clean. It is recommended to inspect them regularly, keep them well-enclosed, and to occasionally empty them and clean them with an appropriate dilution of chlorine and to rinse them well. Well water must be inspected for contaminants coming from the ground source. . . . If there is any question about the water supply at any point (source to tap), then the cistern water should not be used for drinking or cooking. If it is of acceptable quality and consistency, then it can be used for (1) toilets, and housecleaning; (2) showers and handwashing; (3) washing dishes, with appropriate sanitation methods, and for the highest quality, (4) cooking and drinking.²⁴

Dee, or did you mean both? I like the idea of women as “covered reservoirs.” Not sure about using them for toilets and housecleaning.

Then there is the prefix *cis-* to consider: “meaning ‘on the same side of,’ referring to the alignment of one’s gender identity with one’s biological sex assigned at birth.”²⁵ The definition of *sistren* as *cistern* would certainly align with the traditional roles of women in our family and church.

But, is it possible to be both *cis-* and *trans-* *sistren*: “on this model used with the meanings ‘across,’ ‘beyond,’ ‘through,’ ‘changing thoroughly,’ in combination with elements of any origin.”²⁶ *Origin of faith?*²⁷ That is, is it possible to acknowledge that my gender identity and biological sex align, but that this identity extends beyond that assigned to me by my faith and family? Is it possible to be “on the same side of,” but “changing thoroughly” the sisterhood?

PERFORMER AS DEE

Goes back to reading blog.

I am writing to comment on the messages regarding the exclusion of women from filling certain roles in churches. I don’t want to upset anyone, but as a woman I need to react when my sex is considered unsuited to pastor, preach, or be a priest. . . . Describing the practices of groups who choose to discriminate or exclude persons of one sex from certain activities can be informative. But the discussion on this list seemed to present such exclusion from the ministry by some churches as a positive measure with reference to Biblical scripture to support such a view as making it a just and right view. I cannot allow that view to go unnoticed and unchallenged, although I do not want to “stir up” any negativism on this wonderful list.

Dee²⁸

PROJECTION 3

From: <FamilyHart@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Women and the Church

Date: Fri, 21 Jan 2000 09:48:44 EST

PERFORMER AS DON (FAMILYHART)

If the rolls [*sic*] of men and women in any Church were defined by men, then you might have a point, but the roles of its members in most Churches [*sic*] are believed to be defined by God. It is this difference of interpretation of God’s will by men (men meaning to include women) that has led to so many Churches [*sic*] that are of the Christian faith and for that matter of other faiths

(i.e. Muslim, Buddhist [*sic*], etc.). Today there is probably a Church out there in the world that would cater to the beliefs of just about anybody. If you really want to know if a doctrine is true or not, there really is but one source to go to and that is God Himself. If there is a God, He would want you to know the truth.²⁹



Cranking the well. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

Performer looks up. Waits. Stands and goes to the well. She draws “water” from the well, using her skirt as a bucket. In it is a King James Version Bible. She reads from the Bible. Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians is read in the form of an email, the epistle of today.

PERFORMER

Reads the letter.

From: Paul

To: Corinthians

Subject: Exercising Gifts in Public Worship

1 Corinthians 14

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted for them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.³⁰



A full bucket. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

PERFORMER AS DON

Returns to the SL music stand.

Since people are people and are not immune to human frailties and weaknesses in mind as well as in body, there may still be differences of opinion as to what God has said to them. Thus there may still be challenges to overcome with each other. To be both tolerant and accepting of someone else's beliefs would then be paramount in keeping peace on this earth. If I believe one way and you believe another. . . this should not cause strife and descension [*sic*] between us. Personal beliefs are just that. . . personal. Changes in those beliefs must come from within. I am personally not a member of one of the Brethren Churches. My ancestors were however. I do have a deep respect for the challenges they faced in defending their beliefs and convictions. I would never call into question their beliefs. I agree with many of them.

