Editorial
Religion and Theatrical Drama, an Introduction

Larry D. Bouchard [1],* and Charles A. Gillespie [2],*

1   Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904-4126, USA
2   Department of Catholic Studies, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT 06825, USA
*   Correspondence: ldb4k@virginia.edu (L.D.B.); gillespiec4@sacredheart.edu (C.A.G.)

Often, a lonely light bulb illuminates the edge of a stage outside of working hours. Part safety mechanism against falling in the dark and part theatrical tradition, the "ghost light" keeps the living alive and brightens up the place for any spirits still hoping to practice an old monologue[1]. Stages juxtapose worlds, or fragments of worlds. The ghost light, then, would illuminate juxtaposed worlds, of the living and of the possibly otherwise. In some ways, this Special Issue of *Religions* takes theatrical juxtaposition as its premise. We invited papers working at intersections between studies of religious history, thought, and practice and studies of theatrical drama.

We began this project long before a global pandemic caused commercial and amateur theaters to go dark for a long time. That sentence might have just as readily addressed the flowering of digital scholarship or the many live-streamed religious practices that have developed as a result of COVID-19. We intended this introductory note to appear at the start of the project and so composed it then. Thanks to a number of reasons, our introduction now appears at the project's conclusion, but we decided only to make a few small additions in lieu of a new version. Reading, writing, and thinking about theatrical drama during and after a time of hiatus will juxtapose our current world with many others. In many ways, a time of pause might be the best time to reconsider the exchange between religion and drama in hopes of new approaches still to come.

Like the best staged stories, complications and conflicts emerge almost instantly. Religion and drama are inherently contested areas for research, and we believe that scholarly approaches in both areas have fragmented in analogous ways—ways we see as mutually beneficial. Into such an "empty space" between the fragments, as Peter Brook might regard our juxtaposition[2], we hope to stage crisscross illuminations (Brook 1968). Not so much to resolve antagonisms (antagonisms that often seem "natural" and "common sense") but to encourage new conversations where potential conflicts are viewed differently, sometimes dialectically and even companionably, giving rise to new and surprising knowledge. What discoveries could be unveiled anew in readings of dramas and religions in the theatrical ghost light?

Studies of theatrical drama and studies of religion share a number of hermeneutical concerns. What phenomena provide the objects of study? Will they be embodied persons, practices, institutions, ancient traditions, new movements, beliefs and theories, material cultures, texts, archives? Theatrical drama demands all the familiar practices necessary for interpreting literature: close reading, philological analysis, and engagement with questions of form, genre, style, intent, and authority. At the same time, however, interpretations of theatrical drama must remain aware of drama's orientation toward an end in theatrical realization in social space and time. Where and how do the contributions of actors, design-

---

1   See "Ghost Light" in (Fisher 2015).
2   "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage" (Brook 1968, p. 9). David Wiles complicates Brook's famous metaphor, observing how all spaces are particularly contextualized, never "empty" as such (Wiles 1997, pp. 3–4). We suggest that theatrical drama negotiates emptiness, demarcations, and crisscross movements.

ers, producers, and audience reception impact theoretical readings and the appropriation of theatrical categories?[3]

Problems in religious studies methods can be said to "rhyme" with the genre trouble faced by studies of theatrical drama. It is well known that the field of religious studies includes comparative and critical approaches often guided by functional definitions and methods, including ironic awareness of the near impossibility of defining religion satisfactorily as a generic subject matter while proceeding as if it could be. Yet, the field of religious studies also incorporates scholarly disciplines practiced more or less within traditions. Such scholars interpret aspects of belief, affect, thought, and practice often while interpreting history, society, culture, and nature in ways informed by traditionary and constructive perspectives (from Mahayana Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, North American indigenous traditions, Ethical Humanism, and traditions within traditions, e.g., Hasidic Judaism, Sufi Mysticism, Kiowa Sun Dance ceremonies). So-called critical and confessional ways of studying religion are frequently regarded as antagonistic, especially if certain traditions seem implicitly hegemonic in given academic spheres. However, such ways of putting things prove, on countless occasions, to be a false binary. Drama in the theater may well help us explore and reconsider how to move interpretations beyond such binary occasions.

Conversations between religion and theatrical drama often stall, mired in putatively commonsensical origin stories and disciplinary antagonisms. Consider how religious-cultural ritual and meaning making can be read as performance. As with the contests of the Olympian gods staged at Delphi, the emotive ghosts of Japanese Noh theater, reenactments of Christ's passion at Oberammergau, Purim plays, Indian classical drama—in these, theater and religion seem to have converged. Moreover, given the cultural or historical distance now separating us from them, such convergences can now appear anew and differently with shifting interpretive paradigms. For instance, do Euripides' *Bacchae* sing praises for Dionysus as an *act of worship*, to *reify civic values and duties* by displaying the dangers of unchecked bacchanalia, or to *lament* the conflicted power structures of family, tribe, gender, or even substance abuse, not to mention the complications of "fate" or random contingency? It is by no means clear that different disciplinary approaches to religion and theatrical drama must place these meanings into zero-sum competition; yet, that can be what happens. One finds dramatic literatures studied alongside other narrative and lyric forms in the field of religion and literature with minimal attention to performance or performativity. Theatrical events are grouped alongside other ritual activities, with minimal attention to theological or atheological ramifications. Theatrical theologies and dramaturgical approaches to religion may borrow drama's vocabulary without attending to distinctive ways in which religious meanings are constructed and interpreted through the arts of theater and drama.

