

‘The Honour of the Mind’: Intellectual Integrity in Scholarly Research

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Keywords

Integrity, Scholarship, Reason, Feminism, Misogyny

In her novel *Gaudy Night* (1936) Dorothy L. Sayers develops the theme of the intellectual job of scholarship.¹ At a pivotal moment Sayers’ detective, Lord Peter Wimsey, leads the conversation among the female faculty of the fictitious Shrewsbury College to the topic of intellectual integrity in research. He paraphrases an elderly scientist in C. P. Snow’s novel, *The Search* (1934):

The only ethical principal which has made science possible is that the truth shall be told at all times. If we do not penalize false statements made in error, we open up the way for false statements by intention. And a false statement of fact, made deliberately, is the most serious crime a scientist can commit.²

In the ensuing discussion a junior don, Miss Chilperic, correlates intellectual and bodily honour. She suggests that, if a woman knew her husband had falsified scholarship in order to advance his career, and thus to support her, the woman would be horrified: “I should think,” said Miss Chilperic, stammering a little in her earnestness, “she would feel like a man who – I mean, wouldn’t it be like living on somebody’s immoral earnings?” (p. 289). Significantly, Miss Chilperic holds falseness in scholarship to be analogous to prostitution. Lord Peter commends her, observing, ‘if it ever occurs to people to value the honour of the mind equally with the honour of the body, we shall get a social revolution of a quite unparalleled sort’ (p. 290). We are still awaiting such a revolution.

Further, in the past forty years or so certain practices have become acceptable in academic publishing that are at odds with the honour

¹ This paper was first presented on December 5, 2008, for The Socratic Club, founded by Dr. David Calhoun at Gonzaga University in imitation of C. S. Lewis’ Socratic Club at Oxford.

² Dorothy L. Sayers, *Gaudy Night* (New York: Avon Books, 1968), p. 287.

of the mind. Scholarly publishing is intended to advance human understanding scientifically, that is, in demonstrable, repeatable ways. Although a great deal of excellent research continues to be produced and published, at the same time a portion of what is published in academia is no longer scholarly. It is not that reason and logic have been repudiated, although some people assert that they have been. If that were so, then scholarship would proceed merely by assertion, without evidence to support the assertions and without a logical sequence to the assertions. Notes would be obsolete, if evidence had become irrelevant. No, the appearance of a reasoned approach is maintained. The problem is that those books and articles which fail to be scholarly sport a veneer of reason. If their writers had in fact repudiated reason, then they would not use the language of reason. Words such as ‘if . . . then’ and ‘therefore’ would be entirely absent from their publications and their conversation. Instead, such terms remain, but they are manipulated in the way a magician uses sleight of hand.

Magic proves a useful metaphor for exploring some of these modern techniques. The ‘Vanishing Footnote’, the ‘Smoke and Mirrors’ of ideology and self-projection, and the common trick of ‘Sawing the Lady in Half’ by disallowing half the pertinent evidence are techniques that are deceptive in the result, no matter what the intent of the writer or speaker. And, to be fair, some people use these devices not intending to deceive, but because they are personally convinced by the illusion, or perhaps because they have been trained in them and accept them without question. From the far too numerous instances of such deceptive techniques, several are shown below.

The Vanishing Footnote

The ‘vanishing footnote’ describes any means of masking an actual lack of evidence by the pretense of giving abundant evidence. Lack of evidence is a fundamental problem because claims need to be substantiated by supporting evidence. When one reads an article and encounters a footnote number, that number in the text is a signal that evidence awaits the reader in a note. At least, that is what the footnote number is supposed to signal. It is startling that in some cases the note number turns out to have a quite different function, namely to lull the reader into thinking, ‘The writer must have evidence for the statement I just read, because here is a footnote number’. However, in these cases, the note does not corroborate the claim that was just made in the article. Several works of scholarship are generally well documented and have only one or a few vanishing footnotes, but if the ones whose evidential value ‘disappears’ upon examination are the crucial ones, the problem is serious. Here are two examples.

Madeline Petit published two articles on Tamar, one of the ancestors of Christ (Matthew 1:3), who is known through Genesis 38. The first article is a comprehensive review of Jewish commentary in late antiquity treating Tamar.³ The second article is bristling with notes – they constitute half of the first page, for instance – but the two most important vanish. In this second essay Petit puts forward a double thesis, the first being that Tamar was a type of the Messiah for the Jews before the time of Christ.⁴ This is a striking claim, which no other scholar has made before or since. Her second is not only striking, but scandalous, for it is that Christians, beginning with the Evangelist Matthew, suppressed that tradition. She advances her first thesis by asserting that ‘within the pseudepigraphic literature . . . is sketched a messianique typology of Tamar’.⁵ The next paragraph appears to explain how this typology developed, with a strong hint that it came from Qumran, and concludes by asserting that Tamar had ‘a messianic quality’ (p. 145). Throughout the rest of the essay the author continues to reiterate that Tamar in Jewish tradition was held to have ‘messianic traits’ and ‘messianic characteristics’ (pp. 145-46) and that she was ‘a messianic figure’, a phrase repeated in the final paragraph of the essay (pp. 152, 157). Given these six iterations, the reader reasonably expects that there must be a few if not several texts interpreting Tamar in this way, constituting a tradition: Otherwise it would hardly be fair to blame Christians for suppressing something they might not have even known of.

