

other hand, describes an act of deliverance of a man from a spirit of forgetfulness, while George Otis, Jr. speaks of 'strategic-level spiritual warfare' (p. 276). Andrew Walker on the other hand critiques what he considers paranoia driven fear of evil, a paranoia that leads to a triumphalist 'comic-strip' like interest in blowing away the devil. In response he writes: 'I believe that genuine spiritual warfare means quite simply refusing to play the war game: we can only overcome evil with good, for if we appropriate the enemy's weapons we are lost' (p. 279).

This is an important work that fills a real void, especially as a textbook, but it does have significant liabilities. A revision of this anthology might focus less on British Pentecostalism and include pieces from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The voice of women, though present, could be enhanced – especially by including a few more pieces by Aimee Semple McPherson. Part Four could be improved by paring down the number of 'issues' and moving some of the pieces to other areas of the book – for instance why is there a section on morality when holiness is considered earlier? In addition, Kenneth Copeland's letter to his supporters, does not give a real sense of the theology underlying the faith/prosperity movement. That movement deserves greater attention, if only to include both a strong case for it and a critique. Pentecostalism is approaching a degree of maturity. Its roots go back at least a century, but scholars are beginning to give attention to it. Having become a force in world Christianity, it will likely help shape Christianity as we know it well into this new century.

Robert Cornwall  
Santa Barbara, CA



**Poetics of Critique: The Interdisciplinarity of Textuality**, Andrew W. Hass, Ashgate 2003 (0-7546-0868-9), pp. xii + 184, Hb £47.50/\$94.95

*Interdisciplinarity* is a slippery term; like all our recent 'post-'s (post-modern, postsecular, postcritical), it is more often used than understood. Because of the challenge (or threat, as some see it) it poses to the traditional disciplinary divisions endemic to academia, it seems interdisciplinarity's plight is to remain marginal – that is to say, on the margins or boundaries between disciplines, precisely where, by intention, it ought to be. In *Poetics of Critique*, Andrew Hass demonstrates a profound, even reverent understanding of interdisciplinarity, and his book represents a significant contribution to theology, philosophy, literature

and critical theory, but without fitting easily into any of these disciplinary categories.

Let me say at the outset that, while this book is not for everyone, it has an almost mystical sort of universal applicability. It is, to my mind, a paradigmatic interdisciplinary text written with a high level of scholarly rigor. While the writing is gracefully accessible, the depth of critical thinking to which the reader must aspire is probably too much to expect of most undergraduates. To read *Poetics of Critique* is to take a textual sojourn of sorts, through the lines and across the pages of writings ancient and modern, across languages and centuries, across cultures and genres. There is no map, and sometimes the road is only visible a few steps ahead. This should be no surprise, however, as our pursuit is *truth*. Hence I would argue that the work is primarily theological, for the concerns that bind together all of these textual wanderings are patently theological – even religious (*re-* + *ligare*, to tie fast).

*Poetics of Critique* begins with 'A Beginning', one beginning, selected (one imagines) from many possible in-roads. Hass implies that deconstruction's time has passed; now is the time of re-construction, recreation, *play*, in this case, the play of words (and of The Word). His proposed approach is one of '*lento*' reading, a musical term which implies 'care and circumspection in the face of an impatient, indifferent, and hurried temperament' (p. 12). Through this art of slow and conscientious reading, we learn to read again, with redeemed eyes and renewed minds. The *scalpel* of critique is not taken up, for this book is not an exercise in invasive, *violent* interpretation, cutting and stabbing at a text to get at its meaning. Rather, Hass teaches us how to discover openings in texts, where unexpected shafts of light beam forth, inviting passers-by to peer inside. Indeed, as Hass asserts, 'Truth is encountered in the searching for it. *One comes to truth*' (p. 167). These openings are always already there, and the light shining forth collides and intermingles with that of other texts. Inside we find Nietzsche discussing Truth and Lying with Jesus and Pilate, Bulgakov's Master conspiring with Goethe's Faust (and Thomas Mann's Goethe), and Milan Kundera chatting with Oscar Wilde about the honesty of fiction.

