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RELIGIOUS EXCHANGES

Solomon's Temple, Holy Land Travel, and a Georgics of Sacred Space in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Writing

Michael Rotenberg-Schwartz

In the twenty-first section of his poem, *Jerusalem, 1967*, Yehuda Amichai describes the city as a “port city on the shore of eternity” and the Temple Mount as “a huge ship, a magnificent / luxury liner” which is “always arriving, always sailing away.”¹ It is a site where Hasidim “shout hooray, hooray,” but also where “the flags and the high masts of churches / and mosques and the smokestacks of synagogues”

¹ Yehuda Amichai, *Poems of Jerusalem* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

mix and are recognized. Though a place of general prayer, Jerusalem is also marked by “fences and the piers / and the policemen.” Eternity may be close, but as Ranen Omer-Sherman notes, Amichai’s Jerusalem is a geography “too complicated to be limited to a narrative of faith, historical closure, or redemption.”² And so, Amichai concludes this section by comparing the holy city and its primary occupation (prayer) to a more worldly locale and endeavor: “And the commerce and the gates and the golden domes: / Jerusalem is the Venice of God.”

Amichai’s language resonates in surprising ways with a passage written some three hundred years earlier by Thomas Fuller in his *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine*. Describing the city’s distance from water routes, Fuller explains that God situated Jerusalem away from commercial traffic because he intended it for, not a Venice, but “a Royal Exchange of Religion, chiefly holding correspondence with Heaven itself, daily receiving blessings thence, duly returning praises thither.”³ Fuller adds that, according to Eusebius, Plato imitated God’s geography by recommending that his republic be established “some miles from the Sea, lest foreign merchandize should by degrees bring in foreign manners into it.”⁴ Jerusalem is a world depot but, lest it be polluted by foreign, secular goods, for only one (spiritual) product.⁵ Yet it might in that case have been described as a temple, not an exchange. Of course, notwithstanding its distance from waterways,

² Ranen Omer-Sherman, “Yehuda Amichai’s Exilic Jerusalem,” *Prooftexts* 26 (2006): 223.

³ Thomas Fuller, *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine and the Confines Thereof* (London: 1662), 315. This is a rather purer vision of religious institutions than Fuller, a moderate who argued that the Established Church ought to be accepted even if, like ancient Jerusalem and its temple, it was flawed, generally espouses. On the politics of Fuller’s writing, see: Florence Sandler, “The Temple of Zerubbabel: A Pattern for Reformation in Thomas Fuller’s *Pisgah-Sight and Church-History of Britain*,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 10.2 (1977): 29–42 and Florence Sandler, “Thomas Fuller’s *Pisgah-Sight of Palestine* as a Comment on the Politics of Its Time,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 41.4 (August 1978): 317–343.

⁴ Fuller, *A Pisgah Sight*, 316.

⁵ An interesting passage in the travels of Arculf describes the miraculous way in which God cleanses Jerusalem after it is dirtied by an annual market: “On the 15th of September, annually, an immense multitude of people of different nations are used to meet in Jerusalem for the purpose of commerce, and the streets are so clogged with the dung of camels, horses, mules, and oxen, that they become almost impassable, and the smell would be a nuisance to the whole town. But, by a miraculous providence, which exhibits God’s peculiar attachment to this place, no sooner has the multitude left Jerusalem than a heavy fall of rain begins on the night following, and ceases only when the city has been perfectly cleansed.” *Early Travels in Palestine*, ed. Thomas Wright (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003), 1.

Jerusalem was not far from the King's Highway and traffic. Moreover, as Achsah Guibbory has shown, English writers under the Stuarts recognized that trade "had significance in the Hebrew Bible. Solomon had a 'navy of ships' . . . which he sent to Ophir . . . When Isaiah envisioned the glorious future of Israel restored . . . he emphasized that wealth and trade would flow to Jerusalem . . . Isaiah's vision of a future, imperial Jerusalem, the center of trade and wealth, was adaptable to seventeenth-century England's commercial and imperial ambitions."⁶ Thus, for Samuel Purchas, "the English 'Temple' James would build with [imperial] riches was not simply spiritual. But neither was it simply the physical churches of England. Rather the 'Temple' is Christian England itself. The traffic in material goods and the accumulation of the world's wealth, now to be centered in the new Israel, is itself the building of the Temple."⁷ Over a century later, in a defense of church ornamentation, one writer similarly identified Solomon's Temple with extensive commerce and wealth:

Inexhaustible Sources of Wealth had been opened to this Monarch and his People by his cultivating the Arts of Peace, and by his extending Navigation and Commerce *to the Ends of the Earth*. In a Manner, therefore, corresponding to this great Opulence, he was desirous of erecting a national Temple, which, Excellency of Materials, the Efforts of Art, and Richness of Decorations, should conspire to render the Object of universal Admiration. And such a Structure he no less thought a conspicuous, lasting Monument of his Gratitude and Regard to the Most High, than a powerful Instrument in producing awful, reverential Conceptions of his Perfection in Mens Minds.⁸

So too did William Hodson's Seatonian Prize-winning poem, "The Dedication of the Temple of Solomon," where the speaker praises Solmon for his "worthily perform'd" task:

⁶ Achsah Guibbory, *Christian Identity, Jews, and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 46.