So, what are these texts? The first and second statements about Tamar as a messianic type are each associated with a footnote, so this is where the author may be presumed to identify some pertinent texts. The note from the first statement, that ‘within the pseudepigraphic literature . . . is sketched a messianique typology of Tamar’, directs the reader to the writer’s first article, explaining that there the reader will find the Jewish texts about Tamar grouped into three categories. This rather implies that one of the three categories must consist of texts that treat Tamar as a messianic type. So I read the first article. Three times. Not a mention of Tamar as a messianic type. To be fair, the author had claimed in her note that the article would group the texts, as in fact it does. But this seems either careless or misleading: Surely the reader was led to expect that after the statement that

³ Madeline Petit, ‘Exploitations non bibliques des thèmes de Tamar et de *Genèse* 38. Philon d’Alexandrie: texts et traditions juives jusqu’aux Talmudim’, in *Alexandrina, Mélanges offerts à Claude Mondésert, S.J.* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1987), pp. 76-115.

⁴ Madeline Petit, ‘Tamar’, *Figures de l’Ancien Testament chez les Pères* (Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 2; Strasbourg: Centre d’Analyse et de Documentation Patristiques, 1989), pp. 143-57.

⁵ ‘dans la littérature pseudépigraphique . . . s’ébauche une typologie messianique de Tamar’: Petit, ‘Tamar’, p. 144.

‘within the pseudepigraphic literature . . . is sketched a messianique typology of Tamar’ the footnote would give evidence of that typology within that literature.

What, then, of the second pertinent statement, that in the typological texts from Qumran Tamar had a ‘messianic quality’? A lengthy footnote is associated with this statement⁶ and this note at last identifies a specific text – only one, but at least a specific text, the Psalms of Solomon, no. 17. However, buried within this footnote is the author’s admission that the text she cites is ‘without connection to Tamar’ (*sans lien avec Tamar*). Incredibly, within the entire article, the author cites not one text to support her claim that Tamar was a type of the Messiah for the Jews. And once one sees this fact it becomes clear that, after all, if Petit had known of such a text, it would have been so important to her argument that she would have discussed it in full in the body of the essay.

If one investigates the crucial footnotes in this essay, their evidential value vanishes. Yes, these two notes cite actual sources. But no, the sources do not support the statements in the text.

Another instance of vanishing notes is in a collection of essays. The book has a wonderful title: *Equally in God’s Image: Women in the Middle Ages*. It is edited by Julia Bolton Holloway, Constance S. Wright, and Joan Bechtold.⁷ These three wrote the introduction to the book as a whole and also introductions to each of its parts. An arresting statement is made in the introduction, and it has an endnote: ‘It was noble Roman ladies who aided Jerome in his labors of translating Greek and Hebrew scriptures into the Latin of the Vulgate’ (p. 2). Certainly noble women were associated with St. Jerome. Marcella, Albina, Paula, Asella, Marcellina, Felicitas, and Lea are some of these fourth-century Romans who lived a monastic life under the direction of Marcella and the spiritual guidance of St. Jerome. Jerome encouraged them to learn Hebrew and to pray the Psalms in it, just as he did, and to engage in serious biblical study.⁸ Famously, the major work of St. Jerome’s life was preparing the Vulgate edition of the Latin Bible, which he issued in stages with introductions.⁹ Now, until the statement just quoted, no one had ever suggested that these women, who began as Jerome’s students, had become his collaborators in translating the Vulgate. Moreover had he had collaborators, male or female, it would seem seriously unjust that

⁶ Actually the note is at the end of the previous sentence, but seeing no note with the pertinent sentence, one goes to the nearest note, in hope.

⁷ *Equally in God’s Image: Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Julia Bolton Holloway, Constance S. Wright, and Joan Bechtold (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

⁸ J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome, His Life, Writings and Controversies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998). See each woman’s name in the index.

⁹ These introductions are included in the Stuttgart edition of the Vulgate.

Jerome had never acknowledged those putative colleagues.¹⁰ Thus, considerable importance is attached to the note from the statement that ‘noble Roman ladies . . . aided Jerome’ in preparing the Vulgate.

That note cites one of the essays in the volume. The note, in full, reads: ‘Jane Barr, “The Vulgate Genesis and St. Jerome’s Attitude to Women”’. Usually a note to a specific point in an essay cites a specific page or span of pages, for the sake of giving precise information. But, no matter, one can simply read the entire essay and locate the needed details oneself. Most readers would probably see the note number from the statement in the text and take the mere presence of the note as adequate indication that proof is given. Other readers would turn to the endnotes, read the note’s citation of an essay, and conclude that this took care of proof. These readers would be mistaken.

For Barr does not claim that Jerome was assisted by women. She merely mentions one of the women. That is, she affirms that Jerome had ‘tenderness’ and ‘affection’ for Paula (p. 122). Barr discusses parts of eight individual verses from Genesis pertaining to women and considers half of them to be negative in Jerome’s translation. (Although she remarks that these verses are ‘from a large collection of examples’ she has compiled [p. 126], she neither cites the collection nor characterizes it.) She holds that Jerome’s translations are sometimes quite sympathetic to women (p. 125) and sometimes strikingly effective (p. 126), but she considers one passage to be tasteless (p. 126) and the important Genesis 3:16 to be a major change in the direction of supporting men’s power over women (p. 127). Barr, however, is careful to qualify her comments by noting that Jerome may have had a different Hebrew text than the Masoretic Text records.¹¹

It turns out that one must search the introduction to the part of the book in which Barr’s essay appears. Of course, that introduction is not part of Barr’s essay. It is not even by her: it is by the editors. They make a strong statement here:

Jane Barr’s essay discusses the accuracy of Jerome’s translation of the Vulgate Bible from the Hebrew and Greek into Latin – except where he

¹⁰ On Jerome’s production of the Vulgate, see Catherine Brown Tkacz, ‘*Labor tam utilis: The Creation of the Vulgate*’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 50.1 (1996), pp. 42-72; on the issue of authorship, see pp. 46, 52-53.

