

Influence' (pp. 121–138); A. Andreopoulos, 'Icons and the Bible: St. Nicholas's Orthodox Church, Cardiff' (pp. 253–270); S. Kadish, 'The Jewish Presence in Wales: Image and Material Reality' (pp. 271–290); b) D. Jasper, 'Pre-Raphaelite Biblical Art in Wales' (pp. 139–154); C. Rowland, 'Images of the Apocalypse: Blair Hughes-Stanton (1902–81) and John Hancock (1899–1918)' (pp. 155–170); H. Dentinger, 'Biblical Imagery in the Engravings of David Jones (1895–1974)' (pp. 171–186); P.E. Esler, 'The Biblical Paintings of Ivor Williams (1908–82)' (pp. 187–204); N. Gordon Bowe, 'Interpreting the Bible through Painted Glass: The Harry Clarke Studios and Wilhelmina Geddes (1887–1955)' (pp. 205–216); A. Smith, 'Light, Colour and the Bible: The Stained Glass Windows of John Petts (1914–91)' (pp. 217–234); c) P. Lord, 'The Bible in the Artisan Tradition of Welsh Visual Culture' (pp. 91–120); O. Fairclough, 'Biblical Imagery in Private and Public Spaces in Wales (1850–1930)' (pp. 291–304).

The final article, C.Lloyd-Morgan, 'Transformation or Decline? Modern Welsh Artists and the Welsh Biblical Heritage' (pp. 305–317), takes an honest look at the present position with regard to biblical art in Wales. Much traditional biblical art depended on religious patronage. This is no longer as readily available to artists, since patronage now comes more and more from secular sources. Going along with this is the decline in religious observance, with the result that scenes from the Bible no longer have the same resonance for present-day Welsh people as they had for their forebears. Lloyd-Morgan asks the question, 'Biblical subjects are certainly rarer among practising artists today than ever before. Now that the younger generations lack the thorough, early grounding in the content of the Bible, has the Bible remained a source of inspiration or has it largely been abandoned?' (p. 308). She concludes that the production of this volume, and the DVD to accompany it, is timely since it preserves the rich heritage of Welsh biblical art before it is attenuated further. This reviewer concurs and thanks the editors and the many researchers involved for a superb production.

CÉLINE MANGAN OP

**DIALECTIC AND DIALOGUE** by Dimitri Nikulin, *Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 2010, pp. xiii + 169, \$19.95 pbk, \$19.95 e-bk, £55 hbk*

In his seventh letter (if indeed it is his), Plato remarks that he will never write about the deepest matters of philosophy, 'For this knowledge is not something that can be put into words like other sciences; but after long-continued intercourse between teacher and pupil, in joint pursuit of the subject, suddenly, like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and straightway nourishes itself' (341c). This idea, that there are some matters that cannot be expressed or attained to outside of oral dialogue, forms the backdrop to Dimitri Nikulin's book, *Dialectic and Dialogue*, which attempts to provide a philosophical and historical account of the origins, interrelatedness, and significance of dialectic and dialogue.

In the first chapter on the platonic origins of dialogue and dialectic, Nikulin identifies a development that is key to understanding the relation between them: 'dialectic originally was an oral practice established in oral dialogue; written dialogue then appeared as an imitation of oral dialectic; and finally, written dialectic was distilled into a non-dialogical and universal method of reasoning' (p. 2).

In chapter two, 'Dialectic: Via Antiqua', Nikulin looks in more detail at the origins of dialectic. For Plato, the purpose of dialectic is to know the 'what' of a thing (its essence). In Plato's earlier dialogues, Socratic oral dialogue forces its 'interlocutors to recognize that the original description of a thing's essence was

wrong and that they must begin anew, doing so often without success' (p. 25). Plato develops dialectic as a discursive, logical activity: 'dialectical investigation begins with what interlocutors can agree on and then proceeds toward a conclusion by excluding possibilities through reasoning with respect to opposites' (p. 27). Aristotle takes dialectic in a different direction. In the *Topics* it is associated with premises that are probably true and is therefore distinct from both eristic dialectic and syllogistic deduction. It cannot be the case for Aristotle that dialectic is a science of being, since it concerns the probable and not the true. Thus, 'Plato and Aristotle substantially disagree about what dialectic is and how far it extends' (p. 43).

According to chapter three, 'Dialectic: Via Moderna', in modernity dialectic becomes 'a logical calculus of propositions . . . taking mathematics as a paradigmatic example of clarity, systematicity, and order of arrangement' (p. 49). Dialectic becomes one of reason's pretensions and needs to be subjected to critique: Kant's 'transcendental dialectic is the critique of the rational illusion and unjustified claim of reason of achieving complete and absolute knowledge' (p. 52). Nikulin traces the origins of Hegelian dialectic in Nicholas of Cusa's 'program based on the coincidence of opposites' (p. 54). For Hegel dialectic 'utterly dissociates itself from dialogue and becomes the method and driving force that cannot be divorced from philosophy as the enterprise of solitary thinking' (p. 65)

In chapter four, 'Dialogue: A Systematic Outlook', Nikulin identifies four key features of dialogue: personal other – the indefinable constant in and precondition for dialogue; voice – that which expresses and communicates discursively; unfinalizability – at every moment meaningful and always able to be carried further inexhaustibly; and allosensus – constructive, non-confrontational disagreement. Thus, dialogue 'is a process of meaningful but unfinalizable allosensual exchange that can always be carried on without repetition of its content and that implies communication with other persons in the vocal expression of one's own (but not "owned") personal other' (p. 79). Dialectic, on the other hand, does not recognize this personal voice. It is monological. Moreover, it is not 'unfinalizable'. It possesses the argument in a finite number of steps following formal logical rules, ending in a true conclusion, whereas dialogue only 'accidentally' reaches a logically justified conclusion.

