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ATLA Newsletter

This is the PDF version of the ATLA *Newsletter*. Please visit the ATLA *Newsletter* (newsletter.atla.com) for the latest content.

From the President

Making the Most of Change

As we welcome new and returning students back to the fall semester, I want to talk about the difference between change and transition. As William Bridges states in Managing Transitions: Make the Most of Change, "Change is situational: the new site, the new boss, the new team roles, and the new policy. Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation." In other words, change happens outside us, while transition occurs inside our heads and bodies.

A person experiences both change and transition at the same time. Similarly, associations experience a life cycle, including both change and transition. Currently, ATLA is experiencing situational change with new leadership, new and younger members, and a new core purpose and core values. As a result of this external change, I am internally working through the psychological process people go through to come to terms with a new situation. Questions arise, like, Where do I see myself in the new purpose? Will I enjoy the new ATLA? How do I help mentor new members to follow and build upon ATLA's legacy?

Bridges states that "transition starts with an ending—paradoxical but true." Even with "good" changes, transitions require letting go. In order to grow, associations need to "let go" of certain situational items in order to move forward. The same is true for us and our new students. So when I hear about changes in ATLA, I let myself transition, and I am learning to let go for the good of the association. I hope you will join me in this season of change and transition.

By Kelly Campbell, ATLA President

From Staff Leadership

A Pleasant Surprise

Before leaving for the Labor Day weekend, I checked on our September update on EBSCO. A year ago I would have seen few recent issues, but this time I saw that both the *ATLA Religion Database*® (*ATLA RDB*®) and the *ATLA Catholic Periodical Literature Index*® (*ATLA CPLI*®) included issues dated August 2015, with *ATLA CPLI* including the September–October issue of Pastoral Liturgy. When you factor in the large number of new titles added to both databases, this level of currency shows just how far we all have come during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Change is the dominant force when producing electronic products, and the team managed a lot of change this year. While the transition to the new editorial platform slowed our work at times, we adjusted to new tools and processes, and this has allowed for other changes that will help us in the long term.

This has been possible because one essential factor has remained constant: Unwavering commitment on the part of the staff to the quality of our ATLA databases as resources for students and researchers. The team has worked closely to identify efficient solutions to resolve a range of thorny issues, not the least of which is the most reliable way to enter non-Roman character sets. We also quickly filled open metadata analyst positions with staff who add to our subject matter expertise (e.g., Buddhism and Korean Christianity).

We may not have the same level of currency across all of our titles, but based on the response of the staff to the changes of the past year achieving that goal may only be a matter of time.

Board of Directors Meets in Denver

The whole of Tuesday, 16 June, was devoted to strategic planning, and above all the question, "How can the ATLA expand to be more diverse and inclusive?" As so often in its recent history, the board engaged consultant Paul Meyer, of Tecker International, to facilitate the discussion.

On Wednesday, the board reviewed Tuesday's discussion and asked the staff to provide further information in preparation for the October board meeting. It then took up the question of the relation between the organizational ends and the new strategic plan (to be communicated again to, and discussed with the membership at the Open Forum on Thursday), and decided that the Executive Director should "continue to report on the organizational ends" while making her own connections to "progress on the strategic priorities" for as long as it takes the board to settle on an official harmonization. In addition to the annual evaluation of the Executive Director, finalized in executive session, the other major topics of discussion were conflict of interest (revisions to the new policy as well as the now-annual review of disclosures) and a condensation of the election schedule designed to allow the president and other officers-elect to begin working with the Executive Director in advance of the official point of transition each June.

Early Saturday morning the board met again in response to the following petition, which ATLA members Shaneé Murrain and Jessica Bellemer made during the business meeting on Friday, 19 June:

> We 'petition the board to convene to discuss an appropriate ongoing response for ATLA as an organization which builds upon the lunchtime discussion organized and attended by ATLA members about the religious and racial terrorism act, a dialogue that was inspired by the recent act which victimized the congregation at Mother Emmanuel AME Church' in Charleston, SC, the victims of which 'include alumni of ATLA member institutions and a professional librarian.'

After an extensive discussion, the board approved the following statement, which was read at the closing luncheon on Saturday.

> Whereas the board has been petitioned to make an appropriate ongoing response to the recent act of 'religious and racial terrorism' that occurred at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC; and
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> Whereas this act occurred in a sacred religious space and impacted clergy, librarians, and their communities; and
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> Whereas the work of ATLA contributes to the formation of religious leaders and librarians; and
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> Whereas the victims included prominent leaders in the African American community; and
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> Whereas one victim (Cynthia Hurd) was an influential public librarian; and
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> Whereas two of the victims (The Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney and The Rev. Dr. Daniel L. Simmons, Sr.) were alumni of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, an ATLA institutional member; and
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> Whereas one of the victims (The Rev. Clementa Pinckney) was a D.Min. candidate at Wesley Theological Seminary, another ATLA institutional member; and
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> Whereas these tragic events directly speak counter to our core value of 'Hospitality, inclusion, and diversity';
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> Therefore be it resolved that we the board condemn this act of racially motivated violence that emerged out of a larger environment of social injustice;
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> Be it further resolved that the board commend its members for leading this discussion;
>
> Be it further resolved that the board encourage continued member input into how to live into our core value and contribute to a change in the larger social environment;
>
> Be it further resolved that the board encourages members to make appropriate resources available to their communities; and
>
> Be it further resolved that the board expresses its grief and its solidarity with those affected by this tragedy.