¹¹ An important point indeed: It seems quite clear that in some regards the Masoretic Text does not record the earlier Hebrew. For two instances of this in Psalm 21 see Gilles Dorival, ‘L’Interpretation ancienne du Psaume 21 (TM 22)’, pp. 225-314 in Gilles Dorival et al., *David, Jésus et la reine Esther: Recherches sur le Psaume 21 (22 TM)* = Collection de la Revue des Études Juives 25 (Paris: Peeters, 2002) at p. 293; Michaela Burks, ‘Le Psaume 21 (22 TM) dans la recherche veterotestamentaire du XX^e siècle’, pp. 341-92 in Dorival, *David, Jésus et Esther*, at 347-48; and Catherine Brown Tkacz, ‘Esther, Jesus, and Psalm 22’, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70.4 (2008), pp. 705-28 at 721, 725, 728.

must inscribe women's sexuality. Thus the major Book of Christianity is seen to have been subverted and betrayed away from women by its male translator. Elsewhere, in discussions between Paula and Jerome, we find them squabbling over these inaccuracies.

First one notes that this synopsis of Barr's essay ignores both everything positive Barr had to say about Jerome's translation regarding women and also her cautions about the limits of the extant evidence. After thus slanting their report of Barr's discussion, the editors make their own statement, more extreme than any statement made by Barr herself. The editors state that Jerome was guilty of 'subverting and betraying away [!] from women' the Bible itself. This is a heavy claim to base on the slender support of criticism of only four verses from one biblical book. Finally comes the statement that Paula and Jerome had discussions (plural) in which they 'squabbled' over Jerome's 'inaccuracies' (plural) concerning women's sexuality.

Here at last is another endnote, and it is this note that is apparently the sole basis for the claim that 'noble Roman women' assisted Jerome in his translation. The note cites a letter by Jerome and explains: 'He is telling [Paula's] daughter Eustochium, after Paula's death about the argument he had with her over the translation of the Hebrew "zo" in Psalm 132, Paula insisting it was "her," Mary, Jerome that it was "him," God.' In sum, *one* woman disagreed with Jerome in his translation of *one* Hebrew pronoun in *one* chapter of *one* book of the Bible. And it doesn't say that she convinced Jerome. Yet on the basis of this minimal incident, the editors had asserted, 'It was noble Roman ladies [plural] who aided Jerome in his labors of translating Greek [!] and Hebrew scriptures into the Latin of the Vulgate'. Had a male scholar, writing about a woman – say, Christine de Pisan – cited only a single disagreement one man had had with her about one pronoun in one of her works, and on that basis then asserted that Christine de Pisan had been assisted by several male authors in writing her entire literary corpus, surely the scholarly world would cry 'Foul! How unjust to deprive her of credit for her own intellectual work on such a trivial basis!' Yet because the editors of *Equally in God's Image* hid their lack of evidence through the device of vanishing footnotes, their denigration of the character and reputation of St. Jerome probably convinces many readers.

In addition to the vanishing footnote, other ways of proceeding with inadequate evidence include substituting a parenthetical citation for quoting an important text and giving partial quotations which omit details troublesome to one's thesis. Both parenthetical citations and partial quotations can be used honestly and effectively, but scholarship suffers when they are used misleadingly.

In her book on *Women and the Historical Jesus*, Kathleen E. Corley of the Jesus Seminar faults Jesus as patriarchal and actually states

that he refers to all women who follow him, including his mother, as ‘whores’.¹² Her statement will startle anyone familiar with the Gospels and who therefore has no recollection of the Lord ever calling his mother a whore. Corley distorts the evidence by using two magical flourishes: a variation of the vanishing footnote and the trick of sawing the lady in half, to be discussed below.

The sole evidence Corley adduces for her allegation that Jesus called his mother a whore is Matthew 21:31-32, which she cites only parenthetically. This allows her to misrepresent the passage without the difficulty of having the text there on the page to contradict her. It is well to be explicit here. The two verses are part of a larger passage, Matthew 21:23-32, in which the chief priests and elders of the people ask Jesus by what authority he acts. Jesus responds first by asking them what is the authority by which John the Baptist baptized, and his questioners think, if we say, ‘It was from God’, he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe in him?’ and if we say, ‘It wasn’t from God’, the crowd will be against us. So the chief priests say, ‘We don’t know’. Jesus gives an apt parable and concludes with the verses Corley referred to without quoting. Here are those verses:

Jesus said to them, Truly I tell you the tax collectors and the prostitutes (*oi telonai kai ai pornai*) are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him. [NRSV]

It is well to recall that tax collectors were then corrupt and extortionate. So, *if* this passage implies that Jesus called all his female followers whores *then* he also called all his male followers extortionists. Clearly, however, he did neither. Instead 1) Jesus is referring to both male and female examples of sinners who repented, 2) he is speaking of followers of John the Baptist and not of himself, and 3) nothing in his words suggests either A) that he considers all followers of John the Baptist to be ‘tax collectors and whores’ or B) that he derides any repentant sinner, whether tax collector, whore, or otherwise. Rather, he is pointing out to the hypocritical male Jewish leaders that they are spiritually inferior to repentant sinners of both sexes. Corley could never have gotten away with her ridiculous assertion that Jesus called his mother a whore had she presented the evidence fairly.