Don Hartman³¹

PERFORMER

And so do I, agree with many of them. My paternal grandfather was born into the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, an "ultra-conservative"³² denomination of the Brethren, also known as the "Tunkers, Tinkers, Dunkers, Dunkards,

Dompelars, Tumblers and Tumplers.”³³ (You’ve seen them but thought they were Amish or Mennonite and maybe wondered why they were driving cars.)

The Brethren had their beginnings in Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708 under Alexander Mack and seven followers, four men *and* three women.³⁴ The Brethren stood against the state and institutionalized religion, which they blamed for the Thirty Years’ War. They sought a simpler, peaceful faith—free from violence and state influence. They looked to the New Testament for their model of the “ancient order” and “primitive church.”³⁵

In 1723, the Brethren fled from religious persecution in Germany to America. In 1753, my ancestors Matthais, Peter, and John Blocher came over on the ship appropriately named “Brothers.”³⁶

Performer, as a little girl, skips around the well chanting a childhood rhyme about a “secret” hidden in the family well. This movement serves as a transition between scenes.

PROJECTION 4: Pic. “Newlyweds, 11 September 1949”

Aunt Lydia and Uncle Everett were married in ’49.



Newlyweds, 11 September 1949.
Photograph provided by Kari-Anne
Innes.

I was just a little girl—only 5 at the time.

I remember little bits were told of a suitcase in the well.

Grandmother didn’t know it—or if she did, she didn’t tell.³⁷

Performer lowers the “bucket” back into the well. During the recorded voiceover, she mimes turning the pulley handle. The turns get harder as the water fills the bucket and is heavier to lift.

RECORDED VOICE

Like the Samaritan woman, contemporary women thirst for living water. They stand at the well, hoping to draw life from ancient traditions. They long to discover their own inner wells, to meet God within, as [a] source of their wisdom, power, creativity, and strength. They want to be wellsprings of new vision and hope, to use their gifts to change their communities and the world community.³⁸

The bucket, her skirt, returns overflowing with letters, postcards, notes, etc. Performer carries the bucket, full and heavy. It spills onto the floor, scattering the letters.



Reading from the well. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

Performer draws a single sheet of paper from her skirt and walks to read it from the SL music stand.

First Witnesses, a play by Dr. John Steven Paul and Kari-Anne Blocher Innes.

PERFORMER AS WOMAN (a character in the liturgical drama)

Begins, reluctantly at first.

It was in Sychar. About a year ago. I came to draw water at the well. It was the heat of the day. Noon. There was a man sitting at the well. He looked weary, as if he'd been traveling on foot and [had] sat down to rest. He turned to look at me and I could tell he was a Jew. I know well enough that Jews don't think Samaritans are worth the ground they walk on. I knew I'd better keep away until. . . well, you know the law, a man—a Jew at that—alone and a Samaritan. . . woman. I just didn't need the hassle. So, I put the jar on my shoulder and started to walk away. But then I heard a voice calling to me: "Give me a drink," he said. I can't remember the number of times a man has asked that of me. Usually it's an order. But this voice—I can still hear it—stopped me. The sound of his voice came into me like a liquid and washed my entire body clean from the inside. I suddenly felt free to talk with him, openly, he seemed different somehow. I said "Sir, how is it that you a Jew, call for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" I don't know what I expected to hear from him. "If only you knew what God gives," he said, "and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask him and he would give you life-giving water." Now, even after all that has changed, I can barely believe that it happened.

PROJECTION 5: Pic. "Oh what a catch—Lydia Blocher, 1939"



Oh what a catch—Lydia Blocher, 1939. Photograph provided by Kari-Anne Innes.

PERFORMER AS LYDIA

Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.³⁹

PERFORMER

Turns upstage to look at projected image.

Lydia?

Continues looking at the projected image.

Lydia Blocher Kinzie is my great aunt.