Each of the book's eight chapters considers a different writer, and the texts we pause to consider serve as landmarks along our intertextual journey. We turn first to John's Gospel to find Pilate interrogating Jesus, the Word, on the matter of truth. But Jesus, like all words and all narratives, 'falls silent at the place where we most want an answer' (p. 20). We seek, we question, we chase after truth, but, Hass points out, 'truth is never something 'at hand', which is why we ask the question. . . . Is this not what Pilate shows us? Truth lies somewhere in the question 'What is truth?'. Truth is in the question' (p. 21). We become aware of the 'gap' that lies between the question and the answer that never finally arrives. To press our questions in spite of silence requires of us

*imagination*. Our questioning is action, *doing*, and Hass wants us to see that, following Kant, there is no separation between our theoretical musings and the *practice* of our critique. The problem is that truth just cannot be pinned (penned?) down – just as the attempt to nail Jesus down finally failed, and so Chapter 2 considers Russian novelist Mikhail Bulgakov and his masterwork *The Master and Margarita*. From his close reading of this text, Hass concludes that

truth cannot be fixed, unless ‘fixed’ by fraud. . . . Whereas Christ remains silent before the question of truth, the Devil takes up the charge and runs, only to come to the point, through duplicity, that truth is itself duplicitous. (p. 36)

The question of duplicity leads us to Kant’s Critiques and Goethe’s fiction in Chapters 3 and 4. Hass intentionally focuses on particular passages from particular works, selecting them and savouring them for all of the complexities they contain. As with all the voices Hass draws in, his critical exercises here are by no means exhaustive, and shouldn’t be thought of as major contributions to Kantian or Goethean scholarship (for example) so much as new keys, new clues, new ways into texts old and new.

Suddenly, out of *nowhere* (that void which is the cradle of truth), a theatre appears. We take our seats and watch a drama unfold before us. The scene is a sanatorium, and the protagonist is Nietzsche, who is visited by a diabolical ‘Figure’ driving a familiar (especially to a German) bargain. This section, called an ‘Interlude’, is to me the most exciting part of the book, and it left me thinking that more such interdisciplinary discourse could (and should) be carried out in this manner – that is, in *drama*, in *narrative* – in *fiction*, the way Hass creatively frames the discussion of textual play within a literal textual *play*. Hass writes: ‘We play at truth, because truth is only ever a doubling, a marriage of artifice and human spirit. . . . Truth is only ever creative’ (p. 101). This drama provides a bridge between fiction and philosophy, between poetry and theology, between critique and creativity, and so it is appropriate that it should appear smack between Goethe and Nietzsche, who plays not only Goethe’s Faust but later Eve’s tempter.

Chapter 6, which introduces Czech novelist Milan Kundera, is formally distinct from rest of the work. Hass adopts an anecdotal style (à la Blanchot, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard), fragments like a mosaic, a block here and a block there, which eventually reveal a greater picture. Imagination is still our guiding light, and the highlight of this chapter is another imaginary dialogue, this time between Kundera and Oscar Wilde. The ever-widening discussion is then extended to the hermeneutical work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (Chapter 7), for Gadamer theorizes what Kundera puts into practice, that which Hass terms

'poetic consciousness': 'poetry and truth together . . . as inseparable features of a modality by which the self becomes "made" and the work becomes open to all of life's possible makings' (p. 152).

In the final chapter, the tragic theatre of Sophocles embodies truth *through suffering*, and in light of current global and political crises, this seems a significant and poignant way to leave off the conversation. But I hesitate to say that Hass 'ends' this way, with this discussion of suffering and tragedy, for he foregoes (deliberately, no doubt) any definitive conclusion. Rather the conversation is suspended, and it is our job – we as readers – to resume it in our own thinking and writing. As with the theatre, 'It is we the audience . . . who grant the performance credibility. . . . It is we who accompany the action to its place of truth' (p. 176). We come away from Hass's text with a certain conviction – it must be more than an opinion, a hunch, for he writes with the conviction of a preacher, with an aim is to *inspire*, to fill us with the same Spirit that drives Jesus out into the wilderness (of the page, the stage) to search for truth. The conviction that he instils in us is the initiative set out on our own journeys, to undertake our various quests for truth in our own work, with/in the texts of our own choosing. Of course there could have been other texts, other voices which could have contributed to the conversation, but this is not the point. Truth is there to be discovered, to be uncovered and recovered, sounding the 'call to imagination. Not to shrink back but to move forward, into the darkness and the chaos, and to forge anew. It requires the strength of creative minds . . . the joy of experiment . . . the breaking of boundaries' (p. 179) and indeed, '*Interdisciplinarity arises when truth becomes play in poetic consciousness*' (p. 164). Hass's writing is one example, and a fine example, of *doing* interdisciplinarity, of allowing perpetual critique to lead us to the margins. *Poetics of Critique* is a genuinely exciting effort to dwell within the dark space of interdisciplinarity – an uncertain, insecure space where the rules are uncertain and guiding lights flicker dimly but are not overcome.

Brannon Hancock  
University of Glasgow



**Modern Judaism. An Oxford Guide**, Edited by Nicholas de Lange and Miri Freud-Kandel, Oxford University Press 2005 (ISBN 0-19-926287-X), pp. ix + 459, Pb £22.95

The present guide is a long overdue textbook on modern Judaism. For the exploration of the complex subject the editors, Nicholas de Lange