Another variation on the vanishing footnote is the truncated quotation. A marvelous example, whether apocryphal or true, concerns a reviewer of a new novel who found his statement, ‘Not one of

¹² Kathleen E. Corley, *Women and the Historical Jesus: Feminist Myths of Christian Origins* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 2002), e.g., pp. 4, 142.

the best books of the year, but a passable read', quoted in part in an ad for the book. His name appeared as the source for the words 'One of the best books of the year!' In Rudolf Bultmann's essay on 'Source and Meaning of Typology as a Hermeneutical Method' one finds both his selection of examples and his partial quotation of them to be misleading.¹³ His thesis is that typology as used in the New Testament is wrong. Disconcertingly, Bultmann avoided the Gospels, emphasizing the Epistles instead. Only two paragraphs in the entire essay treat instances of Jesus' typological statements recorded in the Gospel of John, and even in these remarks Bultmann edited his quotations to conceal the fact that John presented Jesus as the speaker (col. 209-10). For instance, the essay treats Jesus' self-comparison to the serpent lifted up in the wilderness (John 3:14-15), which is part of the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21). Bultmann insisted that this typology should have left the serpent out and correlated Jesus with Moses alone. This insistence is odd, given that Bultmann's opening paragraph had given a standard definition of types that included *events* and institutions as well as persons.¹⁴ He should have had no difficulty in interpreting the *event* of the raising of the brazen serpent as the type here. However, Bultmann asserts, 'With extreme freedom John 3:14ff takes as reference the Moses-Christ typology: As Moses had "lifted up" the serpent in the wilderness, so will the "Son of Man" – not do any sort of analogous deed, but rather be himself "lifted up"'.¹⁵ In a bit of sleight of hand, Bultmann made 'John 3:14f' the grammatical subject and thus made the authorship of Jesus invisible. Bultmann next referred to the 'Bread of Life' sermon (John 6). Again he wrote so as to mask the evangelist's identification of Jesus as the author of that sermon. Bultmann concluded of this and of the brazen serpent speech, 'These passages are no doubt based upon typology; however, the *Evangelist* pursues the typological thought, playing with it *ad absurdum*'.¹⁶ Given that the words expressing the typology are, according to John, the words of Jesus, if anyone were guilty of absurdity, it would be

¹³ Rudolf Bultmann, 'Ursprung und Sinn der Typologie als hermeneutische Methode', *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 75 (1950), pp. 205-12, reprinted in his *Exegetica* (Tübingen: Mohr / Siebeck, 1967), pp. 369-80. The essay's logical flaws are discussed by Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'Typology Today', *New Blackfriars* 88 (2007), pp. 564-80 at 576-78. The rest of this paragraph and the following one are indebted to that essay.

¹⁴ 'Personen, Ereignissen oder Einrichtungen': Bultmann, 'Typologie', col. 205. Italics mine.

¹⁵ 'In recht freier Weise nimmt Joh. 3, 14f. auf die Mose-Christus-Typologie Bezug: wie Mose die Schlange in der Wüste "erhöht" hat, so wird der "Menschensohn" – nicht etwa eine analoge Tat tun, sondern selbst "erhöht" werden': Bultmann, 'Typologie', col. 209.

¹⁶ 'Diesen Stellen liegt also wohl Typologie zugrunde; aber der Evangelist führt das typologische Denken mit ihm spielend, *ad absurdum*': Bultmann, 'Typologie', col. 210. Initial emphasis added.

the Lord. Simply by ignoring relevant aspects of the passages he cites, Bultmann has caused critical areas of evidence to vanish from the reader's attention.

The most common way for statements to pass with insufficient evidence is by an elliptical manner of writing. The disapproving statement, 'You really should stop beating your dog!' has imbedded in it the implied statements 'you own a dog' and 'you beat your dog'. Because those statements are taken for granted in the admonition, 'You really should stop beating your dog', the author avoids having to prove them. Of course, elliptical expression is frequent in human communication and generally there is nothing misleading about it. Increasingly, however, it behooves readers to consider whether ideas presented in subordinate phrases actually require to be defended. Otherwise, the reader is apt to assume that these ideas must be accurate. Scholars are perhaps likely to assume this when reading works outside their own specialty. Students and non-academics are likely to assume generally that whatever is written by an academic is authoritative and to be trusted.

Misleading ellipticism is seen, for instance, in statements and studies that concern the heroine of the Book of Daniel, Susanna. The following sentence, printed with no footnote, appeared in Marina Warner's prominent book on the Virgin Mary, *Alone of All Her Sex*. 'In an Old Testament figure like Susannah, demure before the aged voyeurs, the Fathers saw a forerunner of the Christian virgin'.¹⁷ The first phrase is true: Susanna *is* an Old Testament figure. But what of the central descriptive phrase, defining Susanna as 'demure before the aged voyeurs'? The Book of Daniel recounts that Susanna was threatened by two men with death by stoning, that she articulately and effectively refused and evaded them, and that she was condemned to death. The phrase 'demure before the aged voyeurs' minimizes both Susanna's character and the mortal danger she braved. While Warner's statement may match elite paintings from the Enlightenment, it is definitely not a report of the biblical text or its reception in the Early, medieval, or Byzantine church.¹⁸ Despite the fact that the phrase 'demure before the aged voyeurs' was written by a woman, it is misogynistic. As for the actual clause in the sentence, that the Church Fathers saw Susanna as 'a forerunner of the Christian virgin', it is false. No Church Father ever presented her as a model for virgins. Why would they? She was a married woman with children. Often early Christian preachers would give a few or even several

¹⁷ Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex* (New York: Vintage, 1983), p. 55.