⁷ Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, 48. On the use of Solmon's Temple in the iconography of the Stuart court, see Graham Parry, *The Seventeenth Century: The Intellectual and Cultural Contexts of English Literature, 1603–1700* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 22–23.

⁸ *The Ornaments of Churches Considered, with a particular View to the late Decoration of the Parish Church of St. Margaret Westminster* (Oxford: 1761), 62.

The pride of every Region, every Clime,
 Thy pious Care selected for the Work,
 And brought to Solyma; whose Magazines
 Th' united Produce of the World contain'd.
 Here might be seen the Treasures of the East,
 The boasted Wealth of Taprobana's Shores,
 With varied Splendour struck the dazzled Eye,
 And sham'd thy radiant Light, oh Sun!⁹

Johnson's definition of an exchange as the "place where the merchants meet to negotiate their affairs; place of sale" further confounds. If for Fuller an exchange can be of different kinds, for Johnson it is a place of sale. And yet Johnson's second proof-text comes from Denham's description of the Thames in *Cooper's Hill* ("—No thing, no place is strange, / While his fair bosom is the world's exchange"), where the Thames has just been described as "God-like" in bounty, both natural and commercial:

No unexpected inundations spoyl
 The mowers hopes, nor mock the plowmans toyl:
 But God-like his unwearied Bounty flows;
 First loves to do, then loves the Good he does.
 Nor are his Blessings to his banks confin'd,
 But free, and common, as the Sea or Wind;
 When he to boast, or to disperse his stores
 Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
 Visits the world, and in his flying towers
 Brings home to us, and makes both Indies ours;
 Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants
 Cities in deserts, woods in Cities plants.
 So that to us no thing, no place is strange,
 While his fair bosom is the worlds exchange. (175-188)

Half a century after Fuller and Denham, Addison waxed cosmopolitan at the Royal Exchange on somewhat similar grounds. Here was a place

⁹ William Hodson, *The Dedication of the Temple of Solomon: A Poetical Essay* (Cambridge: 1770), 7-8.

people of different beliefs could gather for one end, not despite but because of commercial interests.

To exchange is simply to give one thing for another. In Fuller's sense, the idea is that people barter sacrifices or prayers in return for a heavenly return. It would seem that there are religious exchanges and secular exchanges, and never the twain shall meet. But the first three prooftexts in Johnson's *Dictionary* complicate this distinction, indicating that an exchange of one kind implies the other and that both are equally concerned with the issue of use. The first text is from Ezekiel 48.14: "They shall not sell of it, neither exchange nor alienate the first fruits." The second is from Locke's *Second Treatise*: "Exchange his sheep for shells, or wool for a sparkling pebble, or a diamond." And the third is from Atterbury's *A Sermon Preach'd in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's at the Funeral of Mr. Tho. Bennet*: "Take delight in the good things of this world, so as to remember that we are to part with them, and to exchange them for more excellent and durable enjoyments." Johnson's choices seem counterintuitive. One would expect texts on exchange to relate primarily to economic transaction, but here they prioritize religious or moral ends. Cognizant of commercial traffic, the quotations from Ezekiel and Atterbury speak to a separation of worldly and heavenly domains. In a world where fruit is sold, there are fruits one may not sell; likewise, in a world of pleasurable activities, one should keep in mind their eventual substitution for even greater heavenly enjoyments. Johnson even uses the passage from Locke, from the chapter "Of Property," for a moralized end, for in it Locke describes an appropriate use of one's property as that which does not waste what others might benefit from. Though for Fuller Jerusalem as Exchange is free from worldly taint, in this essay I want to explore the juxtaposition of prayer (or religion) and commerce, especially as it relates to notions of the Holy Land or any sacred space, to question the sharp distinction that is often drawn between sacred and secular experience. Although a fundamental element of the sacred is of course its separation from the mundane,

I want to suggest that the theoretical disposition of the sacred—the systematic relation of things within space and the interest in the uses of those things—could be and was shared with the secular.¹⁰

My interest in this stems from reading early modern English travel narratives to Palestine, whose authors modern readers typically insist on reading as entirely secular. They were secular because, being post-Reformation travelers, they no longer believed in a Holy Land or the efficacy of pilgrimage for penance. Even in Catholicism, the notion that Palestine was holy had long been subject to debate. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Jerome, for example, both advised against making special pilgrimages to Palestine. For them, as well as for Luther and Calvin, the idea that any land could be holy was rendered obsolete by Jesus, the new Temple whose model everyone should emulate.¹¹ Holiness no longer resided in the stones of a temple, but in the hearts of believers.¹² As George Herbert puts it in “Sion,” a

¹⁰ Although the argument here bears similarities with Talal Asad's *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), particularly in its sense that neither the secular nor the religious are “essentially fixed categories,” it differs with him where he disclaims that “if one stripped appearances one would see that some apparently secular institutions were *really* religious” (25). In this respect, my argument follows writers like John Milbank and William Connolly, who maintain that secular culture is based on theological beliefs.

¹¹ When God put an end to the old dispensation, he put an end to holy places, Isaac Watts writes in his sermon on “The Holiness of Places of Worship”: “He removed his dwelling from Places made with Hands, and dwelt bodily in the Man *Jesus Christ* as his noblest Tabernacle.” Isaac Watts, *The Holiness of Times, Places, and People Under the Jewish and Christian Dispensations Consider'd and Compared, in Several Discourses* (London: 1738), 112. For similar sentiment, see Christopher Smart's “Hymn 6: The Presentation of Christ in the Temple,” where the Temple's grand and true proportion are yet no match for “. . . another fane [which] arose, / The fabric poor, / And built by hardship midst her foes” (26–28).