Performer picks up letters from Lydia Kinzie's memoirs from the floor downstage of the well. As she reads, she begins to dismantle the upstage well of books, rebuilding it around the suitcase downstage. Through the action, Performer decides which of the books and letters she will keep to build her own well, and which she will discard or leave behind. When she is finished with one letter, she picks up another and repeats. During this sequence, Performer reads as the character of Lydia while making comments and addressing the audience as the performer.

Letter 1. October 3, 1941: "Camp Boys," different ones, were present at North Manchester and Eel River thru the summer. At Etta's and my baptizing, . . . a car load came. I suppose Ike was in the group, but I only remember seeing one as the car unloaded—Everett Kinzie. EK.⁴⁰

PERFORMER

Brethren are baptized as adults. My great aunt Lydia was baptized when she was eighteen; my great aunt Etta was twenty-eight. After being baptized, women wear the head covering according to 1 Corinthians 11:2–7.

Returns to the letters.

Letter 2. Thanksgiving evening, November 20, 1941: [A] car load stopped by the Simon Blocher home. EK was chauffeuring two couples: Loren Moser and Florence Bainter, and Lee Yoder and Rosa Hufford. . . . We three sisters were on the front porch ready to go to Night Meeting. He singled me out . . . "Can I take you to Church tonight?" "I'd love to."⁴¹

Letter 3. December 1941: Thru a . . . church member contact at Dr. Rhamy's office [in] Wabash, I took a job in their home as Mrs. Rhamy's helper, cleaner, cooking, ironing (the Dr.'s white shirts!), etc. Sometimes I [clean] in the office, which [is] in part of the huge, old house. This [is] another wage increase—\$17.00 a week.⁴²

PERFORMER

The first church in Europe likely began when a merchant named Lydia opened her mistress's house to Paul's ministry.⁴³ According to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "the house church, by virtue of its location, provided equal opportunity for women, because traditionally the house was considered women's proper sphere, and women were not excluded from activities in it."⁴⁴ Likewise, Dr. Rhamy's office and Mrs. Rhamy's house held a world of opportunity for my great aunt Lydia. This is where she learned her vocation when family obligations prevented her from studying elsewhere.

Returns to the letters.

Letter 4. December the 7th: Pearl Harbor.⁴⁵

Moment of silence.

PERFORMER

Picks up another leaf of paper.

First Witnesses, page 9 to 10.

PERFORMER AS LYDIA OF PHILIPPI

Returns to the SL music stand.

When I first came to Philippi, I met some women who were traveling merchants dealing in cloth and perfume. We wanted to worship the God of Abraham together, but there weren't enough Jewish men to form a synagogue. What could we do? We wanted to pray together, but there was no temple. So we went outside the city walls to the bank of the Gangites River and worshipped at the water's edge. And, now the people of God worship in the streets of Philippi, in the plaza of Antioch, in an eating room in Corinth, in the groves of Ephesus, in the fields of Galatia, in the catacombs in Rome. . . . My name is Lydia. I'm a cloth merchant. Purple goods are my specialty. I was born in Thyatira, but I live in Philippi. . . . I met a preacher in Philippi named Paul, a tent-maker by trade. He worshipped the God of Abraham, but he proclaimed a new prophet, the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus Christ, had come and freed us from the Law of Moses. . . . Paul told us about the day they crucified Jesus. He quoted to us the psalm that says "You will not allow your devoted servant to rot in the grave." That's why I'm here today: to visit the empty tomb and then prepare for the celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.⁴⁶

Performer wads up paper into a ball and throws it into the well.

Too wooden. I need to do something to humanize her.

Performer pauses, thinks, and makes an association. As she speaks, she circles back up to the well.

Diana Taylor defines the performance of everyday life as “embodied knowledge”: “vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity”⁴⁷

Performer begins to draw from the well. Using her skirt as a bucket, she gathers more books and letters.

I think I understand this. I embody what I learn and become who I am, in part, based on the knowledge transferred to me by parents, society, tradition, religion, etc.