In response to an oft- and forcefully-expressed concern about the precedent-setting nature of this board response (the first such resolution in the memory of those present), the Governance Committee was tasked with drafting criteria carefully designed to delimit the conditions under which the board should consider such resolutions in the future.

The minutes of the June 2015 meeting will be posted on the ATLA Community site in late July or early August.

Submitted by Steve Perisho, ATLA Secretary

The ATLA *Newsletter* Site is Live

The new ATLA *Newsletter* is now live and articles will be published on the ATLA Newsletter site throughout the month, along with monthly feature articles from professionals in the field of scholarly communication and theological librarianship. Members will still receive a monthly digest the second Tuesday of every month. However, you may choose to subscribe to the newsletter site to have updates emailed directly to you. This new platform will allow us to share up-to-date information and disseminate our news across multiple outlets, including Facebook and Twitter.

Some articles on the new newsletter site require a login. You won't see these articles if you're not logged in, but you will see them in the digest version and be prompted to login to read the full article. Also, if you want to comment on an article you'll need to login. The login for the ATLA Newsletter site is the same as your login for the ATLA website, the login you use when you renew your membership online or access the community section of the ATLA website. You can retrieve your password online or contact us if you need assistance logging in to the ATLA *Newsletter*.

We have created a short tutorial showcasing the many features of the new site.

ATLA Summer Outing Recap

This year's ATLA Summer Outing featured a tour of the Chicago River with the Chicago Architecture Foundation River Cruise on August 28, 2015.

The tour was given by Chicago Architecture Foundation certified volunteer docents who interpret more than 50 buildings along the Chicago River, revealing how the city grew from a small back-country outpost into one of the world's most important crossroads in less than 100 years. In 90 minutes, we got the real story on Chicago architecture and its history.

After the tour, we walked to South Water Kitchen and enjoyed a delicious lunch together.

Please check out the wonderful photos from Debbie Winarski, Digital Products Supervisor.

NFAIS Humanities Roundtable, Oct. 2 in Chicago – Registration Open for Popular Event

ATLA is pleased to sponsor and host the NFAIS 2015 Humanities Roundtable, to be held Friday, October 2 in Chicago.

This year's theme, "Digital Humanities and Digital Publishing: Global Opportunities and Challenges," will cover the range of disciplines in the Humanities. Registration is open for Onsite and Virtual attendance, and the NFAIS member rate applies to ATLA members as well.

Click here for more details.

ATLA is a member of National Federation of Advanced Information Services (NFAIS™), a global, non-profit, volunteer-powered membership organization that serves the information community, that is, all those who create, aggregate, organize, and otherwise provide ease of access to and effective navigation and use of authoritative, credible information.

Save the Dates – ATLA Receptions at AAR & SBL Annual Meetings in Atlanta

ATLA will host two receptions during the Concurrent Annual Meetings 2015 of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in Atlanta.

Both receptions will be held at The Ellis Hotel, a short walk from the conference venue. We will post more information soon. For now, save the dates.

The Ellis Hotel, 176 Peachtree St NE, Atlanta, GA 30303

Saturday Evening Reception
November 21, 2015
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Morning Reception
November 23, 2015
7:00 – 9:00 a.m.

September and October Events

ATLA is around the globe this season. Check out the ATLA Calendar for a list of events, deadlines, and meetings.

- September
- 44th General Assembly of BETH Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie
- Deadline for the 2016 Annual Conference Session Proposals

October

- NFAIS Humanities Roundtable
- CTLC Fall Meeting
- SEPTLA Fall Meeting
- Frankfurt Book Fair
- ATLA Board of Directors Meeting
- Parliament of the World's Religions
- Diversity Committee Meeting
- ATLA Annual Conference Committee Meeting
- Professional Development Committee Meeting
- CATLA Fall Meeting

As a reminder, routine maintenance will be performed on ATLA systems on Monday, September 14. You may encounter a brief interruption of service between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. (CDT). Services that will be affected include ASE, listservs, the ATLA website, and member community sections. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

Click here to see the ATLA Calendar.

Call for the 2016 ATLA Annual Conference Proposals

The ATLA Conference Committee cordially invites members and friends to submit proposals for the 2016 ATLA Annual Conference, June 15-18, 2016, in Long Beach, California, hosted by the Southern California Theological Library Association.

The deadline for submitting proposals is Wednesday, September 30, 2015.

While we welcome proposals pertaining to all areas of librarianship, we are particularly interested in topics that relate to creative uses of technology, open access in relation to scholarly communications, intermediate or advanced level programs, and programs that apply to religious studies bibliographers working in university settings.

Please click here for more information on proposal guidelines and to submit your proposal.