¹² Some writers contend that prior to Jesus, the land was holy in particular places only while God remained present in them. For example, in *The History of the Consecration of Altars, Temples and Churches: Shewing The various Forms of it among Jews, Heathens, and Christians, deduc'd from it's first Origine to this present Age* (London: 1706), James Owen writes: “That which made a Place Holy was some special Presence of God in it. Thus God's appearance unto *Moses* made the Ground Holy. The Divine Glory of Christ in the Transfiguration made the Mountain Holy. And when this Glorious Presence ceas'd, the Places ceas'd to be Holy, and became common Ground” (13–14). In another anti-consecration pamphlet, *The Gospel-Sanctuary: Or, God's Name Recorded in Places of Publick Worship. In which The Consecration and Holiness of such Places are rationally considered; and the free and publick Exercise of Religion, supported upon Natural and Christian Principles* (London: 1740), P. Cardale doubts holiness was ever imparted by God: “Nor did the Divine presence itself ever so far alter the nature of things, as to make one place more holy than another in this sense. Even his *glorious* presence

poem about God's preference for the groans of inner faith: "All Solomon's Sea of Brass and World of Stone / Is not so dear to thee as one good Groan / And truly Brass and Stones are heavy things, / Tombs for the Dead, not Temples fit for thee."¹³ Belief in the ongoing holiness of Palestine, Isaac Watts argued, led to the frantic and blameworthy zeal of the Crusades, and to the abuse by Tasso and Casimire Sarbiewski of their poetic muses.¹⁴ (Oddly, though, this did not prevent writers from thinking of present-day Palestine as cursed. For example, William Lithgow recounts that while Canaan once "was the most fruitful land in the world . . . I find now the contrary, and the fruitfulness thereof to be changed, God cursing the land together with the Jews."¹⁵ Likewise, in his history of the Crusades, Thomas Fuller writes that "to this day [pilgrims] light on parcels of rich ground in

in the tabernacle and temple could not be said to communicate any real holiness to those places" (75). Such thoughts are expressed even in consecration sermons. In *A Sermon Preach'd in the New Church of St. Matthew's, Bethnal-Green, On the 20th of July, 1746. Being the Sunday next after the Consecration of the said Church* (London: 1746), William Gordon writes of an abandoned church: "if the Service of God should no longer be perform'd here, it returns to its original Indifference again, as it was before the Foundation of the Fabrick was laid; the relative Holiness itself is lost, even as the Place whereon Moses stood, though it was declar'd to be holy Ground, whilst God was there present, and conversed with him; soon as ever that Presence was withdrawn, it was no longer sacred in itself, but reduc'd to a Level with any other Spot in the Neighbourhood" (22).

¹³ George Herbert, *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), lines 17–20. On the difficulty of discerning Herbert's attitude to churches, see: David L. Orvis, "Thy glorious household-stuffe': Doctrinal (Re) Inscription in George Herbert's Church Furnishing Poems" in *The Sacred and Profane in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Mary A. Papazian (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008). Also see, Samuel Hayes, *Prayer: A Poem* (Cambridge: 1777): "What avails / The splendid Temple, decorated Shrine, / What all the pageantry of labour'd art?" (4).

¹⁴ Watts, *The Holiness*, 112–13. Interestingly, where Watts's disbelief in the inherent holiness of place leads him to criticize the Crusades, in *The Holy Land: A Poem* (Cambridge, 1800), Francis Wrangham's confidence in the "inextinguishable flame" of Palestine's "holy light" ("In the dust / Thy scatter'd relics shine; and radiant still, / By time's successive billows uneffaced, / The pilgrim tracks the footsteps of his God" [lines 61–68]) moves him not only to praise Richard the Lionheart but to fantasize that either French or Russian armies, though infidel themselves, will scourge Egypt (lines 245–250).

¹⁵ William Lithgow, *Travels and Voyages, through Europe, Asia, and Africa, for Nineteen Years. Containing An Account of the Religion, Government, Policy, Laws, Customs, Trade, &c. of the several countries through which the Author travelled; and a Description of Jerusalem, and many other remarkable places mentioned in Sacred and Profane History: Also A Narrative of the tortures he suffered in the Spanish Inquisition, and of his miraculous deliverance from those cruelties*, 11th ed. (Edinburgh, 1770), 204.

Palestine which God may seem to have left, that men may tast the former sweetnesse of the land, before it was sowed for the peoples sinnes . . . But it is barren for the generality: the streams of milk and hony wherewith once it flowed, are now drained dry; and the whole face of the land looketh sad, not so much for want of dressing, as because God hath frowned on it.”¹⁶ Aaron Hill strikes a similar note in his account “Of the Present State of the Holy-Land”: “Nor is, *the once sublime, and Flourishing Condition* of her Ancient Government, the only thing, which time has chang’d to this Surprizing disadvantage, *even the Land itself*, as if a Curse from *Heaven* attended the deserted Climate, has disrob’d her *Surface* of those amiable Beauties, and attracting Excellencies of Fertility and Prospect, which in former times, were wont to Crown, not only the *Vallies*, but the very *Hills* and *Rocks* themselves, with a Productive Gayety.”¹⁷ The motivation for English travelers, then, could only be antiquarian curiosity.

