

**BETWEEN ENGLISHNESS AND ETHIOPIANISM:
MAKING A SPACE FOR INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGY**

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ABSTRACT: Originally an address delivered to open the 2010-11 academic year at Princeton Theological Seminary, the essay grounds itself in the Ephesians vision of a New Humanity and articulates a theological orientation that discourages trivialization of cultural particularities. It then opens a conversation on the necessity of intercultural theology. As theological curricula are usually overcrowded, a case is argued that to make space, someone (a discipline, etc.) will have to yield space. To envision the possibility, I use a Ghanaian novel, *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911), as evidence of the creative power unleashed, theologically, when the practice of having cross-cultural interlocutors is fostered in students.

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision' — a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands — remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.

Ephesians 2:11-15 (NRV)

A seminary (theological school, etc.) has got to be and continually become, over and over, a home, a welcoming environment, a place where faith is cultivated, relationally, in the context of faithful relationships. Jonathan Sacks, a British Rabbi, reminds us of a simple but important truth when he speaks of 'home' as a place that we make *together*.¹

¹Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007).

Home', though, can mean a lot of different things, depending on where one comes from; so does that delightful little adverb, 'together'. That being so, what I am wondering is how we might imagine a seminary being and becoming a welcoming community, *interculturally*. Biblically, my essay is focused on the Ephesians theme of a New—intercultural ('multi-', 'intermulti-', or 'multi-intercultural')—Humanity in Christ. Whatever one calls it,² our New Humanity in Christ entails both a *dissolutio* ('breaking down') and an *elevatio* ('building up') of human cultural particularities; instead of being abolished or trivialized, they are transformed.³ On another occasion, I hope to enter more thoroughly into the question of what an intercultural theology might actually look like (a model worth considering can be found in *Transformative Imagination* [2009], a work of George Newlands, much quoted in this essay). Here, I mainly want to argue for its being a necessity, not a luxury, and to claim a space for it in our theological curricula.

Talk of God and experience of divine presence', a Scottish theologian, George Newlands, writes, 'is articulated within particular cultures in different ways.'

²'Epistemologically, intercultural theology must be multiperspectival. It must look to several cultures for insights and validations.' Peter C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face: Asian American Theology in the Making* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), p. 12. The whole of Phan's Introduction (pp. 3-25) is germane to the question of naming the kind of theology under discussion here (e.g., as 'inter-', or 'multi-', or inter-multi-', etc.).

³Here, Karl Barth's dialectical theology, his concept of 'transformation' (*Aufhebung*) in particular, has helpfully shaped my understanding of 'culture'. Note, however, that *dissolutio* and *elevatio* are mainly used by Barth when he talks about 'religion'. I follow Johannes Aagaard in rejecting the routine English translation of *Aufhebung* as 'abolition'. The *locus classicus* would be §17 of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* 1.2, 'The Revelation of God as the *Aufhebung* of Religion'. See Aagaard, 'Revelation and Reason: The Influence of Dialectical Theology on the Understanding of the Relationship between Christianity and Other Religions', *Studia Theologica*, 15 (1960), pp. 148-85.

⁴ The illustration I am going to use comes from a culture within a culture of Christian Europe. Let us go back for a moment to the Elizabethan church of the English Reformation and consider a certain George Aylmer (1520/21-1594), Lord Bishop of London, whom I chanced upon in my reading a while back. I bring him up because Christian history is not altogether on my side in recognizing theology's need of being intercultural.