Performer crosses down through the well, knocking down some of the structure. She draws a book from her skirt, letting the letters spill to the floor.

Taylor writes that knowledge is recorded, saved, stored, etc. in the archive—texts and ancient manuscripts. The archive is authoritative; it is something someone can look back upon and reference. So, in terms of women and the Bible, could one argue scripture as archive? For example, “Woman is essentially X, or woman should do Y because it says in so right here in the book of Corinthians.”

Performer crosses downstage and continues to rebuild the well downstage.

The repertoire, on the other hand, is the “embodied practice” of the archive. How women actually live their lives in concert and in contrast with the archive (in this case scripture) would be considered the repertoire, right? This embodied practice is transferred from generation to generation, colonizer to the colonized, pastor to parishioner. . .

Returns to papers. As Performer reads the letters, she continues to take the books/archive from upstage and rebuild it downstage.

Letter 5, September 1942: I took a job at the Cyclone Feeder Company. . . with “leave of absence and time off” as the need [arises]. . . I [continue] the monotony of factory life. I [feel] an interest in nurse’s training; I toured the Rochester, Indiana, Hospital and made inquiries elsewhere. I investigated correspondence courses. Most schools [don’t] accept our covering. . . . I learned Ft. Wayne would. But it would. . . be an all-exclusive life from family, friends and Church

Meeting, considering transportation costs. . . in war times. [It's] too great a price to pay in that respect.⁴⁸

Letter 6. March 1946: After three years of service. Dr. Rhamy returned to his Wabash practice and set up [an] office across the street in back of the hospital. . . . Word came through some of the member patients that Dr. Rhamy was wanting an office girl, and if I was interested, to come see them. I was, and I did. The friends [at Cyclone Feeder Company] presented me with a Bible. That [ends] my “career” there. I [start] at Dr. Rhamy’s office the latter part of March. . . . With a patient, tolerating Doctor and his wonderful wife to tutor under, and good nurse friends to help me learn and train, it [will be] the “job of my life.”⁴⁹

Performer returns downstage, opens the suitcase. In the suitcase is her great aunt’s plain dress and head covering.

Individual agency, then, operates within the repertoire: “Repertoire, etymologically ‘a treasury, an inventory’ . . . allows for individual agency, referring also to ‘the finder, discoverer’ and meaning ‘to find out.’”⁵⁰

Performer finds her great aunt’s head covering.



To find out. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

If I understand correctly, an individual's repertoire is a negotiation of his or her transferred, or inherited, embodied practice. An individual draws upon the archive and embodied practice to "create," "discover," "find out" his or her own repertoire?

Performer starts dressing in plain dress using items from the suitcase.

How does this relate to Joseph Roach's theory of "performance genealogy"? Taylor interprets Roach as arguing that performance is not ephemeral, but that it is "coterminous with memory and history. As such, it participates in the transfer and continuity of knowledge."⁵¹ In his words, "patterned movements made and remembered by bodies, residual movements."⁵² For almost three hundred years, the women in my family have constructed their identities, in part, by performing and preserving the archive of the apostolic "primitive church." Has this embodied knowledge and performative impulse taken hold in my bones; is it inherent in my genealogy, a part of my genetic make-up? My grandfather left the church. I had very limited access to that side of the family. . . the occasional visit, reunions, a few Christmases. Could this limited access to the family "repertoire" explain why I am compelled to study, perform, and embody women from the biblical past? Residual movement?⁵³ Is the Lydia of my liturgical drama my embodiment of the family repertoire? Do my great aunt's embodied performances offer me a way of knowing and understanding my spiritual present? Or, as Taylor has assessed critically Victor Turner's hope to gain "access and insight into another culture," does this project may say more "about [my] own desire for access, and reflect the politics of [my own] interpretations?"⁵⁴ Certainly it does. I desire to access the traditions of my fore Sisters so that I may both preserve and reshape my performance of these traditions within my identity as a feminist of faith.