While I agree that such travelers usually were not primarily motivated by religious impulses, especially compared to, say, Jewish travelers of the same period, I believe it is a mistake to eliminate religion altogether from their experiences. Indeed, much work has recently been done that suggests beliefs in the sacred persisted on the ground notwithstanding the theoretical disagreements of theologians and even the violence of civil war. The world of Luther, Robert Scribner has noted, was highly charged with sacrality—only it was a sacrality beyond human control.¹⁸ Likewise, though Calvin wrote against the idea that one place could be holier than another and maintained that individual Christians were the stones of the true church, the 1566 Second Helvetic Confession called for sacred places.¹⁹ “Even in the heart of the Calvinist movement, the ‘new Jerusalem’ of Geneva,” write Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, “what took place was not a process of desacralisation, but rather a rearrangement of space according to a new conception of the

¹⁶ Thomas Fuller, *The Historie of the Holy Warre* (Cambridge: 1639), 2–3.

¹⁷ Aaron Hill, *The Present State of Aethiopia, Egypt, Palestine, and the Whole Ottoman Empire* (London, 170?), 276.

¹⁸ Robert W. Scribner, “The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the ‘Disenchantment of the World,’” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23.3 (Winter 1993): 475–94.

¹⁹ Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 11.

sacred."²⁰ Surprisingly, some architects in Geneva took their inspiration from the Temple of Solomon, or the Temple of Ezekiel's vision, notwithstanding its popularization by the Jesuit Villalpando.²¹ Villalpando's influence even spread to New Haven, which was modeled according to his plans of the Temple compound.²² Moreover, though Puritans were free to homogenize time and space in the American colonies, meeting-houses came to seem consecrated by their use for prayer.²³ Initially used for mixed purposes (such as town meetings), meetinghouses were eventually deemed inappropriate for secular practices; by the Revolution, the term church had been rehabilitated, as had consecrations, for their use.²⁴ In Scotland, too, the Kirk found it difficult to replace traditional attitudes about sacred rites and, by the 1620s, reinstituted the practice of consecration.²⁵ Likewise in England, popular attitudes were not necessarily transformed by Protestant teaching or the Westminster Confession of 1647. Congregants still accorded symbolic weight to where they sat in church; and even Quakers came to identify strongly with their meetinghouses,

²⁰ Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, "Introduction: The Dimensions of Sacred Space in Reformation Europe," in *Sacred Space in Early Modern England*, eds. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6.

²¹ Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 12.

²² John Archer, "Puritan Town Planning in New Haven," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 34.2 (May 1975): 140–49. On Villalpando's influence on nine-bay synagogues and churches in Poland and England, see: Sergey R. Kravtsov, "Juan Bautista Villalpando and Sacred Architecture in the Seventeenth Century," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64.3 (September 2005): 312–39.

²³ James P. Walsh, "Holy Time and Sacred Space in Puritan New England," *American Quarterly* 32.1 (Spring 1980): 89–91. On Anglican churches in the colonies, see: Louis P. Nelson, "Word, Shape, and Image: Anglican Constructions of the Sacred," in *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces*, ed. Louis P. Nelson, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

²⁴ Gretchen Buggeln, "New England Orthodoxy and the Language of the Sacred," in *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces*, ed. Louis P. Nelson, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

²⁵ Andrew Spicer, "'What kinde of hourse a kirk is': Conventicles, Consecrations and the Concept of Sacred Space in Post-Reformation Scotland," in *Sacred Space in Early Modern England*, eds. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 87, 91–92. Also see: Andrew Spicer, "'God Will Have a House': Defining Sacred Space and Rites of Consecration in Early Seventeenth-Century England," in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2006).

particularly when squeezed out of them by the Established Church.²⁶ As Alexandra Walsham has shown, even the destruction of churches across Britain and Ireland did not necessarily purge locations of religious resonance in the minds of those who lived near their ruins: “Even as they repudiated the notion that sanctity could be localized and stressed its transcendence of tangible forms, they spoke as if its opposite, iniquity, had an irresistibly material quality. In this and other respects, it may be suggested, the sacred was not so much eroded as reconfigured and relocated: the way in which it was present in the world was redefined rather than wholly denied.”²⁷ A crucial distinction here was of use: places were not inherently sacred but sanctified by prayer and worship. Moreover, though no longer read sacramentally, nature itself came to be read symbolically for signs of God, who was said to communicate to people through natural processes.²⁸ As Walsham notes, the reputedly medicinal waters of mineral springs “helped to perpetuate, even as it subtly transformed, the notion that divine power was concentrated in particular locations.”²⁹ In other words, over time the landscape in Britain was sacralized, desacralized, and resacralized—but it was not disenchanting as Max Weber long ago suggested.³⁰ So that even in Richard Polwhele’s *The Influence of Local Attachment with Respect to Home*, a long pre-Romantic poem which describes local attachment as the effect not of place acting upon the mind but the mind acting upon place, one senses some remainder of power in sacred space:

²⁶ Christopher Marsh, “Sacred Space in England, 1560–1640: The View from the Pew,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53.2 (April 2002): 286–311; Simon Dixon, “The Priest, the Quakers and the Second Conventicle Act: the Battle for Gracechurch Street Meeting House, 1670,” in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2006).