Aylmer is mainly remembered for a spirited defense of Elizabeth's sovereignty over England against some ill-considered words of John Knox (1514-1572), a pivotal figure of the Scottish Reformation. Known for many well-considered words, uttered some 450 years ago, these were not Knox's finest. They are found in a book called *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1557). Here, 'monstrous' means 'unnatural' and refers to women being unfit as women for monarchy. If that blast from Knox's *Trumpet* sounds off-key in today's world, it ought to interest you that Aylmer, the Lord Bishop, who defended Elizabeth, basically agreed: women, he wrote, were 'flibbertigibbets', except Elizabeth, who ruled by Divine Right. Bad as that sounds, it is actually something worse about Aylmer that caught my eye: namely, his privileging of Englishness and his ascription of it to God.⁵

'God', the Lord Bishop exulted, '*is English*'. Unsurprisingly, Aylmer's English 'God' was fonder of the English than the Danes, the French, and the Norwegians whom he singles out, not to mention the dreaded 'Scottes': 'Fall flat on thy face before God and give him thanks seven times a day, that thou were born an English man, and not a French peasant, nor an Italian, nor [German]'. How blessed the English are, the Bishop again exclaims:

⁴George Newlands. *The Transformative Imagination: Rethinking Intercultural Theology* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p. 7.

⁵On gender and politics in *The First Blast of the Trumpet*, see chapters 8 and 9 of Rosalind K. Marshall, *John Knox* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008). From her, I derive my understanding of "monstrous" as 'unnatural'.

[Germans] eat herbs; and thou beef and mutton. [Germans] eat potatoes; and thou butter, cheese, and eggs. [Germans] drink common water; and thou good ale and beer. [Germans] go home from the market with a salad; and thou with good flesh fill thy wallet.⁶

Obviously, something has gone badly wrong here. It all sounds very tribal, culturally confining, and lacking in the generous inclusivity of Ephesians. And this, from a man who had found refuge in Strasbourg, before he was 'elevated' to ecclesiastical office, just as Knox had found refuge in Geneva! Still, the last thing we should lull ourselves into thinking is, My! aren't we more sophisticated, *interculturally*? Substitute 'American' for 'English' and do you, or do you not, hear an echo of this same Elizabethan sacralization of nationhood in America (and other nations) today?

For a better example of intercultural theology in the spirit of Ephesians, let us now leap over the centuries from the sixteenth to the twentieth, across the continents from Europe to Africa, and from history to literature. I am now going to introduce a novel called *Ethiopia Unbound*, written in 1911 by a Ghanaian Methodist, Joseph Ephraïm Casely-Hayford (1866-1930), the first West African writer of English fiction and perhaps the best until Chinua Achebe of Nigeria⁷

⁶My citations come from the original of Aylmer's unpaginated rejoinder to Knox, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects, against the late blowne Blaste, concerning the Government of Wemen* (1559), accessed on EEBO (Early English Books Online). Quotations from Aylmer have had their spellings modernized.

⁷J. E. Casely-Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1969 [1911]). On Casely-Hayford, the following have been helpful: Augustus Casely-Hayford and Richard Rathbone, 'Politics, Families and Freemasonry in the Colonial Gold Coast', in *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder*, edited by J. F. Ade Ajayi and J. D. Y. Peel (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 143-60; Adelaide M. Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist: The Life and Times of Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford* (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd.); O. R. Dathorne, 'The Beginnings of the West African Novel', *Nigeria Magazine* (1972), pp. 168-70; Kwadwo Osei-Nyame, 'Pan-Africanist Ideology and the African Historical Novel of Self-Discovery: The Examples of Kobina Sekyi and J. E. Casely Hayford', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 12/2 (1999), pp. 137-53; Donald R. Wehrs, *Pre-Colonial Africa in Colonial African Narratives: from Ethiopia Unbound to Things Fall Apart, 1911-1958* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

To understand the title, it helps to know that Casely-Hayford was an advocate of Christianity's Africanization; or, I should say, of its *re*-Africanization. Inspired by Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912), the Liberian founder of Pan-Africanism.⁸ Casely-Hayford believed that Christianity was African in origin and essence.