Yet, our name for this hybrid art form, "theatrical drama", bears traces of its own binary antagonisms. While drama and theater are often interchangeable, overlapping terms, "drama" can connote a kind of literature—plays, which represent, through dialogue, characters involved in temporally concentrated ("dramatic", "comic", "tragic") actions—together with the practices (acting, directing, etc.) of interpreting plays in performance. Whereas "theater" often suggests the arts of making performances to be seen and heard (what Aristotle called spectacle, *opsis*), and "theater" gives much attention to performance–audience–spatial relationships and to the business (including economic) of sustaining this performing art. One locus of antagonism has been the play script. The study of dramatic literature can be regarded as marginal to "actual" theatrical performance and, of course, vice versa. We are reminded that to perform Shakespeare's Scottish play—in the round, in modern dress (or cross dress), crossing back and forth from stage (or no stage) into an audience, indoors or outdoors, in sun or starlight or in rain, a la Stanislavski's methods

---

[3] For the influence of such questions on twentieth-century Christian thought, see (Gillespie 2019).

or Brecht's—we eventually need the thane of Cawdor and, at least some of, the story and script of *Macbeth*[4].

Arguments between drama-as-literature and theater-as-living performance have been fruitful, yet also deadly if cast as incommensurable oppositions. In certain ways, drama/theater binaries resemble those in religious studies, as when comparative and critical methodologies seek to keep one at an existential distance from the "actual" religious perspectives and practices studied or when tradition-informed scholarship proceeds as if comparative and critical perspectives on religion were irrelevant. We can also sense resemblance in comparable charges of bias. The field of theater studies often exposes in culture, including religion, a pervasive "anti-theatrical bias", having to do with threatened authenticity, a famous example being how "hypocrisy" comes from a Greek word for stage acting[5]. Arguably, there is an analogous "anti-religious bias" that regards *any* trace of cultural, institutional, "traditional", or rarified religiosity as inherently self-and-other blinding and oppressive, also threatening some sense of credibility and authenticity. That the two biases can conjoin is seen in the early Protestant charge against the Latin Mass as "hocus pocus"—perhaps a parody of *hoc est enim corpus meum*—as if it were a theatrical magic show, or reflected in contemporary concerns about the "entertainment production value" of some mega-church worship services.

Perhaps it is inevitable that when one brings estranged fields into closer conversation, the terms of engagement will still pre-condition how the available resources are deployed, which has been the case with terms such as "ritual", "spirituality", "drama", and "performance". As it happens, when disciplinary innovators employ such terms, engagement with theatrical drama may be precluded, as if a vestige of an earlier, naïve period of study. One may hear, for instance, that *performance studies is not theater studies; spirituality studies is not the study of religious institutions*. Consider Catherine Bell's *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Bell 2009), which has shaped how the approach of ritual studies to religion has redefined itself along Foucauldian and constructivist lines. Identifying a hermeneutical thought–action dichotomy in Clifford Geertz, for whom symbols and rituals in religious cultures effect a synthesis of "ethos" and "world view", Bell observes how Geertz inscribes a depth semantics—that is, reading ritual "like a text"—which cannot take ritual seriously as *action*. When symbol and ritual are treated as expressions of communal meaning and understanding (*verstehen*), they become inherently *translatable* into the consoling, stabilizing terms (indeed, the ethos and world view) of the anthropologist qua anthropologist. Something similar might be said of Victor Turner, for whom—during the liminal phase of a rite of passage—the meaningful lore of elders becomes newly available to initiates. Bell's theorem attends to the power play of ritualizing, how the "ritualizers" (e.g., priests and prefects) are in effect establishing their positions vis a vis those ritualized. *Power consolidation* is the deliberately obscured (*hocus pocus*) but crucial point of ritual activity.

For Bell, however, something such as theatrical drama—even if it were both meaning-making and power-making, hermeneutical and political—would not be of great *theoretical* concern. Bell much enjoyed theater[6], but her view of ritual is not at base complicated by particular meanings and dramas as such. Our point is not, however, that Bell was as reductive to power play as Geertz may have been reductive to stable meanings or that power versus meaning is no less a binary than action versus thought. Our point is not even (or only) that power and meaning might be brought together more dialectically. Rather, to the extent that Bell is correct—that a group's ritualizers consolidate power and resistance and that consolidation happens in motivated and contextualized actions both seen and not seen (that is, occulted or hidden)—then ritualizing is both dramatic and theatrical. Far from being a supplementary augmentation to how ritual should be studied, actual dramas and theatrical performances can and should be brought into interrogative relationships

---

[4] See especially "Text and Performance" in (Hornby [1977] 1995, pp. 92–109).

[5] See (Barish 1981; Freeman 2017).

[6] See Diane Jonte-Pace's Foreword to Bell 2009 where she describes a play Bell wrote for friends, a "Millennium Masque" (Bell 2009, p. x).

with studies of ritual—politically and hermeneutically, in terms of particular meanings and particular powers.

Earlier projects in anthropology and sociology, such as those by Kenneth Burke, Victor and Edith Turner, and Irving Goffman, did deploy dramaturgical analogies for social life. This trajectory, operating across literary studies, anthropology, and sociology, later settled into something entirely new called performance studies. Theater practitioner and theorist Richard Schechner identified many "points of contact" between theater studies and anthropological research, which would be "necessary if we are ever to comprehend performance interculturally and theoretically" (Schechner 1985, pp. 21–22). To learn "performance knowledge" requires moving beyond the canons of playwrights and theorists that reduce the performance event into, as he would put it, simply staging a play. Schechner embraced performance knowledge head on, developing and deploying his ideas through the work of The Performance Group. Their *Dionysius in '69* performed a version of the *Bacchae* as an immersive event with ritual actions, actor improvisations, and a concluding procession out into the streets of New York.

Schechner's movement away from playwrights and techniques problematizes theatrical drama's ties to literary cultures, for drama does tend to sacralize the play as verbal script. "In the West, the *active* sense of script was forgotten . . . and the doings of a particular production became the way to present a drama in a new way. Thus, the script no longer functioned as a code from transmitting *action* through time; instead the doings of each production became the code for re-presenting the words-of-the-drama" (Schechner 1977, p. 38)[7]. Performance encompasses the entirety of a theatrical dramatic event, including its audience. Indeed, performance interfaces with other aspects of social life and need not be theatrical at all. "Just as drama may be thought of as a specialized kind of script, so theatre can be considered a specialized kind of performance. Thus another model can be generated, one of oppositional pairs: Drama/Script—Theatre/Performance. Cultures which emphasize the dyad drama-script deemphasize theatre-performance; and vice-versa" (Schechner 1977, p. 39). Schechner implies that when scholars (of drama or of religion) place interpretive weight on "Drama/Script", they limit theatrical drama to its semantic power, derived from the canonical dramatist whose *script*ural words matter far more than the ephemeral, contingent actions of a theater ensemble or the contextualized ritual actions of a religious community.