²⁷ Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 151. On the power of church ruins over the imagination of Protestants, also see: Margaret Aston, “English Ruins and English History: The Dissolution and the Sense of the Past,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 231–55.

²⁸ Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, 387, and Alexandra Walsham, “The Reformation and ‘The Disenchantment of the World’ Reassessed,” *The Historical Journal* 51.2 (2008): 508–9.

²⁹ Alexandra Walsham, “The Reformation and ‘The Disenchantment of the World’ Reassessed,” *The Historical Journal* 51 (2008): 512.

³⁰ For the idea that this process led anyway to secularization, see: C. John Sommerville, *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 30.

Lo, by a fine ethereal spirit led,
 Mid olive groves we trace Ilyssus' streams;
 Or hail the solemn spot where Cato bled;
 Or, where the ruin of Iona gleams,
 Cherish, in holy trance, romantic dreams;
 Or, with a filial tenderness, recall
 Each monument of early youth that teems
 With classic thought—the school's awe-breathing wall,
 The bosom-thrilling bench, the academic hall.³¹

Different landscapes appeal to different people, and a person visits a place with particular memories and a particular mindset, yet it cannot be accidental that a person cherishes "in holy trance" not just a random location but Iona, a former center of Irish monasticism. Samuel Johnson had a similar experience of the island, as he records in his *Journey to the Western Isles*: "Far from me and my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground that has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."³² Given this dynamic, to understand how such travelers might have responded to the original space of Christianity, one must consider how writers conceived of religious space in Britain itself, particularly in consecration sermons and in proto-anthropological or architectural treatises on temples in general and the Temple of Solomon specifically.

From an older anthropological perspective, exemplified by Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade, sacred spaces are hierophanic, meaning that their bounds contain local irruptions of the holy which are absolutely distinct from the profane.³³ This sense of the reality of the sacred was later critiqued by Jonathan Z. Smith, who in *Map Is Not Territory* argued that already in ancient diasporic cultures a belief in the inextricable relationship of particular deities to particular places was weakened if not

³¹ Richard Polwhele, *The Influence of Local Attachment with Respect to Home* (London, 1798), 10.

³² Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. Peter Levi (New York: Penguin, 1984), 141.

³³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1987).

entirely given up and replaced by non-locative rites that offered access to the transcendent.³⁴ For Smith, “there is nothing that is sacred in itself, only things sacred in relation.”³⁵ Expounding upon Ezekiel’s vision of the Temple, in *To Take Place* Smith writes that holiness does not reside in specific places or objects but is brought into being by people who employ “complex and rigorous systems of power and status with their attendant idioms of sacred/profane and pure/impure.”³⁶ Because they are ideational and self-referential rather than material and correspondent to some larger reality, these systems can be replicated and transferred—to temples but also to internalized modes of thought—enabling religions to survive in places beyond their points of origin. Judaism thus lost nothing when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed because its synchronic systemization of difference was ready to evolve in the Mishnah; in fact, Smith writes, “if the Temple had not been destroyed, it would have had to be neglected. For it represented a locative type of religious activity no longer perceived as effective in a new, utopian religious situation.”³⁷ Christianity likewise moved away from the *loca sancta* of Palestine by prioritizing a temporal set of rituals. What came to matter was less being in the spaces where Jesus’s life unfolded than the texts one read and the rituals one performed while processing from place to place. In other words, “ritual is not an expression of or a response to ‘the Sacred’; rather, something or someone is made sacred by ritual.”³⁸ Place matters, then, only insofar as it directs attention: “When one enters a temple, one enters marked-off space . . . in which, at least in principle, nothing is accidental; everything, at least potentially, demands attention. The temple serves as a focusing lens, establishing the possibility of significance by directing attention, by requiring the perception of difference. Within the temple, the ordinary (which to any outside eye or ear remains wholly ordinary) becomes significant, becomes ‘sacred,’ simply by being there.”³⁹ And yet, although such spaces are created, once

³⁴ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), XIV.

³⁵ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 55.

³⁶ Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 73.

³⁷ Smith, *Map Is Not*, 128.

³⁸ Smith, *To Take*, 105.

³⁹ Smith, *To Take*, 104.

established they are marked as wholly separate from the world, which is contingent, accidental, and arbitrary.⁴⁰ In the end, for Smith, sacred space still bears significance.

In according significance to ritual, Smith sees himself in opposition to Enlightenment writers who denigrate rituals as empty ceremonies. Yet Smith's argument with Eliade in many ways repeats the disagreement over space that took place during what some scholars now call the long Reformation. In a schematic way Eliade's definition of the sacred matches Catholic defenses of sacred space, pilgrimage, and relics, while Smith's critique resembles reformers who were for consecration, such as Hooker, and even those who were not, such as James Owen, who wrote in *The History of the Consecration of Altars, Temples, and Churches* that "the worship of God now rather contributed to the Sanctity of the Place, than the Place to the Sanctity of the Worship."⁴¹ Defining the sacred as he does implies the existence of discrete secular spaces. And while I would like to borrow from Smith his sense that the sacred lies in the systematic relation of things, I would also question whether it must indeed stand apart absolutely from the ordinary world of work. According to Jonathan Sheehan, in fact for all anthropologists of religion, "the sacred *needs* a place to inhabit distinct and separate from the space of the profane. True religion exists only in its own place . . . For the modern human science, religion cannot function without a space for its performance."⁴² This need, Sheehan points out, arose

⁴⁰ Steven Weitzman, "Reopening the Gates of J. Z. Smith's Temple: *To Take Place* in the Light of New Historicism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76 (2008): 770. For a similar historicist critique of Smith, also see Christine M. Thomas, "Place and Memory: Response to Jonathan Z. Smith on *To Take Place*, on the Occasion of Its Twentieth Anniversary," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76.3 (September 2008): 766–773.