Tweet if You Want Tenure? New Media and the "New Academy"

Kathryn Reklis was the plenary speaker the first morning of the 2015 ATLA Annual Conference in Denver, CO. Reklis is Assistant Professor of Modern Protestant Theology at Fordham University in New York City. She holds a PhD in religious studies from Yale University, where she concentrated in historical and constructive Christian theology (read her full bio).

Many attendees shared with us they found her presentation to be though-provoking and engaging. Her remarks follow, not in the format of a traditional feature article but rather the text of her spoken remarks. These remarks will also be included in the *2015 Summary of Proceedings*.

When I told some of my classmates from seminary that I had been asked to speak at an ATLA conference, there was palpable envy. When we were students at Yale Divinity School, those four or five letters ATLA(S) came to epitomize long-nights scouring sources for a New Testament paper due the next morning, the ritualized walk from the computer to the solitary elevator near the stacks, back to the computer to further refine our search terms. Lost as we were learning how to marshal new sources and comprehend the standards of excellence in many new fields, we could not have imagined that behind that acronym – the compilation of all religion and theological knowledge! – there was a society of real human beings whose vocation it was to make that knowledge live from generation to generation. Being here is a bit like entering Diagon Alley for the first time – so this is where the magic happens!

Having managed to finish those New Testament papers, I have spent the last decade finishing a PhD, working full time in the administration of a historically Protestant seminary, and starting my career on the tenure-track at a Catholic university. These iterations of life in the theological academy have given me new perspectives and new appreciation for the work of libraries and librarians. Especially at this moment as a faculty member, I feel the common burden of our shared mission to keep alive ways of knowing that are not, shall we say, at the peak of their historical popularity. As I chart the future courses of my teaching and research, I feel the need for deeper collaborations and partnerships among all of us working in the study of religion and theology and I am very grateful to be in this conversation with all of you today.

And that is, I think, what my presence here represents: a conversation starter. There is something unseemly about a 36-year-old three years into her tenure clock waxing authoritative on issues most of us are wrestling to clearly define. I think I have been asked to speak with you today, not so much as an "expert" as an example. In particular, I want to share with you some of my thoughts and reflections as a young faculty member and erstwhile administrator swimming through the currents of "the new academy" – or at least trying to figure out which way the water is flowing.

Whatever way it is flowing, we are all reminded in research reports, mandates from granting institutions, strategic plans from our university presidents, and in student attitudes and practices, that the water is made of pixels and binaries – the digital ooze that is subsuming us all. I am right on the cusp of the generation for whom this ooze is a kind of amniotic fluid. I remember the world without an Internet, but I can't really imagine my life as a scholar – or a human – unmediated by digital technology now. Digital media and platforms have played an essential role in shaping my scholarly, teacher-ly, and writer-ly identities. I have also, in recent years, turned more of my attention to the concrete study of how religious communities are engaging digital technology and to theoretical (and theological) questions about the relationship between "the digital" and the study of religion. It is also, I think, because of these efforts that I was invited today: not as someone with all the answers to the questions we are all wrestling to figure out, but to share my stories and reflections as a prompt to discussion.

As I offer some reflections on my own experience of swimming in this digital ooze, I am going to assume two things about "the digital." First, that here, in the middle of 2015, we can move beyond apocalyptic fears and eschatological hopes of digital mediation. Not that we have nothing left to fear or nothing left to hope for when it comes to the digital technologies that we make and that make us, but rather that we are in deep enough now – as humans, as users, and "produsers" – to take the measure of our being "here." This first assumption depends upon the second, that "the digital" does not mark a special set of tools or a machine for organizing data, but rather a way of being in the world, a mind-set or habitus that shapes and orders daily processes and practices even when we are "offline."

A few examples to illustrate what I mean: I meet someone new at a conference and we no longer need to exchange business cards. I don't even have to remember her full name. A few details – the school where she works, her area of research, even my memory of her face – can suffice for me to find her later. A heated argument breaks out over Thanksgiving dinner about an actor in a film no one can remember, the ending to a favorite childhood book, the location of a medieval city state. Someone jokes: "if only there were a magic machine that could answer this question for us?" and several phones are accessed to settle the debate, or introduce a new argument about which online source to trust most. In the words of my colleague, Jason Anthony, so many of our daily

interactions "are steeped in referents to our deeper and more omniscient online selves."

Universal and universally mediating, the digital hovers over all of us, the All Pervasive Presence we access and rely on to varying degrees and with various degrees of self-awareness. If these assumptions hold true of human life in the digital age, this does not mean that the academy knows quite how to live in that age yet. Much less so the theological or religious studies academy, itself already preoccupied with other All Pervasive Presences.

Paying attention to "the digital" as a landscape and horizon of our work seems all the more necessary to me, however, because "the digital" is also connected, in ways that are sometimes felt intuitively more than analyzed, to other broad currents of change in the academy itself and in the very nature of religious practice that forms the backbone of the academic study of religion.

Let me try to illustrate what I mean by fleshing out some of the hopes and anxieties that arise for a scholar with one of the few remaining tenure-track jobs when assessing just why and how to enter this brave new digital world.