Performer returns to music stand and reads from the liturgical drama. Upon each line, she announces the character's names to designate a change in speaker. Her voice and body language also shift between each character.

PERFORMER

First Witnesses, page 7.

PERFORMER AS LYDIA OF PHILIPPI

Mary, would you read Paul's letter to us?

PERFORMER AS MARY

Reads from the letter.

So then, my brothers, how dear you are to me and how I miss you! How happy and proud I am of you!—this, dear brothers, is how you should stand in your life in the Lord.

PERFORMER AS WOMAN

Brothers? I thought you said this was a letter to you.

PERFORMER AS FAITH

I can see how women *stand* in your church.

PERFORMER AS LYDIA OF PHILIPPI

No, that's just it. Paul included all of us in the brotherhood, men and women, just like Jesus did. Go on, Mary.

PERFORMER AS MARY

Continues reading.

[P]lease I beg you, try to agree in your life in the Lord. And you too, my partner, I want you to help these women; for they have worked hard for me to spread the gospel May you always feel joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: rejoice!

PERFORMER AS WOMAN

Explodes.

Your union with the Lord? Rejoice? The Lord is dead. You're in union with a dead man. A dead man you never met. How could you know him? How can he save you? What makes you believe?

PERFORMER AS LYDIA OF PHILIPPI

You. It is you . . . I see it now. Your story is the living water. And through the living water we will receive all that God has promised.⁵⁵

Performer returns to gathering up her well's water, her great aunt's story, and reading/rebuilding the well.

PERFORMER

Letter 8. October 18th and 19th, 1947: I worked at the Doctor's office until 3 [p.m.], Saturday, intending to go to [Eel River Communion Meeting] in the eve[ning].⁵⁶

In the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, communion follows the Love Feast. This is symbolic of the bride (the church) preparing for her reunion with the bridegroom (Christ). A believer must always be prepared for this reunion. Remember the story of the wise and foolish virgins?⁵⁷

Letter 8, continued. Etta and Evelyn Coning came for me and directly informed me Everett Kinzie was at the meeting. As a back seat passenger, no one saw my reaction. And I don't recall seeing him until after the services. "May I take you home?"⁵⁸

Another "Beginning." . . . It was a full day of "Togetherness" for us on Sunday. A postal card came in the mail two days later, informing me he got home alright! It came asking for a reply and with an invitation to come to the North Folk Meeting the following week (I didn't make it).⁵⁹

Letter 9. So began a nearly two year series of letters. Mine October 23rd—his Oct. 27th, Nov. 3rd, Nov. 5th. Friendly, informative, once a week letters. But not until Thanksgiving, Nov 27th did I see him again.⁶⁰

Letters again. It WAS a GREAT DISTANCE—and time between visits were long. I'd begin to wonder, would he really come again, with the feeling of desire to "know him better." We depended on those letters, but not until March 6, 1948, did we "meet again!"⁶¹

Performer returns to papers. She finishes rebuilding the well around the downstage suitcase as she reads.

Letter 10. In June 1948, the day came when "The Man Of My Life" was certain. It was hard to give up one love—the job of my life—for the other. But it *only* took a bit over a year for that change to come, and for me to learn to appreciate the virtue of patience in EK.⁶²

Performer hesitates as to whether or not to include giving up her love of work for love of marriage as part of the foundation for her new well.

PERFORMER

Is this what Taylor means when she writes that the "[p]erformance and aesthetics of everyday life vary from community to community. . . . Performances travel, challenging and influencing other performances?"⁶³

Performer may set aside the last letter, depending upon how she feels about marriage and career that day, and continues to rebuild the well.