In chapter five, 'Dialogue: Interruption', Nikulin considers the claim that 'dialogue is essentially based on interruption' (p. 95). It is this spontaneity of the interruption that distinguishes it from dialectic and written dialogue. In oral dialogue 'there is no rule indicating when to interrupt or what to say exactly' (p. 100). However, Nikulin's assertion, that to be 'interrupted is to be included, invited, and recognized' (p. 103), can hardly be said to reflect the common experience of being interrupted.

Nikulin, aware of the irony involved, gives the title 'Against Writing' to chapter six. He recognises that dialectical reasoning requires the written form to maintain its argument: 'writing is more effective than human memory at storing lengthy lists and the exact details and particular path of an argument through which discursive thinking had to proceed in order to establish a proof' (p. 120). However, writing's function as a 'cure' for the weakness of memory – *verba volant, scripta manent* – is not as successful as we might think. Writing conveys knowledge without understanding. It is inflexible. It cannot speak to defend itself or clarify its meaning. It cannot interrupt. And 'if Plato is right in holding that being cannot be known discursively . . . then it cannot be approached through a step-by-step dialectical movement or argumentation, and it cannot be properly represented, written down, or read' (p. 130).

This is an eloquent book, more rhetoric than dialectic, and its eloquence at times pushes the argument in unwarranted directions. Nikulin gives no consideration to the liberating nature of the written word, which makes available to all, potentially

at least, the knowledge, skills, and techniques that are otherwise available only to a small elite. (The symposium is after all only open to a handful of invitees, 'no fewer than the number of the Graces and no more than the number of the Muses' (p. 83).) Nor does Nikulin consider the role of the electronic media as an alternative means of capturing and conveying oral dialogue. He also understates the major limitation of the oral, its fleeting nature. The dialogue must end, and once it is ended it disappears (unless captured on media such as YouTube). Oral dialogue may never be completed, but, unfinalizable or not, it will eventually be abandoned and lost.

Nikulin ends his book with a statement reminiscent of Martin Buber's 'Dialog-philosophie': 'to be is to be in dialogue' (p. 155). To be in dialogue with God? That is not a question the author considers or perhaps would want us to consider. But it is, I think, where his 'conclusion' is pointing.

IAN LOGAN

**THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD: THE THEOLOGY OF LANGUAGE OF AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO** by Edward Morgan, *T&T Clark*, London and New York, 2010, pp. x + 191, £60

This book studies one, highly important aspect of Augustine's understanding of language – as the vocal medium in which God discloses Himself to believers and discloses believers to themselves – and three works in which the theologian develops his ideas on this theme: the *De trinitate*, the *De doctrina christiana*, and the *Confessiones*. Familiar texts support a novel conclusion, that for Augustine 'human utterance' is 'what keeps the mind going in its searching after God's reality' (p. 13). The starting-point is *De trinitate*, Book 15, and Augustine's reading there of 1 Corinthians 13:12. The image of God within the human person is the enigmatic mirror in which alone we can see God darkly. In thought (an understanding present within the heart prior to any kind of inner speech, and not as a word in any given tongue) Augustine sees an image of the Divine Word in relationship to the Father whose Word and Wisdom He is. The opening chapter then turns to the analogy Augustine sets up between our utterance of a word in giving voice to thought and the incarnation of the Divine Word. Morgan holds (in a way we may question) that this unqualified analogy 'opens up human discourse and language christologically, enabling them to stand as salvific in a way analogous (*sicut*) to the historical event of the incarnation of the Word' (p. 44).

Chapters Two to Four switch away to the *De doctrina*. We follow Augustine's train of thought in Book I from the defence of theological writing on biblical exegesis as integral to the proper understanding of it, to the ineffability of the God of whom silence speaks louder than words, yet who has created people with the desire to praise Him in so far as we can and whose Word (unlike the Plotinian deity) became flesh for us and stands revealed in the Bible. We return to the fundamental analogy of the spoken word which now points to the significance of the incarnation as an act of communication by which God without change in Himself may enter into the heart and mind, just as thought is given voice so that it may enter unchanged into the hearer's consciousness. Again, Morgan's summary turns the analogy round: 'Words, in their outwardly verbalized form, are mediators between God's transcendence and humanity's material embodiment' (p. 53).

From Augustine's reading of inspired human lives and deeds as God's speech act, Morgan next explicates Books 2 and 3 of the *De doctrina* to show how Augustine understands Scripture as reflecting our fallen humanity back at us: 'Reading for Augustine, or rather the task of learning not to misread, is itself