⁴¹ Owen, *The History*, A2. Of course, given Smith's long historical view, what he writes of sacred transferability applied first to Catholicism, then to Protestantism. Indeed, after the Reformation, English Catholics learned to convert ordinary spaces (including barns) into religious spaces by using them in ritualized, imaginative ways. See: Lisa McClain, "Without Church, Cathedral, or Shrine: The Search for Religious Space among Catholics in England, 1559–1625," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33.2 (2002): 381–99 and Richard L. Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England," in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2006).

⁴² Jonathan Sheehan, "Temple and Tabernacle: The Place of Religion in Early Modern England," in *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400–1800*, eds. Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 249.

ironically from the work of early modern scholars and religious controversialists who, worried about the infiltration of idolatry into Christianity, developed an abstract, comparative approach to all religious practices, abandoned ideas about theological profanation (that is, about religious truth and error), and discovered that religion could be analyzed in terms of its social function. By identifying a basic human need—equally present in ancient Israel and contemporary England—for religious places, scholars like John Spencer not only restricted the scope of religion but also discovered areas of human life that had nothing to do with religion. Where religion once defined all space, suddenly it was but one of many non-overlapping spaces.⁴³ But, like Smith, Sheehan overemphasizes the boundaries separating sacred and secular. After all, it has been shown that for hundreds of years (even into the eighteenth century), churchyards were used for a variety of secular purposes, including commerce and leisure; conversely, market places in early modern England were often used for religious purposes.⁴⁴

Admittedly, this mixture was objectionable to some. Consecration sermons typically refer to the act of consecration as a sort of property transfer between man and God. And though, as Samuel Hilliard puts it, God does not give special regard to churches “because of any Holiness inherent in the places themselves, as if there were more Sanctity in those than any other Fabricks, but because they are dedicated and set apart from all other uses to his Service,” nevertheless in solemn assemblies “there’s a

⁴³ Jonathan Sheehan, “Sacred and Profane: Idolatry, Antiquarianism and the Polemics of Distinction in the Seventeenth Century,” *Past & Present* 192 (August 2006): 35–66. For a similar reading of the early modern discovery of religion, see: Guy G. Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁴⁴ David Dymond, “God’s Disputed Acre,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 50 (1999): 464–97; David Postles, “The Market Place as Space in Early Modern England,” *Social History* 29 (2004), 41–58. According to Andrew Spicer, “Before the Reformation, the sanctity of a church was seen to provide protection and lend weight to some secular activities carried out under its roof, so that it was common for churches to be used for swearing of oaths, concluding business deals and even for storing money”; Andrew Spicer, “What kinde of house a kirk is’: Conventicles, Consecrations and the Concept of Sacred Space in Post-Reformation Scotland,” in *Sacred Space in Early Modern England*, eds. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 88. Also see: Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer, “Defining the Holy: the Delineation of Sacred Space,” in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 12; and C. John Sommerville, *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 22.

Schechinah, a peculiar manifestation of God."⁴⁵ Moreover, regardless of whether they favor or reject consecration, writers often speak of the need for places of prayer to remain separate. Thus Hooker deems it unseemly for one to build a house of God "with no other apparance, than if his end were to reare up a Kitchin, or a Parlor for his owne use? Or when a worke of such nature is finished, remayneth there nothing but presently to use it, and so an end?"⁴⁶ Likewise William Hole writes that "Were [prayers] to be offered up in the same Places, where ordinarily the Busy and Gay Scenes of Life are transacted, Ideas of Levity or Business would be oftner associated in the Imagination. The very Places might tempt the Proneness of our corrupted Nature to a Dissipation of Mind. They might invite and encourage such Sentiments, as it would be very difficult to exclude, however unworthy of us to entertain."⁴⁷ And Isaac Watts constructs an interesting analogy of the misuse of religious space to the misuse of secular space:

Reason and Humanity seem to dictate this Separation or Appointment of Buildings for publick Worship. Should the Senate-house where our Law-givers assemble be used for a Theatre or Droll-house, or for idle Puppet-shews? Should the Council-board be made a drinking or gaming Table when the King is absent? Or the Presence-chamber be an entertaining Room for publick Mimicks and Scaramouches to divert the Mob, as soon as Majesty is departed? Or is it proper that a Place built for divine Service should be alternately employed for the Fooleries of human Life to appear in when the Worship is ended? This would unite Ideas which are extreemly distant, and blend together Solemnity and Ridicule. This would too nearly join Things divine and jocular, and mingle the Images of such Scenes in the Fancy as should for ever be kept separate.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Samuel Hilliard, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Consecration of the Chappel of St. Catherine, in Camvy Isle in the County of Essex, on the 11th of June, 1712* (London: 1712), 14, 8–9. Also see: John Leng, *A Sermon Preached at the Consecration of the Chappel of St. Katherine's-Hall, in the University of Cambridge, September 1. 1704* (Cambridge: 1704), 4–5; Thomas Lewis, *An Historical Essay Upon the Consecration of Churches* (London: 1719), 2.