In my own provincial environment in the graduate school of arts and sciences at Yale University, I remember the moment when it became cool to study religion.

It was 2006 and all over campus (so it seemed) social scientists and political scientists and even English doctoral students were discovering "the return of religion." Since we never thought religion went away, being a religionist was suddenly a ticket to the cool kids table in the academic lunchroom. New working groups were formed, conferences convened. And then, in 2007, an online blog was launched that seemed to encapsulate conversations taking place all over the academy: the Social Science Research Council's blog *The Immanent Frame*.

Taking its name and its founding impetus from Charles Taylor's magisterial book *The Secular Age,* published the same year, The Immanent Frame managed in a short span of time to rewrite the rules of online academic writing and to convince some of the most well-known figures writing about religion in a variety of disciplines to talk to each other in a new digital space. What previously might have taken years of disparate book reviews, scholarly essays, and conference panels to convene impassioned, interdisciplinary discussion of a book or topic took place in a matter of days or weeks in an online forum. Take for example the discussion of Taylor's book, which helped birth the site in 2007 and which generated new responses on the blog for over three years. While individuals still authored essays in response to the book and to each other, the overall "product" of these discussions is a multi-authored, interdisciplinary nexus of essays that reflects a new model of collaborative scholarship in something close to real time. For the scholars who participated this was a form of peer review that far exceeded anything the standard model of journal submission could achieve – public accountability to one's peers made accessible for comment and critique by the wider scholarly community.

If *The Immanent Frame* modeled itself on the standards and practices of traditional scholarly publishing - peer review with a digital twist! - many other sites make space for timely, provocative analysis of objects that might not make sense in traditional scholarly venues. This is sometimes because the object of analysis is personal experience, as in a site like *Killing the Buddha*, which makes space for essays that blend personal narrative, critical analysis, and lyric essay. And this is sometimes because the object of analysis is tied to the quickly changing news cycle (like the Pope's encyclical on the environment) or pop culture phenomenon (like the latest episode of Game of Thrones), as at a site like *Religion Dispatches*. It is not that these objects can't be, or are not already, tackled in more traditional scholarly forms. We do have great books on religion and pop culture or religion and politics. But a site like *Religion Dispatches* taps into the often-deflating experience of working hard at the analysis of an object that no longer captivates the public imagination by the time your manuscript passes through two rounds of peer review and an attenuated publishing calendar. Here too is another promise of the digital: immediacy. What good, after all, is public, accessible scholarship if it is not also timely?

I mention all of these particular online sites – *The Immanent Frame, Killing the Buddha, Religion Dispatches* – because they are ones with which I have been involved, either as an author or in conversations with their founders/editors – so I have a bit more "inside" perspective on what they are up to. But they are certainly not the only ones that could join our conversation today. We could easily add to this discussion much larger and even more popular sites like *Huff Post Religion, On Faith* (formerly of the *Wall Street Journal*, now run by Faith Street), the *On Being Blog*, and *Patheos* – all increasingly perceived as authoritative and popular sources of religion news and analysis. Or we could veer in the direction of more scholarly sites and talk about *Feminism and Religion, Religion in American History*, the *Third Spaces Blog*, and *Religion and Politics* – all first-rate examples of discipline-specific scholarly collaboration happening online.

All of these sites came online between 2007-2012 – slightly less time than it took me to finish my PhD. For me, and for many of my peers, the promise of the digital called to us from the solitary enclave of the stacks: here was hope for more engaged, responsive, less-hermetically sealed conversations, the promise that our work might matter in some way beyond the ivory tower, even if the details of what that meant were a bit nebulous. I will say more about this in a moment, but this hope was not, I think, felt at the expense of leaving the stacks behind. In other words, "the digital" can be site of translation not destruction – translating the long, slow, deep labor prized by the academy into public, accessible, immediate and engaged forms.

Tweet if You Want Tenure? continued

That work of translation, however, has much to do with how we understand and articulate our work in the shifting sands of academic fortune.

If the last several years have seen the star of religious scholarship rising, they have also been shadowed by a pervasive malaise about the state of academia in general. With increasing demands to "prove" the relevance of our work (and the broader work of the humanities), online forums may very well be a vehicle to take ownership of this mandate and to set the terms by which we translate our more private scholarly conversations for public consumption and debate.

If scholars themselves do not do this "popularizing" work, does scholarship offer (here's a positive spin) a foundation on which popular interpretations (done by whomever) can be built? Maybe a supply and demand or two-tier model of production is a way to reinvigorate the public perception of academic scholarship? Scholarly work is taken up by a new "para-academic" who popularizes the content for a more general audience.

Such a model depends on these "popularizers" (whoever we imagine them to be) finding the scholarship and investing in understanding it. It also gives rise to a more negative spin on the process of "popularizing" work: is scholarship the host for the parasite of popularization – the products of long, difficult, well-vetted labor sucked dry by "generalists" who depend on that labor to flesh out popular interpretations of "religious phenomena" and who reap a kind of public endorsement or credential the lonely, maligned professor can only dream of?