The fusion of performance and ritual studies has rightly encouraged us to contend with the reign of legitimizing *logoi* over theatrical drama and ritual practice. However, in *Dionysus in '69*, The Performance Group actually did use nearly half of Euripides (in William Arrowsmith's fine translation) and debated which player improvisations were working and which were not as the performance developed and stabilized over time and attracted a following of knowledgeable audiences. Not only was the "show" theatrical drama, but its stretched yet strong dialectic of performance and story (especially its analogy to political gods of mob violence—"If Nixon in '68, why not Dionysus in '69?")[8]—continues to contribute to performance knowledge and ritual theory.

Even so, when scholars of the performance paradigm put their interest into empirical methods of *both* power and semantic analysis, they may still risk disregarding theater's and ritual's perennial interest in human experiences of the unseen or invisible. Consider how Donalee Dox's *Reckoning with the Spirit in the Paradigm of Performance* articulates the need for performance studies to find approaches that are genuinely attentive to a practitioner's reports of spiritual experience. She draws on cognate methods—from religious studies takes on spirituality to neuroscience and psychology of religion, as well as cultural theory—to question and learn from "what cannot be seen in vernacular spiritual practices but is (for practitioners) nonetheless present" (Dox 2016, p. 148). These answers cannot be translated into the empirical or materialist terms prized by the performance paradigm, and they

---

7   The italics in this quotation are ours.
8   See (The Performance Group 1970; Shephard 1991).

retain their spiritual sense. Rather than abandon the scholar's task of rigorous analysis and simply "affirm" spiritual experience as ineffably personal, Dox argues for thinkers to integrate mind–body–spirit and community to see performance as a "permeable boundary between people's sense of an inner, spiritual life and the bodies acting in the materiality of culture" (Dox 2016, p. 60). Performance now becomes a porous boundary between the visible and the invisible, public exteriority and inner life, shared material cultures and personally meaningful spiritual experiences. Dox attends to unsung spiritual knowledge in "Western vernacular spiritualties", phenomena she finds too quickly dismissed away as commercialized orientalism or trite therapeutic play.

Indeed, the dominating discourse of performance and performativity in religious studies (e.g., Schechner, Bell) undervalues *dramatic* materials, especially texts and scripts, and the religious meanings, theologies, and ideologies those dramatic materials construct, complicate, and disclose. Dox's and others' work within the materiality of performance and spirituality opens up epistemological, scientific, and cultural questions apart from (predominantly Christian) theological assumptions; yet, they also proceed to foreclose other lines of theological and religious inquiry that might benefit from their own reckoning with performance. For instance, Dox writes, "The ontological status of spirituality is outside the scope of this book" (Dox 2016, p. 17). Perhaps so, perhaps not? To juxtapose fields of study under any heading also means wagering that they may continue to illuminate each other, especially in consideration of their forms, meanings, effects, and occasions. As actors told to "find their light" know very well, any illumination of some part of the stage will also cast shadows onto others. A return to consider religion and theatrical drama does not mean we intend to disregard theater's social embodiment or the elitism that reduces religious studies to the analysis of institutional theologies.

Rather, our goal is to expand the playing space we find between religion and theatrical drama to include literary texts, philosophies, histories, normative theologies, ethics, and comparative analyses alongside work with ritual, performance, and spirituality.

Already, for instance, we have used the word "practice" in reference to both religion and theatrical drama; and it is easily observed that both fields involve narratives and dramas (stories and scripts in various senses) and spectacles (activities arranged to be seen and heard). As treated above, ritual has probably been the most commonplace of Schechner's "points of contact" between religion and drama, though more of the side of "theater" and performance studies. What would it mean to apply these lessons to the interpretation of dramatic texts and theatrical art? We invited practical and theoretical studies of religion with theatrical drama (plays, performances) whose occasions would, if not overcome such binaries, see them more as dialectical relationships (in Paul Ricoeur's sense of simultaneous continuity and discontinuity). One way of doing so, in some of our own work on theatrical drama, has been to notice "metatheater" (generally, a work of theater becoming aware of itself as theater, but not confined to "plays-within plays" or actors who overtly break "fourth walls"). Metatheater is a phenomenon noticeable not only in performance, but also in the language of plays and in action being dramatized.[9] Metatheater foregrounds the ritual or conventional structures at play in theatrical drama and religious practices. The pre-show invitation commandment to "turn off your electronic devices" is, in a strict sense, performative speech that initiates the audience into their necessary participation in the performance, styled as silent observer, on-stage volunteer, or some combination depending on the choices of the playwright and production.

So, let us return to *Macbeth*, whose actions in part turn on performing, appearing, and not appearing to others to be a legitimate king, and to its metatheatrical beginning:

---

[9]   A *locus classicus* is (Abel 1963). In our work, we distinguish three, sometimes overlapping, metatheatrical occasions: 1, when plays directly refer to themselves (e.g., the Stage Manager in Wilder's *Our Town*); 2, when plays or staged performances occur within the action represented in the play (e.g., the Mousetrap in *Hamlet*, the "For the Love of Venus" scenes in Suzan-Lori Parks' *Venus*); and 3, when theater-like dimensions in life are so emphasized as to refer indirectly to the play or theatrical environment (e.g., Hamlet's reaction to Gertrude's and Claudius's presiding at court, in his "suits of woe" soliloquy; when soliloquies are played to address the actual audience, they could count as metatheater-1).