Letter 11. Finally a wedding date was set for September 11, 1949. In our many talks, we had both decided that we didn't want a big wedding. And if we invited no way could we figure less than 50! The family, brothers and sisters and others, had been trying to get us married for so long we decided to surprise them. Our parents knew, and we would have liked them. . . to be with us. But that was



Plain dress. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

complicated, too; especially to keep it a surprise. . . . The surprise worked for us, scary at times.⁶⁴

Letter 14. The Saturday night before the wedding, one of my suitcases needed to be packed, smuggled out of the house, and sent home with EK. We couldn't put it in his trunk Saturday night, as the car was being used by family members to go to Goshen the next day to a Metzger reunion. Sharing a room with sister Etta complicated things a bit in packing out. Will she miss some of the dresses in our closet?⁶⁵

Letter 15. The suitcase had to be moved out of our room Saturday night at the right time—there might not be one Sunday night. Where to hide it!? In back of the buffet in the dining room? It was angled across a corner and was the receiving station for mail and letters thru the years. What if someone dropped a penny or a toothpick and they stopped to pick it up? Explain that! On the back porch, under a boarded cover, was a well pit. By lifting a couple of boards we could fit the suitcase in.⁶⁶

Performer runs to the well as if just discovering the well pit. She turns the crank, drawing up the suitcase during the voiceover.



Discovering the suitcase. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

RECORDED VOICE

The Samaritan woman's discovery that there is within her a spring of living water is Jesus' affirmation that at the center of her being, she is holy and a bearer of holiness. Her will is a font of liberation.⁶⁷

PERFORMER AS LYDIA KINZIE (BLOCHER)

No longer reading from letters, Performer embodies the character of her aunt and relives the story from memory.

So far, so good! Sunday eve, at the right time and after dark, we got the suitcase to the car and even wondered if somewhere someone could be spying on us! . . . On our way at last!⁶⁸

Performer places the suitcase on the ground outside of the well. She begins to undress and pack the costume/habit of her great aunt in the suitcase.

PERFORMER

I think I understand it now, for me at least: "Archival memory works across distance, over time and space. . . . What changes over time is the value, relevance, or meaning of the archive, how the items get interpreted, even embodied."⁶⁹

Performer stands with the suitcase. She switches character into the liturgical drama First Witnesses. She crosses to the music stand and reads from the script.

FAITH

Will you come with us?

WOMAN

Turns away.

I can't.

Performer pauses. Can she follow in her great aunt's faith? Can she continue her story without taking all of the metaphorical baggage? She crosses back to below the well and puts down the suitcase to finish Lydia's story.

PERFORMER AS LYDIA KINZIE (BLOCHER)

At 3:25 [p.m.] Adolphus met us at the door, and Annie was nearby. . . . We stood at the entry to the dining room, facing east; he stood before us at 3:30 [p.m.]. In five more minutes, we were pronounced: "Husband and Wife."

In our hotel room the night of our wedding, husband Everett chose to read 1 Corinthians 13, a favorite chapter,⁷⁰ read at many weddings.

Reads from the Bible.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own.⁷¹

PERFORMER

Struggles with the personification of charity as female.

Seeketh not *her* own? Charity *suffereth* long, and is *kind*; charity envieth not; vaunteth not itself. *Herself*? Is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly. *Herself* unseemly? Seeketh not her own?



Reading from the Bible. Photograph by Jakob Innes.

Performer closes Bible, wrestling with the words “seeketh not her own.”

And though I understand. . . and though I have all faith. . . seeketh not *her* own?

Performer looks behind at the well she has rebuilt.

PERFORMER

Reads from the Bible, coming to some sort of resolution

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man.⁷² [Woman.] I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.⁷³

Performer realizes that, as a woman, now is the time to put away the “childish things” of trying to live according to the archive of ideals presented by a religion, a gender, or family tradition. Only then can she stand face to face with herself, her family, her God, and be known in full.

“Give me a drink, he said.”

Performer closes the Bible and holds it close to her heart.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.⁷⁴

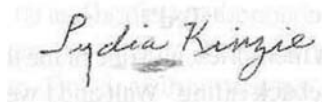
Performer gathers her things and exits, seeking her own. Seeking her own is itself an act of charity.