Hear in this more cranky and worried question, overlapping concerns about Massive Open Online Courses and outsourcing the public face of teaching to the "camera ready" front man/woman who delivers the intellectual goods created by academic "screenwriters." I'm not sure how many of you saw a Slate piece by Jeff Young last year on EdX's idea to start using movie stars instead of "bookish professors" to deliver the content of their open online course lectures. If Matt Damon can deliver my history of Christian thought and practice lectures, do I aspire to be more like Matt Damon or to beat my other scholarly colleagues to writing his script?

Hear also fears of scarcity in a desert market. With more and more PhDs and almost-PhDs taking up posts in new media journalism, "popular writing" and "scholarship" are not separate creatures that only meet on an American studies syllabus. The line is increasingly blurred between investigative journalism and ethnography, between academic cultural studies and long form cultural analysis. In many ways these blurred lines are a boon for everyone – more insightful, accessible work is being read, debated, and circulated than scholarly monographs could hope to produce. But online journalism is not a wide-open field of democratic play – there are hierarchies and gatekeepers there too. And as more professors need public profiles to distinguish themselves and more public journalists need university press books to prove their depth, and both professions are witnessing the hollowing out of pay structures that can support a living wage, the proliferation of new online spaces for religion work might also represent a narrowing of the playing field, where more and more intelligent people compete for fewer paying gigs in either field.

We are veering back to apocalyptic fears and eschatological hopes: the stark distinctions between what the digital will allow and what it will destroy. The digital promises open, free access to all knowledge – the limitless flow of ideas, a revolution of consciousness, democratic access to the sum of human wisdom! Or the digital constrains real wisdom by pandering to popularity, reduces in-depth research to shallow hyperlinks, elevates subjective opinion over objective knowledge, overwhelms the user with meaningless noise so that nothing of real value can be heard. Not so, replies the digital triumphalist: online writing is about expanding one's reach beyond the narrow confines of the ivory tower, engaging the public with the necessary, meaningful products of academic labor. It is about elevating public discourse about religion! And isn't that, replies the harbinger of the digital apocalypse, precisely what university education is supposed to do – educate the general public, raise the tenor of public discourse? Will a few YouTube videos or an occasional blog post replace the hard work of shaping young minds over many years?

I could spin this out some more. It is quite easy to fall into these rancorous and overblown arguments because, well, sometimes things really do seem this stark. These hopes and anxieties – the digital will save us, the digital is destroying us – are connected to many other hopes and anxieties about "the state of the field" and the fate of the liberal arts.

Which is to say that the changes underfoot are not just about whether or not a blog post should count toward tenure. Somehow or another the seismic shift we call "the turn to the digital" is connected to the reordering of the university, to the nebulous, glorious, fearful unmooring and reordering of knowledge itself.

And for scholars of religion, the shaking of these foundations is tied to changes in religious practice too – also part of this "digital age". It is what I was taught in my liberal Protestant seminary context to lament as "the decline of the church" and it is the sneaking, but not always acknowledged suspicion, that as religious belief and practice changes so too the scholars who study it. In fields like "religious studies", the internal logic of which is at best unclear and the history of which is always contested, or in "theology" which is unsure how it relates to "religious studies," the exact object of our study has always been a source of contention; how much more so as we are told from all sides the very nature of "religion" is changing. Caught at the nexus of these three institutional shake-ups – what we study, where we study, how we study all potentially up for grabs – it is enough to leave one breathless with the

wonder of new possibility or flat on one's back, unable to find steady footing.

I feel have I been cantankerous, sounding a note of anxiety more than one of possibility. I feel strongly the need to re-exert a biographical note: I love the digital! Or more precisely, the digital is making me the scholar/teacher/writer/human that I am. So in my remaining time I will try to be more specific about my own path through the digital forest.

To prove I have not lost all my academic credentials, I shall now follow tried-and-true academic protocol and give you three ways the digital is transforming my work as a scholar and teacher: the digital as collaboration, the digital as method, and the digital as content.

To start, the digital as collaboration. One of my first forays into digital writing was as a founder of a collaborative blog about popular visual culture and religion. I founded the blog The Moth Chase with a friend from divinity school when we were both PhD students in different religious studies programs. Like many graduate students learning the perimeters of our fields and facing the disciplinary power of our disciplines, we spent an inordinate amount of time daydreaming about writing about topics and in genres beyond the peer-reviewed academic article. There are many salient features of the experiment I could talk about, but I want to highlight the collaborative nature of the work.

From the outset we decided that our blog would be authored in dialogue form. Overtime we invited more authors to join us. This meant that except for a few exceptions, every post is written by two or more authors. The dialogue nature of the blog started as a form of discipline and accountability: if another writer is responding to you or waiting for your response, you actually sit down and write every week.