¹⁸ The radical change in depiction of Susanna in the sixteenth century, from positive and impressive to negative and exploited, is now documented: Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'O *Beatissima Susanna*: Three Witnesses in the Walters to an Articulate Woman in Iconographic Context,' *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* (in press).

moral models of young, middle-aged, and elderly persons, with male and female instances for each, and Susanna is named in many such lists, but always as a wife, not a virgin.¹⁹ Again Warner seems to be relying on elite paintings, not the biblical text or patristic writers. If this single statement about Susanna unravels when one examines it, one would do well to read the rest of Warner's volume with a cautious eye.

Jennifer Glancy's article on Susanna appeared in the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* and was subsequently reprinted in the *Feminist Companion to the Bible*, insuring that it would have continuing influence. She treats the whole history of Susanna; her approach is characterized by the few instances cited here. Before reviewing the first example it is useful to recall that the biblical account presents the psychology of the Elders (Dan. 13:7-12).²⁰ A key scriptural passage is the following: 'And the old men saw her going in [the garden] every day, and walking; and they were inflamed with lust towards her. And they perverted their own mind and turned away their eyes that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments' (vv. 8-9). A frequentative form of the first verb is used, so one might render the first clause, 'And the old men *made a habit of watching her* go into [the garden] daily'. Instead of quoting the full passage, Glancy summarizes and glosses it: 'When the elders see Susanna, they metaphorically avert their eyes from heaven (v. 9). [The text suggests that] looking at a beautiful woman render[s] a man unfit to look at heaven'.²¹ To the contrary, the text presents the Elders as the active agents of their own moral decline, first forming a habit that conduced to lust and then deliberately rejecting heaven and justice. Yet Glancy is not the only feminist to treat this passage in this way. The influential Dutch biblical scholar, Mieke Bal, treats the same passage, omits verse 9, and also asserts that the text blames Susanna.²²

Although Susanna's own words present her reason for refusing the Elders, feminists have ignored Susanna's witness and ascribed a

¹⁹ For examples, see Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'The Doctrinal Context for Interpreting Women as Types of Christ', *Studia Patristica*, vol. 40, ed. F. Young, M. Edwards, and P. Parvis (Leuven / Paris / Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2006), pp. 253-57.

²⁰ The "moral monstrosity" of the elders (p. 87) is well analyzed by Eleanore Stump, 'Susanna and the Elders: Wisdom and Folly', in Ellen Spolsky, ed., *The Judgment of Susanna: Authority and Witness* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 85-100, esp. at 85-87, 97-98, 99.

²¹ Jennifer Glancy, 'The Accused: Susanna and Her Readers', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 58 (1993), pp. 103-16 at p. 108. Reprinted as pp. 288-302 in *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*, ed. Athalya Brenner, *The Feminist Companion to the Bible*, vol. 7 (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

²² Mieke Bal, 'The Elders and Susanna', pp. 1-19 in *Biblical Interpretation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), p. 4; somewhat revised from pp. 149-50 in her *Reading Rembrandt: Beyond the Word-Image Opposition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

different motive to her. In contrast, Susanna's clear statement of her purpose was respected by Roderick MacKenzie, S.J., who correctly observed in 1957 that the situation

is here set in relation to the primary duty of faithfulness to God and His Law. Susanna does not think of personal preferences or aversions, nor even of the wrong that would be done to her husband. She says, "It is better for me to fall into your hands than to sin before the Lord" [Dan. 13:23]. Similarly Joseph: "How should I do such a great wrong as this, sinning against God?"²³

Her refusal is heroic, given that the elders had implicitly threatened her with death on a false charge of adultery.²⁴ Yet Bal, like Warner, downgrades the threat and revises Susanna's reason for refusing: 'the men threaten to ruin Susanna's reputation for chastity, hence the honor of her husband. . . . [Susanna was concerned with] the good of her husband's reputation'.²⁵ Likewise Glancy asserts, 'What is at stake in the story is . . . the honor of Joachim's household'.²⁶ Similar examples can be shown from writers such as Nancy Tuana.²⁷

Ironically, although 'Susanna Speaking for Herself' is the title Alice Bach gave her treatment, that critic disparages Susanna's words and quotes only one of her three speeches, and that one only in part.²⁸ Further, instead of quoting Susanna's articulate and effective prayer (Dan. 13:42-43) and the narrator's report that at once the Lord heard her (v. 44), Bach dismisses Susanna's prayer for the surprising reason that it 'occurs in its expected chronological position' (p. 68). Having suppressed much of the evidence and belittled the rest, Bach then concludes that Susanna is contemptibly passive (p. 69). Further minimizing the importance of Susanna, Bach also misrepresents Mosaic Law. The 'eye for an eye' law of Deuteronomy 19:18-21 famously condemns perjury.²⁹ This is patently what is referred to in the Book

²³ R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., 'The Meaning of the Susanna Story', *Canadian Journal of Theology* 3.4 (1957), pp. 211-18 at p. 217.

²⁴ 'She turns on the instant to the morally heroic choice: she will put her life on the line to avoid collaborating with moral evil. In this choice she exemplifies the special excellence of intellect and will that Aquinas calls wisdom': Stump, 'Wisdom and Folly', p. 100. See also Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'A Biblical Woman's Paraphrase of King David: Susanna's Refusal of the Elders', *Downside Review* 450 (2010) 39-52.

²⁵ Bal, *Reading Rembrandt*, p. 151. Italics mine.

²⁶ Glancy, 'The Accused', p. 107; see also p. 105.