PROJECTION 6: Pic. "50 years later"



50 years later. Photograph provided by Kari-Anne Innes.

PROJECTION 7: Pic. "Lydia Kinzie signature"



Lydia Kinzie signature.
Photograph provided by
Kari-Anne Innes.

EPILOGUE

The repertoire is charitable toward the performer, seeking not its own authority and permanence as does the archive, but allowing the performer to access the

archive through embodied memory in an effort to access her own identity. In turn, the performer has been charitable toward the archive, deeply appreciating its memory by embodying some of its traditions, while seeking her own way of living authentically in the present. In this case, to seek one's own does not negate or diminish the archive in service of one's own ego or perspective, as the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 or Taylor, in her response to Turner, might suggest. Rather, the performer's intellectual, spiritual, and physical inquiry into the archive allows it to regenerate into a new living creation. Just as Lydia's well gave her access to leave her childhood home and seek her own future, access to the performer's "cistern" of her "sistren" allows the archive to become a wellspring of her own living and embodied repertoire. The original performance remains preserved in the archive, but the individual's repertoire performs on. ■

KARI-ANNE INNES is Director and Lecturer of Arts and Entertainment Administration in the Graduate School at Valparaiso University. I would like to acknowledge all those who helped me develop this piece: the editors of *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, its first director, Benjamin Powell, and its inspiration, my great aunt Lydia Kinzie. Dedicated in memory of John Steven Paul. Correspondence to: Kari-Anne Innes, Arts and Entertainment Administration, Valparaiso University, Center for the Arts, B408 Valparaiso Indiana, IN 46383, USA. Email: karianne.innes@valpo.edu.

NOTES

1. This is a simplified definition of the mystory for the purposes of this project. For more extensive definitions and discussion see Robert Scholes, Nancy Comely, and Gregory Ulmer, "Texts and Research: The Mystory," in *Text Book: Writing through Literature*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2002), 240–75; Michael S. Bowman and Ruth Laurion Bowman, "Performing the Mystory: A Textshop in Autoperformance," in *Teaching Performance Studies*, ed. Nathan Stucky and Cynthia Wimmer (Carbondale; Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 165.

2. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003) 16–33.

3. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Hermeneutics," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 790.

4. Marjorie Procter-Smith, *In Her Own Rite: Constructing Feminist Liturgical Tradition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 37.

5. Acts 16:11–15 (King James Version).

6. Scholes, Comely, and Ulmer, "Texts and Research," 240.

7. *Ibid.*, 241.

8. *Ibid.*, 246.

9. These texts may be classified as the "popcycle—institutions and their discourses that constructed one's identity," for which the "mystory is a cognitive map by which one locates one's position" (*Ibid.*).