We jokingly called this style of writing "procrastanalysis" – to signal self-deprecatingly the fact that we knew the blog was outside of or even a distraction to the kind of work we were "supposed to be doing." And yet, this style of writing has proven to be one of the most meaningful to me, existentially, and professionally. For the first three years, we remained anonymous on the blog and we still do not list it on our official CVs. But over time the blog positively influenced our academic careers. One of our authors was asked about it in a job interview, even though she did not list it in her materials. Another writer had a senior colleague write about it extensively in his reappointment file because she was so surprised he did not include it himself. In my own case, writing for The Moth Chase honed a style of prose and analysis that eventually led to my role as a regular contributor to the "On Media" column for The *Christian Century*.

The gig with *The Christian Century* is meant to signal that "something serious" came out of all that blogging. For many people, including some senior colleagues in my field, writing for a regular, popular periodical is outside the bounds of traditional scholarship enough. And had the blog writing not translated into this slightly more respectable form of writing, I am not sure I would feel bold enough to offer it as an example today. Given the venue and topic of this conversation, however, I will be bold and assert that the collaborative nature of the blog experiment formed a scholarly habitus far more than, say, writing my dissertation. Or perhaps more accurately, the two practices coalesced and informed each other: one teaching me patience, depth, honesty to my archive; the other inculcating a daily writing habit, attention to audience, and clear prose. And most wondrous of all, it was not always clear which practice was forming which virtues.

Which brings me to the second way the digital is transforming my work as a scholar and teacher: the digital as method. Everything I've said about collaboration could also apply here. "Collaboration," is, after all, a kind of scholarly method. I would like to focus, however, on pedagogical method.

I think of myself as a middle-of-the-road digital pedagogue. I make use of Twitter and sometimes Facebook in my classes, I post virtually all my readings online, I have a very pro-technology stance in the classroom, and I am currently working on a classroom curated site using the archive/exhibit software Omeka. But I have never "flipped" my classroom, taught a MOOC, or taught online. I am quite confident that many people in this room could give me good advice on tools for digital teaching.

Rather than discuss any particular digital tool, I want to reflect a bit on the murkier, but more powerful, influence on my teaching of what Elizabeth Drescher calls "the digital habitus." This gets us right into the heart of one of my grounding assumptions for this talk: that the digital is not just a set of tools but a set practices and mindsets that shape our being in the world even when we are off-line. Even when we are in the classroom.

Some of these practices and mindsets are the subject of much hand-wringing: students enter our classrooms with shorter attention spans, inability to read anything at great length, abbreviated training in history/literature/biblical literacy (if any at all), and demands of "relevance" and "accessibility" that bypass the difficult work - and tremendous beauty - of traditional humanities curricula. Even as a most-of-the-time digital optimist, I wring my hands too. Sometimes in the name of a greater digital good the digital devices must go and it is a fairly frequent occurrence to show up to my class and learn we are having a "technology free day."

But the problems of attenuated attention and demands for relevancy can't be solved by banning laptops or smart phones in the classroom. This is because, paradoxically, many of my students use fewer social media sites than I do, and are professedly worried about the take-over of digital technology in their lives. This does not, as I have come to learn, mean they are not deeply steeped in the digital habitus.

Tweet if You Want Tenure? continued

What do I mean by "digital habitus?" Let me draw on all those years of collaborative blogging about popular culture and offer you an example from a very recent film by Noah Baumbauch - *While We're Young*. In this film, a Gen-X couple in their early-40s befriends a Millenial couple in their mid-twenties. The movie is about the small differences that accumulate into a generational divide despite the relative closeness in age and habits of these two couples. Much like my students, the Millenial couple uses technology less intrusively than the Gen-Xers and eschews the Google-fication of everything, preferring to stay in the moment rather than whip out their phones. But the ease with which the Millenials pick-and-choose which digital platforms to engage rests on much deeper digital immersion. The Gen-Xers still think of Google and Facebook as tools to use in a life that is governed by older rules and ethics. The Millenials fundamentally think of the world as created in the free exchange of ideas, information, images, and relationships. Their world – on and off line – is one giant internet of things whose meaning they create by appropriating and rearranging them.

In the film, "appropriating" and "rearranging" often looks like stealing in the eyes of the Gen-Xers. So too in the classroom. I am convinced that my students struggle more with plagiarism because intuitively to them "knowledge" is made in the process of "sharing, "accumulating," "searching," and "browsing" – a mindset and set of practices that come into conflict with proper scholarly attribution.

Here is one case where an older ethic is clearly called for, and where our role as teachers is to instruct our students in habits and practices that do not come naturally. Most scholars and teachers don't have a hard time seeing the limits of the digital habitus when it comes to plagiarism, short attention spans, and shoddy pedagogical preparation. We do not always see as clearly, however, that along with these challenges come other gifts. If many of our younger students need to be taught how to think in older ways, they come into our classrooms primed to make connections between texts and ideas. The very habitus that blurs the boundaries around authorial credit and proper citation is one that flourishes in the connection among ideas. We might call this the hyperlinktivity of the digitally-formed mind.