²⁷ Nancy Tuana, *Woman and the History of Philosophy*, Paragon Issues in Philosophy (New York: Paragon House, 1992). Tuana and others are discussed in Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'Silencing Susanna: The Rise of Neosexism and the Denigration of Women', *The Intercollegiate Review* 34.1 (1998), pp. 31-37 at pp. 34-36.

²⁸ Alice Bach, 'Susanna Speaking for Herself', pp. 65-72 in *Women, Seduction, and Betrayal in Biblical Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 68.

²⁹ The initial prohibition against false witness is of course in the Ten Commandments: Exod. 20:16, Deut. 5:20.

of Daniel: ‘And [the assembly] rose up against the two Elders, (for Daniel had convicted them of false witness by their own mouth,) and they did to them as they had maliciously dealt with their neighbour, to fulfill the law of Moses: and they put them to death’ (vv. 61-62). Susanna is the neighbor whom the Elders had perjured and would have had stoned to death; the LXX even uses the feminine form of the word ‘neighbour’. Yet Bach asserts, ‘The neighbor [in v. 61] is Joakim, who would have been deprived of his wife and shamed publicly had she been put to death as an adulterer’ (p. 69).³⁰ Although neither Susanna nor the biblical text ever mention or even allude to Joakim’s honour, the feminists seem preoccupied with it.

In Warner’s single statement about Susanna and also in the lengthy discussions of Susanna by Glancy, Bal, Bach and others, the very way that the sentences and paragraphs are written conceals the authors’ distortion of evidence. And this distortion by feminists leads to a misogynistic misrepresentation of Susanna.

Smoke and Mirrors

Magicians use smoke and mirrors to dazzle, misdirect, and confuse the eye, and these, too, have their counterpart in some published works. The smoke of ideology issues from quite a few academic factories. The intellectual air is sullied when jargon and rhetorical packaging predominate instead of valid reasoning. One smoke that clouds some scholarship today is political correctness. That can be found in a wide range of subjects and disciplines, although demonstrating this is beyond the scope of the present study. In works such as Corley’s the smoke is rendered all the more opaque by fumes that arise – not from New Feminism as identified by Pope John Paul II, and not from Natural-Justice Feminism, of the sort espoused by Louisa Mae Alcott and Dorothy L. Sayers – but from radical feminism, which may now be called Establishment Feminism, and which assumes that men are categorically inferior to women.³¹ Sadly, misandry discolours the reasoning by Petit, Corley, and Holloway and her co-editors. Another sort of obfuscating smoke is

³⁰ In general Bach is fast and loose with the text. In addition to the examples already given above, note that Bach asserts that ‘nothing is said [in the biblical account] of [the Elders’] lascivious designs on her’ (p. 71), although Daniel had denounced the Elders for precisely this at their trial in vv. 56-57.

³¹ Such an assumption is a basic departure from orthodox Judeo-Christian belief, which holds that every human being is made in the image of God and is equal in moral competence: Catherine Brown Tkacz, ‘Women and the Church in the New Millennium’, *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 52.3-4 (2008), pp. 243-74 at 246-48; and idem, ‘Jesus and the Spiritual Equality of Women’, *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly* 24.4 (Fall 2001), pp. 24-29.

any unexamined assumption that determines the outcome of a study before it begins. One pervasive modern assumption is that God cannot do prophecy. According to this belief, any biblical text which seems to prophesy an event is fiction devised after the event and is therefore *ex eventu*.

Similar is the smoke of theories which mask abuse of reason. While theory arising from the evidence is valuable for understanding it, theory in despite of the evidence is a different matter entirely. A disastrous case occurred eighty years ago, when the Stalinist Trofim Lysenko wreaked havoc on Russian agriculture by applying political theory unscientifically to plant biology.³² An example of a more recent, but equally unfruitful trend, is Sarah Stanbury's essay, 'The Virgin's Gaze: Spectacle and Transgression in Middle English Lyrics of the Passion' (1991).³³ Stanbury's theory of the gaze assumes that all seeing is sexual, a broad generalization that would never bear serious discussion. Linguistically sophisticated jargon is to the fore in her article, for example: 'the masculinist scopic position' (p. 1084), 'scopic authority', 'gestural cross-dressing' (this refers to Lady Philosophy looking sternly at Boethius in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, p. 1085), 'visual transactions governed by an economy of gender' (p. 1086), and 'patriarchal lines of sight' (p. 1090). Stanbury's contention is that medieval lyrics about the Virgin Mary at the foot of the cross, because they refer to her looking steadfastly at her son, show her to be 'transgressive' (pp. 1087, 1091), implicitly incestuous (p. 1086), and responsible for having 'infantilized' and 'eroticized' her son and even 'impaled[!] ... his body' (pp. 1087, 1088): 'she gazes unencumbered on the naked male body, on a male body that swoons in her arms or sags on the cross, nailed down in forced passivity' (p. 1087). In short, Stanbury describes Mary and Jesus at the Crucifixion as engaged in a particularly kinky form of sexual bondage.

Stanbury dismisses the objection that Christ on the Cross is not 'an erotic spectacle' by asserting without support that the 'categories – what is maternal, what is erotic – are not simply fixed'. Yet a few lines later she contradicts herself by asserting that there are 'ordinary boundaries' between 'Eros ... and maternal power' and that these boundaries are 'violat[ed]' in representations of the Pietá and of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross (p. 1086). Stanbury never alludes to the standard Christian understanding of such representations as sacramental mimesis; that is, Mary models for the faithful, both male and female, fitting veneration and love of God incarnate, as a means of enabling the faithful to become holy themselves. Instead

³² David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

³³ Sarah Stanbury, 'The Virgin's Gaze: Spectacle and Transgression in Middle English Lyrics of the Passion', *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 106.5 (1991), pp. 1083-93.