a twelve-line scene with three witches.[10] Ostensibly, the witches have gathered to plot the fate of Macbeth, but their language implies the contingencies of encounter—"When shall we three meet again"—and of setting—"In thunder, lightning, or in rain" and "Where the place? Upon the heath." Everything about them is "performative", in that their words *effect* what they mean (and as witches they could presumably effectuate the weather), through spectacles intended for Macbeth and also for us. When *Macbeth* is staged, words and actions within the story will prompt decisions about everything we, the audience, will encounter in the *mise-en-scène* of a given production, which, in any case, will have to contend somehow with this "fair" and "foul" world's "fog and filthy air". *Macbeth* is now so established in English discourse and so referential to its production history that the play seems to anticipate the future of its language. In its time, "when the hurlyburly's done" likely referred to tumult and insurrection. In 1984, it referred to the tumult of frantic living and acting in David Rabe's play about actors, *Hurlyburly*; however, it is easy to imagine this meaning being implicit in 1606. For the witches' words are also addressed to the audience (will the witches reappear?), to the frantic business of the stage (at a theater or at court, where *Macbeth* may have been early performed), and to vague yet intense human contexts: does not every "meeting" anticipate many futures?

Does the scene illuminate religion and does religion illuminate the scene? One can ponder this question variously: in terms of appearance and reality, visibility and invisibility, seeming and being, theologically and ethically. These were issues of existential import to Elizabethans and Jacobeans trying to negotiate inner religious convictions and exterior religious appearances against the dangerous winds of Catholic heritage and Protestant-political reform. Theatrical drama places its audiences face-to-face with face-to-face and mask-to-mask encounters. Sarah Beckwith observes that when the King, Duncan, tells Malcom that "There's no art/To find the mind's construction in the face"—in reference to a former thane of Cawdor whose treason he could not forgive and saying this just before he greets his new thane, Macbeth—he ironically speaks a theme pervasive in Shakespeare (Beckwith 2011, pp. 9, 16–23). How can we *see* (before, beside, or behind the face) "that within which passes show" (*Hamlet*, I.2), namely the sincerity, authenticity, integrity, or lack thereof of an embodied human being? Theatrical drama is especially situated to probe such a question, in that each time an actor steps forth "in character", the construction of mind and spiritual (*geistig, geistlich*) presence is interrogated. Theatrical acting recapitulates the problematic play of personal, ethical, and religious presence in life; and dramatic art perennially re-represents the problem, as in Duncan's statement (all the more ironic because he will fatally fail to construe Macbeth.) What theological, political, and fictional persons do theatrical masks and dramatic faces reveal and conceal?

Or, one could ponder the Jacobean contexts of witch references. Are "witches", actual and/or imagined, part of religious discourse in and around London, where theaters and pulpits to some extent competed for the same audiences? Are such references uncritically reflective of ideological distortion in English political and religious discourse? Or are the references *critically* reflective? Is their abiding presence in the play covertly but noticeably commenting on a putative failure of religion in England to exorcize or subdue belief in them? And, or, are they theatrical substitutes for theological meanings that could not then be openly dramatized; are they, for instance, providential agents of divine or demonic judgment—or not?[11] And do they reflect not only historical lore of the occult and the demonic but also realities—be they social, psychological, political, cultural-structural, linguistic, even "natural" or "divine"—that any age must contend with, albeit in particular, ever changing ways?

The occult themes in *Macbeth*, moreover, confer something else to theater history, in the allure of its purported curse. Actors dread the cavalier mention of the title character's name as a sign of bad luck or worse. That the Scottish play has produced many euphemisms—

---

10 While some once questioned the Shakespearean authorship of this first scene, few would today; although, other witch scenes or lines (III.5, parts of IV.I) are generally considered interpolations. See Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason's "Introduction" and "Appendix 1" to (Shakespeare 2015).

11 Such questions are explored, with respect to several of Shakespeare's plays, in (Knapp 2002; Greenblatt 1988, 1993, 2001, 2004).

Mackers, MacB, Macbiddy—displays a quasi-ritual work around its weird and dangerous subject matter. The thane's name should, perhaps, never be uttered except when explicitly required by and for the performance of Shakespeare's script. The theater-makers' intentions and community would always matter for the power of this name, a power that emerges epiphenomenally between the text and its interpretation. Theatrical dramas, similar to religions, live within what Hans-Georg Gadamer called histories of interpretive effects; that is, a play's effects "on" or "in" history are real *through interpretive responses to responses*, including performance histories[12]. The name of an ancient Scottish king starts to patrol a sacred precinct. Why are we so intrigued by these stage witches, plotted fates, and special names? Linguistic markers carry existential weight; theatrical drama complements, unsettles, and recreates the markers and the weight.

Such a mode of history as interpretive and performative is also evident when religionists and dramatists acknowledge fluidity among original documents, events, and discoveries. Quests for an authentic inscription—documentary hypotheses for the composition of the Hebrew Bible, archeological searches for some ancient papyrus bearing the autograph of Saul/Paul of Tarsus, or for the earliest recitations of the Qur'an, or an explanation of the angel Moroni's gift of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith—such quests mirror the hermeneutic difficulties that bear on theorizing theatrical drama. The inherited script for *Macbeth* reports a collaborative effort formed by the necessities of seventeenth-century stage technologies, marketability, political intrigue, the talents of available actors, not to mention four centuries of editorial decisions. Yes, it is the thematic calamity of the drama's story—the depth of the king's betrayal—that conjures up a history of theatrical realization; yet, the thematic calamity is inseparable from that ongoing hermeneutic-theatrical praxis, which constitutes *Macbeth/Macbiddy*.

Through such praxis, the ghost of Banquo now haunts playhouses rather than Scottish castles. There must be some consequential similarities and differences between the ideation of *Macbeth's* violence and its mimetic realization. Theatrical action, which has its own contingencies and dangers (falling flats, dropped lines, breaking a leg while "breaking a leg"), both establishes and crosses permeable boundaries between the fictional stories told and the lived histories of storytellers and audiences. Theatrical drama raises the stakes for interpreting what sorts of tragedies and curses count as real or which witches and superstitions should be avoided. A choice to read or perform *Macbeth* wagers on this story's continuing importance and its aesthetic merit even as interpretive decisions must calculate for any moral dangers or argumentative distortions.