If you read online at all, you know how much digital texts are marked by the presence of hyperlinks – those blue underlined words that suggest there is more information to be had on any number of subjects related to the topic at hand. For my students who do almost all their reading online, the presence of hyperlinks primes them to think about the situation of ideas/topics in relation to other ideas/topics. Far from simply wanting to memorize data and spit it out, I find that my students are deeply curious about how the ideas we are discussing are nestled in webs of connection with other ideas. I was taught to think that connections came after mastery: learn the material, then make connections to other material you have learned. For my students, mastery comes through connectivity. This hyperlinktivity can be an asset in our pedagogical method if we embrace the penchant for association and help our students discern how to put it to use in their theological and liberal arts education.

This seems to me an area professors desperately need help from librarians and information systems specialists. Simply teaching students how to use online databases is not enough. We have to teach them to think of these databases as portals to the kind of connected knowledge – a web or network of knowledge – they intuitively know how to access. Indeed, we might go further to say the very interface of accessing scholarly databases could use an upgrade to reflect this hyperlinktivity.

Another way I try to generate this kind of association is to make the digital age itself a topic of study for my students – to ask them to use the new critical skills they are learning to study and analyze digital culture itself. Which brings me to the third and final way the digital is informing my scholarly and teacherly work: the digital as content for teaching and research.

The digital as content takes us into a growing scholarly subfield called "digital religion." These subfield does not just focus on religion online, but on religion in an immanently online era: at the intersection of face-to-face and digitally mediated practices and spaces. And in this intersection of digital life and "real life", strange things happen to religion and religious practice – but not always the things we might expect.

Take, for example, the strange confluence of traditional religious authority, lay agency, and concerns about embodiment and presence in the two following examples. A small Lutheran church, here in Denver, comprised of self-professed "tech junkies" use new media to negotiate all aspects of community life, from scheduling hymn sings on MeetUp.com to using Google docs as a digital prayer chain. On the one hand the use of new media is an explicit strategy to transfer spiritual authority from the pastor to her newly empowered laity – digital democracy undermining top-down authority. On the other hand, the emphasis on horizontal networks of power in some cases also serves to reinforce the pastor's singularity during face-to-face sacramental ritual, which is especially emphasized in the congregation. The digital reconstitutes authority.

Or consider the case of a United Church of Christ congregation in Omaha that runs a weekly web based television program based around *Lectio Divinia* - an ancient practice of scripture reading, prayer, and mediation. Every program ends with a call to the Christian rite of communion: those gathered for the live broadcast receive together and those watching at home are encouraged to grab any elements (bread, wine/juice, milk and cookies) and participate as well. Despite the presence of prayer, scriptural meditation, communal instruction, and the Eucharistic rite members of the UCC congregation by and large do not consider this "church." What it is, instead, is less clear.

Tweet if You Want Tenure? continued

Both of these examples come from case studies produced by the New Media Project, based at the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. I have been a research fellow with the New Media Project since it began in 2010 (and I wrote the case study on the congregation in Omaha). Part of this work, which is still ongoing, involves tracking what Christian communities are doing with digital technology. And part of it is exploring what these digital shifts might mean theologically. That is, within a Christian theological framework how do Christian leaders and lay people think about the digital turn in terms of an understanding of church/community, human identity, relationship, sacrament, authority, and social justice work.

Through this work I've come to see that many of the questions that continue to define theological and religious studies need to be thought through in terms of digital culture: authority, agency, presence, space and place, ritual, community and networks are re-negotiated, transformed, or reinforced sometimes surprisingly and sometimes predictably in digital space. The digital is - or increasingly could be (should be?) - the content of our study as well as the method of our research and our teaching. The best way to know how the digital is changing the world we live in and the world we study and teach in is, well, to make it the content of our study and teaching itself.

The digital as collaboration, pedagogical method, and content of study continue to exert meaning on my own work as a scholar and teacher. Of course, my personal experience is not exactly a recipe for whole-scale revolution, nor a roadmap for other transformations. Maybe in times of great turmoil or change, we have to start with these personal stories – seeking patterns in anecdotes, formulas for success in individual paths through the thickets.

Highlighting the personal nature of these observations is another way to say that simply touting the digital as an avenue of personal transformation does not answer the very real questions that plague our future. But neither does ignoring these stories. I promised that I would not wax authoritatively and I will keep my promise. In closing, I will simply suggest two points I hope we can keep in mind as we discuss what our collective future in the digital ooze might be.

First, the academy at large and the religious/theological academy in particular is not immune to the forces that make the digital age so exciting and unsettling. It behooves us to set the terms of our own engagement. This means accepting that this is where we live now. Wholesale digital engagement is not for everyone. It is not the same for everyone. But the changes that are underfoot are much bigger than urging professors to try Facebook or deciding that Twitter is mostly trivial. We can all opt out of a particular digital platform. No one can opt out of the digital age.

Second, if we do not set the terms of our own engagement, they will be set for us. Most of the standards, assumptions, and practices of academic life as we know it were formed in the Enlightenment and depended on the technological revolution of prolific, inexpensive book printing. As those assumptions and practices come under attack from many angles and we are asked to justify the value of our work, the digital age offers an opportunity to strengthen or redefine the values and practices we hold dear. No one can study the crises of higher education – adjunctifiation, failing funding, corporatization – and not realize that everything is, to some degree, up for grabs. But that need not mean our future is a free-for-all. The digital age is an occasion to reassert what we are doing – in terms of peer review, scholarly standards, research, disciplinary methods, access to scholarship, and teaching. This to me is a chance for the best kind of collaborative digital method to unfold.