10. Gregory L. Ulmer, *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 142.
11. Michael S. Bowman and Ruth Laurion Bowman reassert this function of the mystery, writing that it “attempts to uncover and trace the story of the ‘self’ that is buried or enciphered in a variety of ‘other’ historical discourses” (“Performing the Mystery,” 164).
12. Ibid.
13. Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Hermeneutics,” 790; Procter-Smith, *In Her Own Rite*.
14. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16.
15. Ulmer, *Heuretics*, 140.
16. “Cistern,” *WikiDoc*, 24 October 2007, accessed 11 May 2016, <http://www.wikidoc.org/index.php/Cistern>.
17. Kathleen Fischer, *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988).
18. Ibid., 108.
19. “Liturgical Dramas by John Steven Paul and Soul Purpose,” last modified 23 June 2009, <http://www.valpo.edu/theatre/activities/soulpurpose/repertoire.php>.
20. Dee Bechtel Howard, “Women and the Church,” (blog), *RootsWeb BRETHREN-L Archives*, 20 January 2000 (11:39 p.m.), 23 June 2009, accessed 8 May 2007, <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/BRETHREN/2000-01/0948411540>.
21. Ibid.
22. “Sistren,” *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*, accessed 11 May 2016, <http://www.finedictionary.com/Sistren.html>.
23. “Cistern.”
24. Ibid.
25. “Cis,” *Dictionary.com*, accessed 29 August 2015, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cis?s=t>.
26. “Trans,” *Dictionary.com*, accessed 29 August 2015, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/trans?s=t>.
27. I use the term “trans” here loosely to refer to the origin of my faith rather than to my biological sex. I do not wish to equate my experience and struggles with those in the transgender community, but rather to use this “slippage of words” to question the alignment of gender and faith within myself and the faith community.
28. Howard, “Women and the Church.”
29. Don Hartman (FamilyHart), 21 January 2000 (9:48 a.m.), comment on Dee Bechtel Howard, “Women and the Church,” (blog), *RootsWeb BRETHREN-L Archives*, 20 January 2000 (11:39 p.m.), 23 June 2009, accessed 8 May 2007, <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/BRETHREN/2000-01/0948411540>.
30. 1 Cor. 14:34 (King James Version).
31. Don Hartman, (FamilyHart), 21 January 2000 (9:48 a.m.), comment on Dee Bechtel Howard, “Women and the Church,.”
32. s.v. “Old German Baptist Brethren,” in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, (Philadelphia, PA: Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., 1983–84).

33. Zandra Wagoner, "What's in a Name?" Name History, Womaen's Caucus, *Progressive Brethren Online*, accessed 4 May 2007, www.womaenscaucus.org/namehistory.htm.
34. s.v. "Women," in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*.
35. Charles D. Thompson Jr., *The Old German Baptist Brethren: Faith, Farming and Change in the Virginia Blue Ridge* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 3-4.
36. s.v. "Blocher," in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*.
37. Katherine Blocher Cable, "50 Years," in *Family Memories: A Collection of Memories of the Children and Grandchildren of Simon and Lucy Blocher*, ed. Mary Evelyn Blocher Karstedt and Katherine Blocher Cable (Covington, OH: Miami Valley Press, 2004), 236.
38. Fischer, *Women at the Well*, 31.
39. Kari-Anne Blocher Innes and John Steven Paul, *First Witnesses* (Valparaiso, IN: Valparaiso University, 1992).
40. Lydia Kinzie, "Memoirs," in *Family Memories: A Collection of Memories of the Children and Grandchildren of Simon and Lucy Blocher*, ed. Mary Evelyn Blocher Karstedt and Katherine Blocher Cable (Covington, OH: Miami Valley Press, 2004), 221.
41. *Ibid.*, 222.
42. *Ibid.*, 224.
43. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 178.
44. *Ibid.*, 175-76.
45. Kinzie, "Memoirs," 224.
46. Innes and Paul, *First Witnesses*, 9-10.
47. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 2-3.
48. Kinzie, "Memoirs," 225.
49. *Ibid.*, 26.
50. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.
51. *Ibid.*, 5.
52. Joseph Roach, qtd. in Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 5.
53. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 5.
54. *Ibid.*, 6.
55. Innes and Paul, *First Witnesses*, 7.
56. Kinzie, "Memoirs," 227.
57. Donald R. Kraybill and Carl Desportes Bowman, *On the Backroad to Heaven: Old Order Hutterites, Mennonites, Amish, and Brethren* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 158.
58. Kinzie, "Memoirs," 227-28.
59. *Ibid.*, 228.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*, 229 original emphasis.
63. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 3.
64. Kinzie, "Memoirs," 231.
65. *Ibid.*, 232.

66. Ibid.
67. Fischer, *Women at the Well*, 37.
68. Kinzie, "Memoirs," 232–33.
69. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.
70. Kinzie, "Memoirs," 234.
71. 1 Cor. 13: 1–4 (King James Version).
72. 1 Cor. 13: 11 (King James Version).
73. 1 Cor. 13: 12 (King James Version).
74. 1 Cor. 13: 13 (King James Version).