As an ancient center of Christian faith, Ethiopia figured as a symbol for Pan-Africanists who felt that decolonization was indispensable to Christianity's becoming African again. Think of Ethiopianism as an early instance of African Christian theology.⁹ Now follows an extraordinary passage from the novel, which has the text from Ephesians inscribed at its beginning:

In late Victorian England, two young men walk down London's Tottenham Court Road. Kwamankra comes from the Gold Coast (as Ghana used to be called by Europeans) and studies law; the other comes from England itself, Silas Whitely, Bishop Aylmer's modern-day avatar. As one might suspect from his name, Whitely is not a person of color. A student of theology, Whitely harbors doubts about Jesus Christ's divinity but is about to be ordained into the Anglican priesthood anyway. Kwamankra, who is not a Christian but an African traditional religionist, finds it hard to understand why Whitely has so much trouble believing in Jesus' divinity.¹⁰

⁸On Blyden's life and Pan-Africanism, none of the research monographs are *au courant*. Though dated, see the still-helpful work of Hollis Ralph Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁹For an overview, see Jehu Hanciles, 'Ethiopianism: Rough Diamond of African Christianity', *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae* 23/1-2 (1997), pp. 75-104. Also Ogbu U. Kalu, *Clio in a Sacred Garb: Essays on Christian Presence and African Responses, 1900-2000* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), especially Chapter 6, 'Nthowa Yifupi? Edinburgh Conference Ethiopianism in African Christianity, 1910', pp. 151-76.

¹⁰Here, I do not find Casely-Hayford particularly clear on the question of Jesus' divinity. Although affirmed, unequivocally, he ostensibly grounds that affirmation (made by Kwamankra) in African traditional religion, although what that might mean remains ambiguous: 'According to our ideas, Whitely, one broad divinity runs through humanity, and whether we are gods, or we are men, depends upon how far we have given way to the divine influence operating upon our humanity; and, comparing one system with another, I must confess there was in the man Christ Jesus a greater share of divinity than in any teacher before or after him.' Casely-Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound*, 10. What the meaning of 'our ideas' might be is open to question, and whether such ideas are actually of an African provenance seems doubtful. If anything, Casely-Hayford was an eclectic who also believed that Buddhism was of African origin (and perhaps other religions as well). Though specious historically, such views do not detract from the power of the novel.

At his flat on Russell Square, Kwamankra tries out a bit of intercultural theology to help Whitely resolve his doubts. Whitely's problems all go back, he says, to 'the feebleness of the idea of God in the Anglo-Saxon language.' Then, taking a dictionary of Fanti off the shelf, Kwamankra turns to the letter 'N' and begins to tell Whitely about one of the many names of God in his mother tongue: 'It is a big word, so big that you can hardly imagine it: —'

NYIAKROPON [*Nyankopon*]
He who alone is great.

Lest Whitely think that Fanti has only one such word for 'God,' Kwamankra treats him to another, 'Nyami' [*Nyame*]:
He who is I am.

He then cites a Fanti proverb:

Wana so onyi Nyami se?
Dasayi wo ho inde, okina na onyi,
Nyami firi tsitsi kaisi odumankuma.
Who says he is equal with God?
Man is to-day, tomorrow he is not,
I am is from eternity to eternity.¹¹

Unaccustomed to thinking of God by any other word or name, Whitely labors under a disadvantage in this exchange. And when Kwamankra poses a 'what-if' kind of question, the cultural-boundedness of Whitely's theological training becomes painfully evident:

[Kwamankra] 'Supposing Jesus Christ had been born of an Ethiopian woman instead of Mary of the line of David, do you think it would have made any difference in the way he influenced mankind?'

[Whitely] 'What a strange question. [...] Whatever put such an idea into your head?'

[Kwamankra] 'Yes, it is strange. [...] But, tell me, what is there extraordinary in the idea?'

[Whitely] 'Oh, I don't know. Habits of thought, convention, and all that sort of thing, I suppose.'