So, should the hermeneutic and critical juxtaposition of religion and theatrical drama constitute a distinct subfield with its own developing methodologies? This question—complicated, for instance, by connotations of *ownership* and approached obliquely rather than directly—helps to organize many of the concerns at work in this Special Issue of *Religions*. It is attentive to two marginalized discourses: religion at work in the study of theatrical drama and theatrical drama at work in the study of religion. We sought articles that would help many fields to overcome the rhetorical traps laid by organizing heuristics such as "religion" and "theatrical drama". In even shorter words, we remained hermeneutically and critically interested, but not exclusively so, in plays-in-performance and in religious meanings and emotions.

As with Antonin Artaud's phrase "theatre and its double", the essays in this Special Issue not only complicate binaries in religion and theatrical drama, but also develop them toward new understandings (Artaud 1958). Theatrical drama holds its magic mirror up to

---

[12] Hans-Georg Gadamer theorizes interpretation as an encounter aimed toward an understanding already imbedded within traditions that include the interpreter's own forestructures or prejudices (that is, pre-understandings). Neither interpreters nor the objects of interpretation can step outside of history and its affects/effects. "Consciousness of being affected by history (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*) is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*" (Gadamer 1989, p. 301, emphasis original). For more on the relationship between Gadamer's hermeneutics and the performing or playing of theatrical drama, see the major section on "Play as the Clue to Ontological Explanation" (Gadamer 1989, p. 101ff).

the invisible, even "metaphysical", as well as to overt and visible dimensions of social life.[13] Consider, for instance, how Schleiermacher's "intuition and feeling" of the infinite universe (Schleiermacher [1799] 1996, pp. 22–23) or the unspeakability of a silent scream (Bertolt Brecht's *gestus* for his character Mother Courage)[14] might be expressed or suppressed by theatrical characters. Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* displays emotional responses to realities that are better expressed subjunctively, through the temporality of the stage. The last act permits an encounter with valued relationality, developed in depth and richness over a lifetime, compressed into a single overwhelming, disturbing moment, perhaps *sub specie aeternitatis*.

The problem of invisible reality returns, with differences, when we consider the *repetitions* of theatrical events that are inherently ephemeral. Whose version of script (or for that matter scripture) guides truth into view? Do conflicting interpretations lead to some combination of destruction, deconstruction, and revelation? Should we remain comfortably at home in our disciplinary languages or venture toward foreign lands with only books as our guide? Tony Kushner's religiously saturated ruminations on communication and transcendence provide theatrical models to question the mutual legibility of interreligious dialogue. Can religious or dramatic tourists ever speak the same language? Consider how Kushner's at least thrice revised, twice published *Homebody/Kabul* complicates assumptions about textual authority *as a plot device* and as a phenomenon in itself. Performativity trades on repetition, difference, and citation. Do scholarly or theoretical interpretations of theatrical drama differ significantly from the interpretive re-readings of playwrights, actors, and directors? *Homebody/Kabul* asks rather directly, through its story and its auto-redaction history, about the dangers of poetic words unmoored from community, place, and history.

Despite the figurative and sometimes physical dangers, theatrical border crossings disclose the cultural inflection of religious meanings. However, the norms that distinguish theatrical drama worthy of serious engagement from silly entertainments remain unwritten. That is, theatrical drama consistently challenges the genre rules that govern the traditions of scholarly interpretation. By construing religion and theatrical drama so broadly, we invited considerations of any and all instances of theatrical drama: from literary dramatic classics and new plays to music dramas and commercial musical theater, political theater, liturgical pageantry, and devised and experimental dramas. Religious and theatrical phenomena can be co-conspiratorial. The sound of theatrical drama permeates religious events with great frequency: Wagner's Bridal Chorus from the music drama *Lohengrin* or "Sunrise, Sunset" from *Fiddler on the Roof* at weddings. Genre shapes (and revises) audience expectations akin to religious intentionality. When Tevye addresses an auditorium full of paying customers, while speaking directly to "you"—that is, the God who made "many poor people"—does the audience implicitly play a divine role? What separates the theatrical drama of a religious ritual from commercial spectacle? Both exemplify "Tradition".

The materiality of strange bodies—and remember, the medium of theatrical drama is enfleshed, speaking, moving persons alongside other such persons—preoccupies the gaze of anthropologists of religion. Theatrical drama can become a surgical theater for the intellectual dissection of religious ideas. When Suzan-Lori Parks' play *Venus* begins with

---

13   For Artaud, every object "on stage" (i.e., in performance space)—from players to props, stillness to gestures, silences to musical sounds, declamatory speeches to inarticulate cries—becomes a sign in a larger signifying event. All things on stage become double; they are both themselves and their signing, which in turn is "metaphysically" revealing. "[B]etween life and theater there will be no distinct division, but instead a continuity" (Artaud 1958, p. 126). In characterizing this depth-revealing sensibility as "mystical", "alchemical", "magic", and "sorcery", Artaud identified the performative, efficacious power of what he called works of *total theatre* to disclose or materialize meanings in ways that remain irreducible to the theatrical event's ingredient parts. Artaud thus distinguished "revelations" in theatrical performance from mimesis as mere ornamentation and dissembling.

14   *Gestus*, here, signals the range of representational and disruptive acting techniques aimed at undermining the audience's merely passive empathy. In Brechtian jargon, Mother Courage screams in slow motion and without sound so to employ one of Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekte* (distancing or alienation effects, which make the familiar strange). The audience simultaneously sits with the horror of the death of a child and the virtuosity of an actress who is not, in reality, that child's mother. See the vivid description and illustration of Helene Weigel's performance of the "silent scream" from the Berliner Ensemble's 1951 production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* in (Rouse 2007, pp. 303–4). See also "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" (Brecht [1957] 1964, pp. 91–99, especially, pp. 94–96) and "A Short Organum on for the Theatre" (Brecht [1957] 1964, pp. 179–205, especially paragraph 47, p. 193).

an actress donning the bodysuit of the Venus Hottentot, the audience confronts questions of bodily authenticity and racialization (Bouchard 2011, pp. 200–6)[15]. Goddess and freak, lover and specimen, the spectacle of the Venus Hottentot ritualizes dis- and re-embodiment. Theatrical drama loans flesh to the interpretations of narrative, but in what ways has that incarnational model presumed a European, Christian, and male gaze? The Brechtian flavor of Parks' play alienates its audience from easy *catharsis*. Feelings of heartbreak and empathy will be ruptured by laughter and singing; the moral comfort of historical and cultural distance from the anthropological abuses on display will be subverted through contemporary idiom and direct address. Theatrical drama risks, but rarely realizes, the literal touch of bodily presence in a political space where comfortable abstraction must yield directly to social commentary. At the very least, live performance invites the proto-political speech needed to negotiate a shuffle towards the exits.