⁴⁶ Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (London, 1622), 203.

⁴⁷ William Hole, *A Sermon Preached in the Parish-Church of Werrington, Devon, at the Consecration of that Church, on Wednesday, Septemb. 7. 1743* (Oxford, 1743), 11.

⁴⁸ Watts, *The Holiness*, 118.

Nonetheless, churches were not untouched by the profane. Alexander Baillie, a Scottish Benedictine traveling from Germany, had this to say about St. Giles in Edinburgh when he visited it in 1622:

& on every side beholding the restlesse resorting of people treating of their worldly affaires; some writing & making obligations, contracts & discharges: others laying countes or telling-over sowmes of mony: & two & two walking & talking to & fro, some about merchandice or the lawes & too many alas about drinking or courting of woemen, Yea & perhaps about worse nor I can imagine; as is wont to be done al the day long in the common Exchanges of London & Amsterdam & other great cities.⁴⁹

And in the next century writers continued to complain about muddled distinctions between spaces. This is true both for the outward form of churches as well as for the behaviors within. For example, in his *Epistle to Burlington*, Pope counts among the foolish imitators of Burlington those who would “Load some vain Church with old Theatric state” (line 29). On this line, Warburton comments: “For the one being for *holy service*, and the other only for *civil amusement*, it is impossible that the profuse and lascivious ornaments of the latter should become the retenue, reverence, and sanctity of the other. Nor will any examples of this vanity of ornament in the sacred buildings of antiquity justify this imitation; for those ornaments might be very suitable to a Temple of Bacchus, or Venus, which would ill become the sobriety and purity of the present Religion.”⁵⁰ Similarly, in “The Winter Walk at Noon” of *The Task*, Cowper scoffs at the use of churches for the praise of man, as when “ten thousand sit / Patiently

⁴⁹ Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 82–83.

⁵⁰ Alexander Pope, *The works of Alexander Pope Esq. In nine volumes complete. With his last corrections, additions, and improvements. Published by Mr. Warburton*, Vol. III (London, 1751), 266. In the same lengthy note, Warburton reflects on the origin of Saxon architecture, which he traces back to the churches in Palestine. This note later appears in the eighth appendix of *The Ornaments of Churches Considered, with a particular View to the late Decoration of the Parish Church of St. Margaret Westminster* (Oxford, 1761), as well as Grose’s contribution to *Essays on Gothic Architecture by the Rev. T. Warton, Rev. J. Bentham, Captain Grose, and the Rev. J. Milner* (London, 1800).

present at a sacred song, / Commemoration-mad" for a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Westminster Abbey, which they hear not for God's but "Handel's sake," or when after the battle of Culloden "in the chapel of old Ely House, / . . . The simple clerk but loyal, did announce, / And eke did rear right merrily, two staves, / Sung to the praise and glory of King George."⁵¹

But such critiques reveal that in actuality lines were often blurred: churches were made to look like secular buildings and people did celebrate mundane things in sacred places. Of course Cowper's *Task* itself takes religious impulses out into the garden and the winter walk. Dustin Griffin has described this as Cowper's spiritualizing of georgic poetry.⁵² But even though the georgic has of late been interpreted by scholars as a medium for eighteenth-century empiricism and science, it is problematic to read them apart from religion. After all, why should Virgil's *Georgics* need spiritualizing when Book IV ends with a story about sacrificial penance? Moreover, in Book I, Virgil takes care to instruct his reader that "Even on holy days the laws of gods / And men permit some tasks."⁵³ Religious habit is part of the fabric of the *Georgics*; and, as these lines show, Virgil recognizes that holiness admits of gradations. As Will Coster and Andrew Spicer remark, in the early modern era sacred spaces were not thought of by everyone as totally opposed zones: "the division . . . was constantly in flux; sacred objects and sacred places tended to become surrounded by other zones of sanctity that could be different in their character and intensity. The results of these factors were gradations of holiness within sacred sites."⁵⁴ Nor, they add, should we think of sanctified space as unchanging: "The sanctity of space was not immutable; it could vary between different points in the liturgical calendar, the week or even the day. For example, the sanctity of the shrine was enhanced on the day of commemoration for a saint, or, for some Protestants a church became more intensely a locus of the sacred on the Sabbath."⁵⁵

⁵¹ William Cowper, *The Task and Selected Other Poems*, ed. James Sambrook (New York: Longman, 1994), lines 633–35, 637, 658, 661–63. Also see Watts, *The Holiness*, where he denies the effectiveness of consecration on the grounds that many public churches are used for parish offices, children's play, and other secular endeavors (121–22).

⁵² Dustin Griffin, "Redefining Georgic: Cowper's *Task*," *ELH* 57 (1990): 875–79.

⁵³ Virgil, *The Georgics*, trans. L. P. Wilkinson (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), lines 268–69.

⁵⁴ Coster and Spicer, "Introduction," 9.

⁵⁵ Coster and Spicer, 13.