¹¹On the use of such names in West African Christianity more broadly (*Ngewo* among the Mende, *Olorun* among the Yoruba, *Chukwu* among the Igbo, etc.), see Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), pp. 94-97. The proverb that Casely-Hayford cites I have been unable to trace in this exact form. Ones that are similar can be found in abundance in Kofi Asare Opoku, *Hearing and Keeping: Akan Proverbs* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 1997), pp. 1-7.

Despite the help Kwamankra gives him, Whitely's doubts remain unresolved after his ordination and he winds up on the Gold Coast, a tragi-comical colonial chaplain preoccupied with one thing in particular, making sure that African and European Christians are buried no less than sixteen feet apart in Accra's colonial-era cemetery.¹² How very badly Whitely needed an interlocutor like Kwamankra! Here, I am thinking again of George Newlands and a comment of his that puts into sharp relief what Whitely has missed out on: 'Christian faith has always maintained', he says, 'that human language about God reflect[s] in part a response to God's prior approach and presence to humanity.'¹³

Here it would be good to pause and consider how 'whiteness' might lie behind Whitely's intellectual paralysis, his failure to grasp hold of the Johannine, Logopneumatological truth Newlands has in mind. *Ethiopia Unbound*, it goes without saying, is a literary work; realistically, however, the odds were against an exchange like this ever occurring.¹⁴ For a possible reason, I turn to Ira Bashkow, whose book, *The Meaning of Whitemen*, is an ethnographic study of a Papua New Guinean people, the Orokaiva:

It is no historical accident that the whiteman, as a perceived cultural presence, is a global phenomenon, and it is thus unsurprising to hear that the *blanco gringo* in Mexico, the *laowai* in China, and the *obroni* in Ghana are all similarly archetypes of western modernity, wealth, and race privilege, personifying the legacy of imperialism, the ideal of development, and the force of globalization.¹⁵

While I suppose that this makes *Ethiopia Unbound* qualify as a postcolonial novel pre-dating postcolonialism as a field of study, it is the window the novel opens up on God that I find most helpful about it.

Still, notice how quickly Whitely slams shut the door onto intercultural theology that Kwamankra opens up, if barely a crack.

¹²Casely-Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound*, pp. 3-11, 19-21, 26-29, *passim*.

¹³Newlands, *Transformative Imagination*, p. 34.

¹⁴Cephas N. Omenyo, Visiting Mackay Professor of World Christianity, Princeton Theological Seminary (personal communication, 2007).

¹⁵Ira Bashkow, *The Meaning of Whitemen: Race and Modernity in the Orokaiva Cultural World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 2.

In that door I feel as if my fingers had been caught; I want someone like Kwamankra to be my interlocutor. Many in the global South want us to be theirs, but discover to their dismay how very hard it is. Elsa Tamez, a Latina Reformed Church theologian who did her higher studies at a Swiss university, puts it like this: the price, she says, of having a decent conversation with the Western theological academy is that you have to play by its rules, or not at all.¹⁶

Making things more fair, theologically, sounds good, but how? One of the ways most worth trying comes right out of *Ethiopia Unbound*. At the end, Casely-Hayford does something really interesting; there, he shows how even a slight change makes a huge difference by playing a neat historiographical trick, called a 'counterfactual' (i.e., 'if *x* changes, *y* might not occur'); counterfactuals work best when the change introduced is minimal without being trivial.¹⁷ For instance, instead of Jesus being crucified in Jerusalem, Pilate sends him to Rome, for trial, and our Lord and Savior gets a reprieve from Caesar. That one, though, happens to be about maximal as they come. Try another: imagine that Switzerland is actually an island in the Caribbean, and instead of being born in Europe Karl Barth, a Swiss Reformed theologian, was born a Rastafarian. Now who, I wonder, is going to take that seriously? George Newlands, the Scottish theologian I have previously cited, thought that one up (the Rastafarian twist, however, is mine); it seems, though, more than just a little implausible.¹⁸

¹⁶Elsa Tamez, 'Our Struggle as Mestizos'. In *Navigating Romans through Cultures*, edited by Khiok-khng Yeo (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 168-170.