Far from reducing theatrical drama's aesthetics to moralizing or ethical pedagogy, religious reflection finds an explanatory ally in drama's structures and stories. Consider the emergence of theatrical theologies and dramaturgical methods for studying the Christian tradition. Some deploy theatrical analogies to frame Christian theology as a task of corporate and community interpretation. Theologian Kevin J. Vanhoozer finds drama to be the core of doctrinal debate to find communities with "faith speaking understanding."[16] Theatrical language clarifies the *telos* of scriptural interpretation in liturgical and communal living. Theological dramatic theorists such as Tom Driver have found within the history of theatrical drama and its ritualizing a mode for modernity to ask "religious" questions with irony[17]. Indeed, theatrical drama has long reinvigorated care for bodies and affect as they inform religious reflection. Sarah Beckwith finds theological development in the transportable, multi-bodied, and streetwise Jesus of the medieval Corpus Christi plays as it transfigures and transports the meanings of sacramental performances usually restricted to a church space. The liturgical bread-body plays its role differently in dialogue with the bodies of Christ of the processional drama (Beckwith 2001). New theological questions surface in the pageant's wake. Broadway theater producers continue to make money from devout audiences hungry for scriptural and religious themes. Commercial plays can be interpreted as serving both God and mammon, nuancing and constructing theological meaning through scriptural interpretations.[18]

Such interpretations, moreover, might even venture into the abstract realms of theology. Conversely, the language of theatrical drama might wander into the pages of the churchly (a la Karl Barth's *kirchlich*) theories on God, transcendence, and ritual. Recent turns to a "theatrical theology" (Vander Lugt and Hart 2014; Craigo-Snell 2014) follow the large footprints of Hans Urs von Balthasar's five-volume fusion of the European dramatic tradition and Christian systematic theology in *Theo-Drama* (von Balthasar 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1998). If religion promises to codify and represent for our consideration in the "mirror held up to nature" those feelings and beliefs that make existence meaningful, then

---

15　See also (Bouchard 2011, pp. 200–6). These comments on *Venus*, however, are shared by Gillespie and Bouchard.

16　"Doctrine is dramatic, then, because it concerns the church's efforts to perform it, to speak and show its understanding of what God is doing in Christ to renew creation" (Vanhoozer 2014, p. 27). Vanhoozer's title, *Faith Speaking Understanding*, alludes both to Anselm's formula—*fides quaerens intellectum*, faith seeking understanding—and to Vanhoozer's application of the theatrical analogy to the importance of doctrinal debate for the life of the Christian church. See also (Vanhoozer 2005).

17　Tom F. Driver narrates the "modern spirit" of theatrical drama by way of a combination of "historicism, the quest for reality turning into query, and the pervasive use of romantic irony" (Driver 1970, p. xxviii). His history and critique of playwrights, plays, and major productions stretches from the romanticist aesthetics of the early nineteenth century to the emergence of the avant-garde "Happenings" in the 1960s. See the discussion of ironic tragicomedy, Beckett, Artaud, and the "happenings" (Driver 1970, pp. 386–90). Driver's history stops at the rift between drama-script and theater-performance we have already associated with Richard Schechner. The latter's *Dionysus in '69*, while arguably remaining a play, seemed to process out of the bounds of theatrical drama toward a ritual that constituted another genre. Its concluding parade from its playing space into NYC's Wooster Street included the audience in a ritual action beyond the scope of theater history as such. Driver himself turns to performance in Driver 1998. With reference to plays, anthropologists, theologians, ritual theorists, and his own practical work, he construes ritual transformation as essentially connected to preserving freedom. Ritual becomes a process of liberation, different from art, through "work done playfully" (Driver 1998, p. 99). The analysis of ritual funds Driver's constructive argument for the liberating work of Christian sacraments and his negative assessment of churches that block ritual's liberating efficacy (Driver 1998, pp. 195–222).

18　Bial (2015) recounts the odd preponderance of commercial plays with biblical themes in U.S. theater history.

theatrical drama can clarify these emotional stakes and share stories of value and identity that are necessarily received and performed *by material, embodied persons of spirit, difference, and freedom*.

Theatrical theologians could seek to recover and theorize what Walter Benjamin calls "aura", in a post-print age characterized by its screen-time (Benjamin 1969).[19] However, theological interventions in theatrical drama might cause religious reflection to obfuscate yet again its still-habitual reliance on bourgeois values and aesthetics as if they were part of theatrical drama's genre conventions. Theatrical drama can store, incubate, and reignite oppressive histories just as easily as it critically retrieves and challenges them. The racist heritage of the minstrel show informs the politics of the American musical, from *Oklahoma!* to *Hamilton*. In response to this danger, for example, religionists with theoretical interest in theatrical drama must account for what José Esteban Muñoz has called the "burden of liveness" that stage conventions have placed on minoritized performers (Muñoz 1999)[20]. Do theoretical juxtapositions of institutional theologies with theatrical drama emancipate possibilities for the study of religions or simply mask old prejudices with new makeup and costumes?