It is also a chance to reinvigorate the way we think about the relationships between libraries, librarians, professors, researchers, students, and the publics we all serve in partnership. The promises of the digital age – collaboration, accessibility, immediacy, public outreach – all challenge a model of solitary professors producing expert knowledge that is then catalogued and preserved by librarians. I have offered these reflections from the position of a young faculty person. I look forward to learning from you how the digital is transforming your vision of your collective work and the work of the theological academy more broadly.

Eileen Crawford Retires

Longtime member Eileen Crawford retired August 14, 2015, from her post as Associate Director and Collections Librarian of Vanderbilt University, Divinity Library.

Eileen has served on the Board of Directors (Vice President, 2010), Annual Conference Committee (Chair, 2003), Technical Services Interest Group (Vice Chair, 2000), and International Collaboration Committee (Chair, 2004), as well as published an article in *Theological Librarianship* titled, "The Perennial Question And A Radical Response: The Student Bibliographer Program In The Vanderbilt Divinity Library."

She stated, "ATLA has gifted me with many friends and immeasurable opportunities for professional growth and travel. I will take full advantage of my status as a Lifetime Member and hopefully continue to contribute to the profession in some small way."

According to Vanderbilt University, "After working for a number of years as a professional cataloger at Volunteer State Community College, Eileen came to Vanderbilt to pursue an MTS degree in the Divinity School in 1990. While still working as a cataloger for Vol State, she began her career in the Divinity Library as a graduate student assistant. In September 1992, she was hired as a Catalog Librarian and over the years, transitioned to Collections Librarian and then to Associate Director, Collections Librarian for the Divinity Library." Read more in Vanderbilt's Library Staff News.

Please join us in congratulating Eileen on her retirement.

ATLA Job Board

- Christoph Keller, Jr. Library, The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church, New York, New York is hiring a Reference Librarian.
- Rolfing Memorial Library, Deerfield, IL, is hiring a Collection Management Librarian.
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh PA, is hiring an Interlibrary Loan - Reference Librarian.
- Biola University, La Mirada, CA, is hiring an Information Literacy Library.
- University of South Florida St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL, is hiring a Dean.
- University of Dayon, The Marian Library, Dayton, OH, is hiring a Director of the Marian Library.
- ATLA, Chicago, IL, hiring a Digital Projects Manager.

Theology Cataloging Bulletin Available

The August 2015 issue of *Theology Cataloging Bulletin* (*TCB*), a benefit of membership, is now available. Please click here to access this issue in the member restricted section of the ATLA website.

Section one of each issue lists new and changed subject headings and section two lists new and changed classifications. Both are selected and compiled by Ann Heinrichs (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois). Section three includes general information and is edited by Leslie Engelson (Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky). A new feature titled "Testimony" has been added to this third section. According to Engelson, "I intend it to be a place where the technical services community can share with each other. Each article will be written by a guest contributor; a member of our learning community."

Thank you to the Technical Services Interest Group (TSIG) for their work on this publication.

Click here to access the Member's Only publication.

Announcing Additions to ATLA Products – September 2015

The American Theological Library Association (ATLA) is pleased to announce the addition of titles to be indexed in upcoming updates of *ATLA Religion Database*® (*ATLA RDB*®) and *ATLA Catholic Periodical and Literature Index* (*ATLA CPLI*®).

ATLA RDB

- *DavarLogos*, by Universidad Adventista del Plata
- *Consensus* (Online), by Lutheran Theological Seminary; Waterloo Lutheran Seminary
- *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, by Trinity Theological Seminary
- *Nidan* (Online), by University of Kwazulu-Natal
- *Sefarad* (Online), by Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
- *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* (2014), by Manchester University Press in association with The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester
- *Les Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, by Université Saint-Joseph; Dar el-Machreq
- *Comment*, by Cardus
- *Svenskt Gudstjänstliv*, by Centrum för teologi och religionsvetenskap, Lunds universitet
- *Preternature*, by Pennsylvania State University Press
- *Priscilla Papers*, by Christians for Biblical Equality
- J*ournal of Religion and Violence*, by Academic Publishing; Philosophy Documentation Center
- J*ournal of Asian Mission*, by Asia Graduate School of Theology-Philippines

ATLA CPLI

- *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio*, by Schwabenverlag
- *Revista española de derecho canónico*, by Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca
- *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association*, by Irish Biblical Association
- *Teocomunicação*, by Programa de Pós-Graduação em Teologia, Faculdade de Teologia, Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul

Read the full press release.

Coming Soon in Fall 2015: ATLA Products Blog

Coming Soon in Fall 2015: ATLA Products blog, with news and information about ATLA's prestigious product line of electronic resources to support the scholarly study of religion and theology.

In the meantime, visit the ATLA Press Room for Product Press Releases or the ATLA Product Center .