¹⁷On counterfactuals, see *Unmaking the West: 'What-If' Scenarios that Rewrite World History*, edited by Philip E. Tetlock, et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), pp. 14-44.

Supposing Jesus Christ had been born of an Ethiopian woman ...

Only that! This is all that Casely-Hayford asks you to imagine differently. But see how radically changed things are only a few degrees of latitude and longitude away! The counterfactual shift to Africa works like a solvent on the taken-for-grantedness of Christian History;¹⁹ it reinvests that history with a sense of—Divine!—contingency, as if it did not necessarily have to be that Aristotle or Kant or Wittgenstein are the only philosophers one could possibly have. And how differently things would look if instead of Greek or Latin, our theological vocabulary had been shaped by Geez, Ethiopia's ancient Christian language—or, for that matter, by Fanti, Tamil, or Chinese, instead of our 'feeble' English. Casely-Hayford, in short, shows us how we might strip off the corrosion on Christian history of the kind that says a decent conversation about theology cannot be had in any language other than English.

But one thing not at all counterfactual to take note of is that Christianity *is* African. Casely-Hayford may have been unaware of it back in 1911; even then, however, Christianity's geographical center of gravity was moving toward Africa, massively. In fact, if you drop a pin onto the center of a Google Map of world Christianity, it would fall on Timbuktu. Now is there, or is there not, an irony in that (at least for Europeans and North Americans, for whom Timbuktu signifies a place that seems unimaginably remote)? It is why we have books nowadays with titles like *How God Became African* by Dutch historian Gerrie ter Haar.²¹

¹⁹Newlands, *Transformative Imagination*, p. 22.

That counterfactuals might be used as a solvent for the taken-for-grantedness of Christian History seems to me an appropriate extension, theologically, of the claim made by Tetlock et al., *Unmaking the West*, p. 17: 'Shattering hindsight complacency is the best way to make us appreciate how uncertain everything seemed before everyone became contaminated by outcome knowledge.' To rephrase that a bit, 'hindsight complacency' refers to an intellectual laziness (in effect, a kind of 'retrospective determinism') that results from having 'outcome knowledge'. For a different—and more maximal—counterfactual than the one I work with here, using *Ethiopia Unbound*, see Carlos M. N. Eire, 'The Quest for a Counterfactual Jesus: Imagining the West without the Cross', in Tetlock et al., *Unmaking the West*, pp. 119-42.

²⁰Todd Johnson and Sun Young Chung, 'Tracking Global Christianity's Statistical Centre of Gravity, AD 33 – AD 2100', *International Review of Mission*, 93/369 (2004), pp. 166-181.

²¹Gerrie ter Haar, *How God Became African: African Spirituality and Western Secular Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

Timbuktu, of course, continues to be a great center of Islamic culture; radiating out from there, however, you begin to get today's first and densest populations of Christians, with Rome and Canterbury, New York and Chicago now on the margins of the Christian world.

Not that, things that happen here are of marginal significance; *Boundless Faith*, a book by Bob Wuthnow of sociology at Princeton University, reminds us of the undiminished *Global Outreach of American Churches* (as the subtitle goes).²² That is a sobering thought, indeed, if men and women like Silas Whitely of *Ethiopia Unbound*, who slammed shut the door onto intercultural openness, are the ones being graduated from our theological schools.

Here, though, I have to pronounce both a Barthian 'yes!' and a 'no!' on Casely-Hayford. He has most definitely opened me up to God; alas, he has also closed me off. The reason? *Ethiopia Unbound* capitalizes on some invidious, racialized essentializations, pitting European against African, Black against White.²³ A dualism like that is uncomfortably Manichaean. Many in American theological institutions who are neither White nor Black, know that between Englishness and Ethiopianism (as it were), public discourse often excludes the middle. That is a reason why no one ought to graduate from Princeton without being immersed in a book like *The Future is Mestizo*, by Virgilio Elizondo, a Catholic prelate and one of America's most illuminating Hispanic theologians.²⁴ A favorite sociologist of mine, Stephen Warner of the University of Illinois, says this of how Diaspora (immigrant) Christianities are changing America:

[W]hen Americans think of Christians, they will decreasingly be able to think simply of whites [and African Americans]. They will also think of Asian students conducting Bible studies and witnessing for Christ on college campuses nationwide. . . .