At this concluding point, we might reconsider one of the oldest Western theorists of drama and performance, Aristotle of all people. What classicist James Redfield and literary-ethical theorist Martha Nussbaum have noticed is that Greek narrative epic and tragic drama, both of which were sung in performance, were on Aristotle's own account engaged in practices of critique. The old stories were restaged with plots and characters newly contrived to place cultural values and assumptions about reality (ethos and world-view) under stress, identifying and interrogating the stress through hypothetical, "what if" questioning[21]. What if a King in apparent ignorance and a city—call it Thebes—in consoling, somnambulant complacency failed to address an old injustice? How would they respond to such a revelation? Could they reach resolution—or would the crimes be compounded, generation after generation? Perhaps the activities of the festival of Dionysus did create an "aura of factuality" (Geertz), but the nature of the theatrical questioning insisted that the aura be interrogated. The ritual of mimesis was not merely imitative in the sense of repetitive sameness, but critical and interrogative. On this account, a Bertolt Brecht, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Wole Soyinka could be deemed Aristotelean-like performance critics[22]. So too, for that matter, could be a Michel Foucault and Judith Butler or a Richard Shechner and Catherine Bell. Theorists dramatize. Plays and performances theorize. All would be self-chastened ritualizers.

We want to conclude this introduction with a brief preview of the essays in this Special Issue. The topics considered cover a wide cultural and temporal geography.

Some of the included scholars approach the work of theatrical phenomena operating inside of, out from, and alongside "religious" contexts. Daniela Cavallaro's essay explores how Catholic Christian religious communities—in both the sixteenth and twentieth centuries—employed theatrical dramas about the afterlife as a pedagogical tool. Her work not only introduces and contextualizes examples from Jesuit and Salesian educational

---

[19] Benjamin defines "aura" as the quasi-spiritual marker of authenticity and tradition contained by an original work of art that is subsequently lost or removed by mechanical reproduction. The process "detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition" (Benjamin 1969, p. 221). Theatrical drama, in not being mechanically "reproduced", can retain something of aura's immediacy and religious overtone.

[20] Muñoz describes this "burden of liveness" as a "hegemonic mandate that calls the minoritarian subject to 'be live' for the purpose of entertaining elites" (Muñoz 1999, p. 182). Minoritized identities are only celebrated—perhaps only sanctioned—during these "live" performances; similar points could be made regarding the entertainment value of indigenous religious ceremonies for tourists. Muñoz frames the burden of liveness as a critique of both the imperative to study only live performance (his work includes film and art installations), as well as the separation of minoritized cultures from the temporality of political life. "If the minoritarian subject can only exist in *the moment*, she or he does not have the privilege or pleasure of being a historical subject. If that subjects needs to focus solely on the present, it can never afford the luxury of thinking about the future" (Muñoz 1999, p. 189).

[21] See (Redfield 1975, chps 1–2) on Aristotle and tragedy; see (Nussbaum 1986, pp. 122–35).

[22] Brechtians typically have disdain for the consoling, emotional release of catharsis often attributed to the *Poetics*; Redfield, however, argues (Redfield 1975, pp. 68, 87, 236–38; also Nussbaum 1986, p. 385) that *catharsis* in Aristotle (used but once in the *Poetics*, once in the *Politics*) better aligns with his view of the cognitive pleasures of *learning* and *reasoning-out* that we take from art generally. Such a view of art and theater would not be alien to Brecht.

theater, but also identifies how theatrical drama reflected the theological and political concerns of these communities (Cavallaro 2019).

Theatrical drama might also pass along religious sensibilities beyond a shared cloister or even explicit causal chain. Dana Tanner-Kennedy, for instance, elucidates how the echoes of metaphysical religion resound across Gertrude Stein's theory of landscape and in her *Four Saints in Three Acts*. Tanner-Kennedy's essay shows how Gertrude Stein's plays and other meditative writing forge indirect links between metaphysical religious thought and later avant-garde theater in the United States (Tanner-Kennedy 2020).

Theatrical drama can also become the site for multiple religious contexts to overlap on stage. Michael VanZandt Collins' essay engages the case of a particular staging of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* where "mutual witnessing" opens possibilities for comparative theology. Like that performance's juxtaposition of star-crossed lovers and war-torn Syria, VanZandt Collins occasions new insights between Islamic and Christian theologies of martyrdom and witnessing truth (VanZandt Collins 2020).

Other essays open new avenues to understanding theatrical drama and dramaturgical theories by utilizing religion as an interpretive key. Charles A. Gillespie, for instance, offers "Showtime" as a way to make sense of theatrical temporalities by borrowing terms from Christian theology. Gillespie finds tools to interpret the Iranian experimental playwright, Nassim Soleimanpour, in Hans Urs von Balthasar's dramatic theory (Gillespie 2020).

Putting theatrical drama in the company of theological ideas can also provide new ways to interpret "canonical" texts. David Urban reads Ibsen's *A Doll House* alongside New Testament texts and Protestant Christian notions of love and self-sacrifice. Urban's essay uncovers and critiques what he calls the "religion of Torvald" that shines new light on the motivations and implications for Nora's choices, as well as scholarly takes on the play (Urban 2020).

Religion does more work for the interpretation of theatrical drama than identify contexts or categorize traditional references. Larry D. Bouchard proposes "metatheatre" as the place to track what might be a latent religious dimension in theatrical drama beyond that of ritual. Surveying three sorts of metatheatre in both Wilder's *Our Town* and Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*, Bouchard brings into focus what might be religious about experiences at these shows' "limits" (Bouchard 2020).

Theatrical drama provides other authors with tools to expand interpretive categories beyond supposed limits and presumed itineraries, especially regarding the meanings of the body. Religious themes of martyrdom appear in Tom Fish's consideration of "gender virtuosity" in *The Virgin Martyr*, a 1622 collaboration between Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger. Rather than rehash scholarly debates about Catholic vs. Protestant interpretations, Fish turns our attention to how *The Virgin Martyr* theatricalizes gendered bodies to represent and perhaps persuade spiritual conversions and miraculous (even bewitching) reversals of norms (Fish 2019).