Stanbury concludes that Mary invites us to participate with her in what is ‘ultimately transgressive’ (p. 1091). One suspects that had Stanbury written such a debasing, quasi-pornographic account of persons and literature from any other religious tradition – say, Judaism or Buddhism – it might not have been published. And again, leaving religion aside, it must be observed that here too a feminist is misogynistic, blaming a woman for looking at her son while he is dying of torture.

The mirrors which whirl and cast misleading shafts of light randomly about in some works of scholarship are perhaps not so much magic mirrors as the old mirror from the myth of Narcissus. Some authors project their own ideas upon the texts (how else to account for Bach’s assertion that Joakim is the ‘neighbor’ in Dan. 13:61?). But free association is not a scholarly response. Also, it is false to think that ‘Saying it three times’ will make it true. Yet is this not what was seen in Petit’s article on Tamar? Petit asserted six times that Tamar was a messianic figure for Jews in antiquity, yet never identified a single Jewish text, or any text, that even hinted at such typology. She repeated her assertion as a substitute for substantiating it. Some writers make an initial, qualified assertion, but then restate it without qualification. For instance, Valerie Karras writing on the subject of female deacons in the Byzantine Church first states correctly that, under a certain interpretation, one church canon from the year 325 ‘implies’ that female deacons were ordained (p. 287), but a few pages later she states that female ordination was ‘indisputable’ (p. 290).³⁴

Sawing the Lady in Half

The magic feat of seeming to saw a lady in half is well known: The magician assists someone, usually a scantily clad woman, to step into a coffin-shaped box raised on legs with casters. She puts her head through a hole at one end, and feet – presumably hers – extend from the opposite end. The magician closes the lid and saws through the middle of the box, ostensibly cutting the lady in half. Afterwards he slides dividers into place on either side of the saw, separates the two halves of the box and then twirls them about as if to prove that the woman has been bisected. He then realigns the two halves, removes the dividers, and opens the box. Out steps the woman, still smiling and still in one piece. Never seen by the audience, however, is a second woman, who was already hidden inside one end of the box

³⁴ Valerie Karras, ‘Female Deacons in the Byzantine Church’, *Church History* 73.2 (2004), pp. 272-316.

before the lady assistant stepped into it. Although it is the woman who had stepped into the box onstage who puts her head out one end, it is the other person whose feet show at the opposite end. Each woman draws herself into her end of the box, so that the saw never touches either woman.

In scholarship, it is possible to manipulate the data in a one-sided way so that no matter how cutting or incisive the analysis may seem to be, no matter how trenchant the remarks may appear, the critique never touches the real body of evidence. This can be found in feminist treatments of Scripture and of the Church which want to fault the Church for maltreating women, but avoid correlating parallel evidence concerning men. An example is Corley's repeated reference to Jesus using the word 'whore' without her acknowledging that in the same breath he used the male reference 'publican'. Acknowledging the male reference shows that neither male nor female was being denigrated by the Lord. In analysis of the Book of Daniel, R. A. F. MacKenzie properly treated all the heroes of the book, both male and female, and noted the parallels among them,³⁵ and so do I,³⁶ but numerous feminist biblical scholars (such as Dorothee Sölle) treat Susanna in isolation and indict her for what they consider lamentable sacrifice.³⁷ If Susanna were guilty, however, then the Three Hebrews would also be guilty for acting in a way that led them into the furnace and Daniel, too, would be guilty for acting in a way that brought him into the lions' den. Often 'sawing the lady in half' in this way leads to misogynistic results.

Happily, despite the examples cited here, much fine scholarship, rigorously reasoned and fairly presented, continues to advance learning. Nonetheless, today more than ever prudence is essential when reading. In consulting scholarship one might undertake to check at least a sample of the evidence offered. And, as a rule of thumb, if you would demand evidence to support a statement made about women (for instance), then in fairness you should also demand evidence to support a statement made about men.

It is timely to affirm that scholarly research properly involves several logical steps. First and essentially comes an 'encounter with reality': Some real evidence or phenomenon ought to be the starting point.³⁸ Next, a coherent hypothesis is needed to explain tentatively

³⁵ MacKenzie, 'Meaning of the Susanna Story', p. 217.

³⁶ Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'Susanna and the Pre-Christian Book of Daniel: Structure and Meaning', *The Heythrop Journal* 49.2 (2008), pp. 181-96.

³⁷ Sölle minimizes the heroism of Susanna's refusal to sin by asserting that 'the greatest sin for women is self-sacrifice': Dorothee Sölle, *Great Women of the Bible in Art and Literature*, Eng. tr. Joe H. Kirchner of *Femmes célèbres de la Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1994), p. 238.

³⁸ Michael W. Tkacz, 'Scientific Reporting, Imagination, and Neo-Aristotelian Realism', *The Thomist* 68 (2004), pp. 531-43 at p. 543.

what has been observed. Third is examining sufficient, representative evidence to test that hypothesis. Fourth comes careful consideration of any evidence which seems to contradict the working hypothesis, to see if that evidence can be reasonably explained while maintaining the hypothesis. But that is not enough.