The key concern here is not exactly on distinction but the proper use of religious space, which was said by middle-of-the-road Protestants not to have essential or inherent but relative holiness. Even for Milton, whom Joseph Lyle, Barbara Lewalski, and David Quint take as unequivocally antipathetic to the concept of localized sanctity, this seems the case.⁵⁶ Although in Book XI, Michael tells Adam that Paradise will be transformed by the flood into an island so as “To teach thee that God attributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought / By men who there frequent, or therein dwell,” in Book III when Satan approaches the stairway to heaven’s gate, he sees they are directly above Paradise: “A passage down to th’ earth, a passage wide, / Wider by far than that of after-times / Over Mount Sion and, though that were large, / Over the Promised Land, to God so dear, / By which, to visit oft those happy tribes, / On high behests His Angels to and fro / Passed frequent” (528–34). Recollecting a Jewish midrash about the close proximity of the Temple Mount and the Promised Land to the heavens, this hints that neither the fall nor the flood cut the land off completely from access to the holy. What cuts it off, as Michael says, is when people fail to bring sanctity to sacred places. Often this is a matter of affect. As Hooker explains, Solomon himself sanctified the Temple because he “knew how easily that which was meant should be holy and sacred, might be drawne from the use whereunto it was first provided...and right wisely therefore endeauored by such solemnities to leaue in the minds of men that impression, which

⁵⁶ Joseph Lyle, “Architecture and Idolatry in *Paradise Lost*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 40.1 (Winter 2000): 139–55; Barbara K. Lewalski, “Milton and Idolatry,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 43 (2003): 213–32; Quint, David, “Milton’s Book of Numbers: Book 1 of *Paradise Lost* and Its Catalogue,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 13 (2007): 528–49. But as Chuck Keim, “Temple Imagery and the Sacred Garden of *Paradise Lost*,” in *The Sacred and Profane in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Mary A. Papazian (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), demonstrates, Milton describes Paradise as a sort of naturalized Temple. (In Book V, Section 11 of *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* [London: 1622], Hooker writes that Adam “euen during the space of his small continuance in Paradise, had where to present himself before the Lord” [201]; in *The Antiquity and Holiness of Places set apart for Publick Worship. A Sermon Preached at the Consecration of St. George’s Chapel, In the Parish of Portsea, Near Portsmouth, In the County of Southampton, On Tuesday, Sept. 17. 1754* [Oxford: 1745], Philip Barton similarly conjectures that “even in *Paradise*, it is probable, that there was some peculiar Place, some Retirement in the Garden, where in the Cool of the Evening, They might pay their Devotions to the Supreme Being” [7].) Milton may be less antagonistic to a concept of holy space than he is suspicious that such spaces will be misused by flawed humans.

might somewhat restrayne their boldnesse, and nourish a reuerend affection towards the House of God."⁵⁷ Consecration sermons throughout the period echo this note. Thus, John Broughton writes that consecrations "keep up in our Minds an awful Sense of the most high God when we approach him"; James Lacy, that "The Consideration of *whose House* we are in, minds us of the Business of the *Place*, and strikes a kind of Awe into our Thoughts, when we reflect upon that *Sacred Majesty* we usually converse with there"; R. Newton, that churches "are apt to give Men an awful sense of the Duties they are about to perform, and to put them in mind, that, as Those Places are Separated from common Uses, so they should now Separate their Thoughts from secular Affairs"; Lewis Stephens, that consecration "is a sort of holy Guard . . . it excites a Reverence in the Minds of the People" and that upon entering a church "We approach the Holy Place with Fear; we enter the Door of the Lord's House with a composed Gesture, and draw near to the Altar with a Religious Silence"; Theodore Waterland, that it creates a right inward disposition, raises, refreshes, and cheers spirits, calms, composes, and sweeten one's temper, elevates, refines, and ennobles one's thoughts, and warms, quickens, and enflames one's affections"; and William Hole, that consecrated churches "tend to raise Men's Minds from abject Sentiments, and to dissipate vitious ones—to implant and promote a Spirit of Awe and Seriousness, and to excite and enliven every good and pious Affection."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Hooker, *Of the Lawes*, 204.

⁵⁸ John Broughton, *Of the House of Prayer. A Sermon Preach'd at the Consecration of the chapel at Kew, Within the Parish of Kingston on Thames, on Wednesday, May 12, 1714, Before the Right Reverend Father in God Jonathan Lord Bishop of Winton* (London, 1714), 17; James Lacy, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Consecration of a Church, in the Parish of Castle-ton, Near Sherborne, Dorset. September 7, 1715* (London, 1715), 9; R. Newton, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Consecration of Hart-Hall Chapell in Oxford* (Oxford, 1716), 18; Lewis Stephens, *A Sermon Preached On the 10th of August, 1727, at the Consecration of Trinity-Chapel, in the Town of Leeds in Yorkshire* (London, 1727), 8; Theodore Waterland, *The Influence or Efficacy of outward Majesty and Beauty in the House of God, to excite and promote true Devotion inwardly in the Minds of Worshippers. A Sermon Preach'd at the Parish-Church of St. Benedict-Fink, London, On Sunday, October 8. 1732. At the Opening of the said Parish-Church, after its being Repair'd and Beautified* (London, 1736), 16; Hole, *A Sermon*, 12.