²²Robert Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

²³Wehrs, *Pre-Colonial Africa*, p. 35.

²⁴Virgilio P. Elizondo, *The Future is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2000).

'Catholic' will no longer be code for 'Irish, Polish, and Italian' but will have to include 'Mexican, Filipino, and Vietnamese'. When Americans think of Asians, they will not just think of exotic religious others but also of believers who thump the Bible and ask you if you are saved. Race and religion are increasingly decoupling.²⁵

Even so, Warner observes of white Americans (of whom the present author is one) that we 'still tend to claim Christianity as [our] property', 'with a mixture of arrogance and exasperation', 'even when many of [us] wish [we] could disown it.'²⁶

In a recent issue of *Theological Education*, Daniel Aleshire of the Association of Theological Schools makes this comment: 'Racial diversity is crucial for effective theological education.' A Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) sister institution that has reflected deeply on this is McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. David Esterline, of its faculty, asks this important question:

Are those of us in the majority culture ready to ... set aside our ownership of the normative culture, ... and turn to listening, learning from and valuing those whose gifts are different from ours? If we expect all members of the household of God to be welcomed in our congregations, we [students and faculty] need to give careful attention to the ways we listen, learn, and teach in our seminaries.²⁸

²⁵Stephen R. Warner, 'The De-Europeanization of American Christianity', In *A Nation of Religions: The Politics of Pluralism in Multireligious America*, edited by Stephen R. Prothero (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 247.

²⁶Warner, 'De-Europeanization', p. 233 (syntax re-ordered)

²⁷Daniel O. Aleshire, 'Gifts Differing: The Educational Value of Race and Ethnicity', *Theological Education* 45/1 (2009), p. 15. Immediately after the sentence I quote, Aleshire goes on to write: 'Ministerial work in the future needs to be informed about cultural realities and cultural differences. Future pastors and church workers will need to be transcultural in ways that past generations did not need to be. In order to learn these skills, seminary students need teachers who have them. The growing percentage of racial/ethnic students need professors who understand the religious and cultural contexts from which they have come to seminary and the settings to which they likely will go when they complete their studies.'

²⁸David V. Esterline, 'Multicultural Theological Education and Leadership for a Church without Walls'. In *Shaping Beloved Community: Multicultural Theological Education*, edited by David V. Esterline and Ogbu U. Kalu (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press), p. 17.

And so, as I close, I go back to Jonathan Sacks, whom I paraphrased earlier, except with this small change, that *theology* is a thing we make together, *interculturally*—and that, again, is why a seminary has got to be a welcoming environment of the kind that I described in my opening paragraph. Theological curricula, however, are notoriously crowded; space can rarely be found, unless someone else yields some. And without space, how can a predisposition be fostered in our students to seek out the view from ‘*manywheres*’?²⁹ Theologically, a start can be made when the oneness that we have in Christ, spoken of in Ephesians, is not interpreted in ways that allow dominant communities to then use it to cancel out, ignore or invalidate, the concrete particularities of cultures that differ from their own.

²⁹I borrow the term ‘manywheres’ from anthropologist Richard A. Schweder of the University of Chicago, whose elucidation of it can be found in his collection of essays, *Why Do Men Barbecue: Recipes for Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 2: ‘The knowable world is incomplete if seen from any one point of view, incoherent if seen from all points of view at once, and empty if seen from nowhere in particular. Per this maxim, one should stay on the move, seeking out and engaging alternative points of view.’