Bodies that perform theatrical drama also lend the spectacle of their physical weight to a play's rhetorical meanings. Emily Bryan's essay re-evaluates the many substitutions in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* by looking at the performing triads in Cheek by Jowl's recent production. Semiotic theories invite Bryan to notice unexpected suggestions of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity through triadic logic and triadic imagery on stage (Bryan 2020).

Theatrical drama prompts such surprising re-combinations. Adam Beyt's essay identifies how the musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* functions as a religious classic by subverting the logic of sexual complementarity in Christian theological anthropology. Beyt puts *Hedwig*'s religious symbols in dialogue with John Paul II and Judith Butler to interrogate normative "completeness" and mythological expectations about love (Beyt 2019).

With this Special Issue, we invited contributors to take up or challenge the sorts of questions raised by our call for papers and this Introduction. We encouraged contributors to press considerations or reconsiderations of religion and theatrical drama in unexpected directions. Our aim now is not to conclude these conversations by dropping a final curtain,

but to demonstrate theatrical drama's persistent importance for and contribution to the study of religion. By illuminating these juxtaposed worlds, we seek fresh revivals of longstanding conversations, as well as new scene partners ready to ask, "What if?" in the ghost light.

References

Abel, Lionel. 1963. *Metatheatre: A New View of a Dramatic Form*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Artaud, Antonin. 1958. *The Theater and Its Double*. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove City Press.

Barish, Jonas. 1981. *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Beckwith, Sarah. 2001. *Signifying God: Social Relations and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beckwith, Sarah. 2011. *Shakespeare and Forgiveness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bell, Catherine. 2009. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Benjamin, Walter. 1969. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In *Illuminations*. Edited by Hannah Arendt. Translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken.

Beyt, Adam. 2019. 'Beautiful and New': The Logic of Complementarity in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. *Religions* 10: 620. [CrossRef]

Bial, Henry. 2015. *Playing God: The Bible on the Broadway Stage*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bouchard, Larry D. 2011. *Theater and Integrity: Emptying Selves in Drama, Ethics, and Religion*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Bouchard, Larry D. 2020. Religion and the Limits of Metatheatre in *Our Town* and *Sunday in the Park with George*. *Religions* 11: 94. [CrossRef]

Brecht, Bertolt. 1964. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Translated by John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang. First published 1957.

Brook, Peter. 1968. *The Empty Space*. New York: Atheneum.

Bryan, Emily. 2020. 'Fantastic Tricks before High Heaven,' *Measure for Measure* and Performing Triads. *Religions* 11: 100. [CrossRef]

Cavallaro, Daniela. 2019. Go and Sin No More: The Afterlife as Moral Teaching in Italian Catholic Educational Theatre. *Religions* 10: 517. [CrossRef]

Craigo-Snell, Shannon. 2014. *The Empty Church: Theater, Theology, and Bodily Hope*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dox, Donalee. 2016. *Reckoning with the Spirit in the Paradigm of Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Driver, Tom F. 1970. *Romantic Quest and Modern Query: A History of the Modern Theater*. New York: Delacorte.

Driver, Tom F. 1998. *Liberating Rites: Understanding the Transformative Power of Ritual*. Boulder: Westview.

Fish, Tom. 2019. Bewitching Power: The Virtuosity of Gender in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*. *Religions* 10: 629. [CrossRef]

Fisher, James. 2015. *Historical Dictionary of American Theatre: Beginnings*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Freeman, Lisa A. 2017. *Antitheatricality and the Body Politic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1989. *Truth and Method*, rev. ed. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshal. New York: Continuum.

Gillespie, Charles A. 2019. Drama Alone is Credible: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Interpretive Work of Theatre and Performance in Twentieth-Century Christian Thought. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA.

Gillespie, Charles A. 2020. Theodramatic Themes and Showtime in Nassim Soleimanpour's *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*. *Religions* 11: 499. [CrossRef]

Greenblatt, Stephen. 1988. *Shakespearian Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Greenblatt, Stephen. 1993. Shakespeare Bewitched. In *Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*. Edited by Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Greenblatt, Stephen. 2001. *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Greenblatt, Stephen. 2004. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. New York: Norton.

Hornby, Richard. 1995. *Script into Performance: A Structuralist Approach*. New York: Applause. First published 1977.

Knapp, Jeffrey. 2002. *Shakespeare's Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Muñoz, José Esteban. 1999. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 1986. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Redfield, James M. 1975. *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rouse, John. 2007. Brecht and the Contradictory Actor. In *Critical Theory and Performance*, revised ed. Edited by Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Schechner, Richard. 1977. Drama, Script, Theater, and Performance. In *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970–1976*. New York: Drama Book Specialists.

Schechner, Richard. 1985. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich. 1996. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. Translated by Richard Crouter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First published 1799.

Shakespeare, William. 2015. *Macbeth*. Edited by Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason. London: Bloomsbury.

Shephard, William Hunter. 1991. *The Dionysus Group*. New York: Peter Lang.

Tanner-Kennedy, Dana. 2020. Gertrude Stein and the Metaphysical Avant-Garde. *Religions* 11: 152. [CrossRef]

The Performance Group. 1970. *Dionysus in '69*. Edited by Richard Schechner. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Urban, David V. 2020. Nora's Ironic Longing for Christlike Love: Self-Sacrifice, Self-Love, and the 'Religion of Torvald' in Ibsen's *A Doll House*. *Religions* 11: 318. [CrossRef]

Vander Lugt, Wesley, and Trevor Hart, eds. 2014. *Theatrical Theology: Explorations in Performing the Faith*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. 2005. *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. 2014. *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

VanZandt Collins, Michael. 2020. Toward Witnessing the Other: Syria, Islam and Frans van der Lugt. *Religions* 11: 174. [CrossRef]

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. 1988. *Theo-Drama I: Prolegomena*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius.

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. 1990. *Theo-Drama II: Dramatis Personae: Man in God*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius.

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. 1992. *Theo-Drama III: Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius.

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. 1994. *Theo-Drama IV: The Action*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius.

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. 1998. *Theo-Drama V: The Last Act*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius.

Wiles, David. 1997. *Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.