Next, as the late Alexander P. Kazhdan used to urge, you must consider the possibility that you are wrong. It is your responsibility to imagine what other evidence is likely to exist if your hypothesis is flawed, and then it is your job to seek that evidence. If this search discovers data that requires you to alter or even abandon your hypothesis, so be it. What matters is the truth. A vignette from another Wimsey novel by Dorothy L. Sayers makes the point. In *Clouds of Witness* (1927) Lord Peter Wimsey's brother Gerald is about to be tried for murder and Peter has just discovered that their sister Mary 'has lied . . . again and again' and is possibly shielding the actual murderer, although to do so she has already brought Gerald into ignominy and jail and leaves him in danger of capital punishment. Peter is aghast, but when the police detective, who is becoming quite fond of Mary, protests against what Wimsey is saying, Peter holds fast to the principle of truth. This is all the more commendable because he is suffering the anguish natural to someone who loves both his brother and his sister. "The best thing we can do", said Wimsey, "is to look the evidence in the face, however ugly. And I don't mind admittin' that some of it's a positive gargoye".³⁹

Significantly, only the 'honour of the mind' allows a happy ending: In each fictional case in Sayers, it is only because the detectives pursue the truth unflinchingly that the innocent are cleared.⁴⁰ A practical example is provided by my own research. When I was first investigating the possibility that Susanna was a type of Christ, initially my research identified one early Christian text, then several, and suddenly I was hypothesizing that interpreting her thus was a mainstream tradition.⁴¹ A new issue arose: from what I had seen, everyone was

³⁹ Dorothy L. Sayers, *Clouds of Witness* (New York: HarperTorch, 1995), p. 114. Sayers returns to this idea in her novel *Busman's Honeymoon* (1937; reprint New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965), pp. 245-46.

⁴⁰ Similarly in Agatha Christie's *Murder at the Vicarage* (1930) and L. M. Montgomery's *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917) only taking the honest course succeeds. In each novel, a well-intentioned physician is tempted to play God and let a presumed-guilty man die or remain incapacitated, but after the physician follows the professional course of healing the man, it becomes clear that the man is innocent.

⁴¹ The initial research was funded by a Summer Stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities and resulted in the article, 'Susanna as a Type of Christ', *Studies in Iconography* 21 (1999), pp. 101-53. Expanded research on this was funded by Pew, Earhart, and Mellon, and is reflected in *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série «Antiquité», tome 165 = Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series, vol. 15 (Turnhout: Brepols /

matter-of-fact about interpreting Susanna, and indeed seven other women, as prefigurations of Christ.⁴² So my new working hypothesis was that this mainstream tradition had developed unopposed. My new responsibility was to consider whether in fact there had been opposition. How might resistance or rejection have left traces? Texts might have been written, arguing against interpreting women as types of Christ; so far my research has located none pre-dating the 1990s, when three feminists reject such typology for Jephthah's daughter.⁴³ Also, texts that present women as types of Christ could have been altered during transmission; that is, censorious souls could have cancelled key passages in existing manuscripts or simply omitted those passages when copying new manuscripts. In the case of the two full-length sermons on Susanna as a type of Christ preached during Holy Week by Maximus, the bishop of Turin, a medieval compiler could simply have omitted those two sermons entirely. Frankly, having been educated in the 1960s and '70s I rather thought I would find some evidence of suppressing or avoiding this theme. However, no evidence of textual destruction or alteration is found when one scrutinizes the textual notes of all pertinent critical editions. In fact, Maximus' sermons on Susanna survive in *more* manuscripts than do most of his other sermons.⁴⁴ Had I scanted part of my job and skipped looking hard for negative evidence, I would never have discovered that the Susanna sermons were not only mainstream, but popular.

The honour of the mind arises from our being created in the image of God. That is true of everyone. For those, however, who are aware that they were created thus, the obligation to uphold the honour of the mind is greater. In scholarship as in all of life, reason is to be

University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), see index. See also, e.g., my 'Women as Types of Christ: Susanna and Jephthah's Daughter', *Gregorianum* 85.2 (2004), pp. 281-314; and 'Aneboesen phonei megalei: Susanna and the Synoptic Passion Narratives', *Gregorianum* 87.3 (2006), pp. 449-86; and 'Women and the Church', pp. 271-73.

⁴² The seven other women are Jephthah's daughter, Esther, Ruth, Judith, the widow of Zarephath, Jairus' daughter, and the homemaker in the parable who finds the lost drachma: Tkacz, 'Women as Types of Christ.'

⁴³ Sölle, *Great Women of the Bible*, p. 130; Nell Gifford Martin, 'Vision and Violence in Some Gothic Meditative Imagery', *Studies in Iconography* 17 (1996), pp. 311-48 at p. 313; and Phyllis Silverman Kramer, 'Jephthah's Daughter: A Thematic Approach to the Narrative as Seen in Selected Rabbinic Exegesis and in Artwork', in *Judges, A Feminist Companion to the Bible*, 2nd ser., vol. 4 (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 67-92, esp. at 80-84. In contrast, male scholars have sometimes recognized the representation of biblical women as types of Christ: see Tkacz, 'Singing Women's Words', pp. 281-82.

⁴⁴ Both sermons on Susanna are in five manuscripts (GLMRS). Only seven manuscripts survive. No sermon is attested in all seven, and the Susanna sermons are better attested than two thirds of the sermons by Maximus, as is seen if one tabulates the attestations for each sermon. See esp. Almut Mutzenbecher's apparatus to his edition of Maximus of Turin, *Sermones* = CCL 23, pp. LXXVIII (list of manuscripts), 227 (MSS for the first Susanna sermon), 231 (MSS for the second Susanna sermon).

followed rigorously. Should distressing gargoyles of evidence rear their unwelcome heads, one may recall that, when Jesus declared himself to be the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6), he showed that seeking truth is itself, in mystery, seeking God.

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