"Although hundreds of years of illuminated Bible history precede this new installment, the St. John's Bible offers a novel blend of two distinct cultural and historical eras: the medieval and the postmodern."

ILLUMINATING A CULTURE, A HISTORY, A TRADITION

Conceptual Blending in the St. John's Bible

ERIN E. EIGHAN

IN 1998, ST. JOHN'S ABBEY IN COLLEGEVILLE, MINNESOTA COMMISSIONED DONALD JACKSON TO PRODUCE ONE OF THE FIRST HAND-WRITTEN, HAND-ILLUMINATED BIBLES SINCE THE INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. THE ON-GOING PROJECT BRIDGES DISPARATE TRADITIONS IN A UNIQUE BLEND OF THE MEDIEVAL AND POSTMODERN ERAS. THIS ARTICLE ADOPTS COGNITIVE LITERARY THEORY TO EXAMINE THE ST. JOHN'S BIBLE, SPECIFICALLY THE FRONTISPIECE TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, AND THE TEXT-IMAGE INTERACTION CONTAINED WITHIN AS PRODUCTS OF CONCEPTUAL BLENDING. A COGNITIVE HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE ST. JOHN'S BIBLE REVEALS THE COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP OF THE MODERN-DAY AUDIENCE TO THE ILLUMINATED TEXT. TENSIONS ARE INEVITABLE WITHIN ANY COGNITIVE BLEND; THE SAME APPLIES TO THE READER-VIEWER'S EXPERIENCE OF TEXT-IMAGE INTEGRATION HERE. THE KEY TO COGNITIVE BLENDING IS THE EMERGENT EXPERIENCE OF THE TARGET ELEMENT. IN THIS CASE, THE POSTMODERN BIBLE AS TARGET BLENDS WITH ITS MEDIEVAL PREDECESSORS TO PRODUCE THE ST. JOHN'S BIBLE—AN INTERSUBJECTIVE, MULTIMODAL, CROSS-GENERATIONAL ARTIFACT OF A COGNITIVE BLEND.

Cognitive literary theory is a new interdisciplinary approach to literature, bridging gaps between "linguistics, computer science, psychology, neuroscience, philosophy of mind, and anthropology" which appears to be "gaining the force of an imperative" in academic circles.[i] Science and art collaborate as equals, drawing on so-called "left brain" and "right brain" processes to formulate a more complete literary analysis. Currently in academia, literary theories work actively to distinguish themselves by offering distinct "definitive readings" of a text. Many readings can and do emerge from a given text. Each school of literary analysis—in addition to offering a distinctive reading—often simultaneously works to delegitimize other readings in order to gain authority. Cognitive literary theory distinguishes itself not only by offering a new reading, but by presenting a way to synthesize the seemingly antithetical readings offered by Marxist, feminist, pragmatist, New Critical, post-structuralist, deconstructionist, and psychoanalytical literary theories. By grounding itself in cognitive science and neuroanatomy, this new theory provides a framework capable of incorporating all forms of literary criticism. By analysis within this framework it is possible to synthesize the most salient and well-grounded criticisms of existing theories with respect to a given text.

Precisely because of this capacity to unite disparate criticisms, the application of cognitive literary theory to religious texts is both attractive and controversial. Not least among these controversies is the apparent conflict between the scientific roots of this mode of analysis and the spiritual nature of religious texts. The realms of religion and theology—once off-limits to scientific investigation—are fertile ground for cognitive scientific inquiry. For cognitive literary theory one of the most fertile patches is the Bible, which for hundreds of years has been subject to ongoing debate regarding the establishment of a definitive reading of the text. This biblical context has proved a grand stage for the critical discourse between competing literary theories taking place in English departments across the country. Therefore, in addressing the Bible, cognitive literary theory undertakes not only to show that cognitive science can effectively comment on religious matters, but also to show that literary theory can provide a synthetic consensus on perhaps the most influential text in print today.

While cognitive theory can approach the Bible in various ways, of particular interest is the collaboration between theologians and artists to produce illuminated manuscripts of holy texts. The illuminated Bibles of the medieval period are perhaps the best-known examples of these cross-modal texts, wherein the reader must integrate two mediums—text and image—in order to arrive at the richness of understanding intended by the authors. Distinguished illuminated Biblical texts include the Book of Kells (ca. 9th century), the Lindisfarne Gospels (ca. 8th century), the Winchester Bible (ca. 12th century), and the Bibles from Tours (ca. 9th century).

In the last fifteen years, artists and theologians at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota have worked to create an illuminated Bible for the twenty-first century. The St. John's Bible is one of the only modern illuminated Bibles since the invention of the printing press, and the first in five hundred years to have been commissioned by a Benedictine monastery, estimated to becompleted in 2010. Although hundreds of years of illuminated Bible history precede this new installment, the St. John's Bible offers a novel blend of two distinct cultural and historical eras: the medieval and the postmodern. In terms of cognitive theory, this cultural blend suggests Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier's theory of conceptual blending.[ii] This theory provides singular insight into the cultures at play in the St. John's Bible and sheds new light on the relationship between text and image in illuminated manuscripts.

To proceed, I will outline the conceptual metaphor theory and other cognitive and visual-reading theories germane to this project. I will briefly investigate cultural history surrounding the postmodern conception of the illuminated Bible. Subsequently, I will examine in detail the relationship between text and image in the St. John's Bible with re-

gard to cognitive literary theory. I will analyze the St. John's Bible as a unique product of disparate cultures, times, and places, focusing on its treatment of the Gospel of John. I will conclude by detailing both the positive and negative effects of a cross-modal presentation of a text which are controversial among current literary theories. Though this text is still an incomplete sentence in the history books of illuminated manuscripts, I will demonstrate that the St. John's Bible has the potential to persist as a unique cultural and *cognitive* artifact for many generations.

COGNITIVE AND VISUAL THEORIES EXPANDED

Two mainstream cognitive literary theories contribute to the discussion of the cognitive implications and historical impact of the St. John's Bible. The first is the conceptual blending theory developed by Turner and Fauconnier, later developed by Turner into the blending theory of metaphor and parable.[iii] This theory can be applied to the St. John's Bible both in examining the text's interaction with cultural and historical trends and in understanding the text-image juxtaposition. Furthermore, it may add cognitive support to the properties of iconography and schematization of illuminated medieval manuscripts. Mary C. Olson's analysis of iconography and schematization will be discussed later.[iv]

The second important theory is Jack Williamson's gradations of the grid theory of visual syntax and textual architecture. While previous cognitive theorists have focused on textual interpretation, Williamson's theory grounds my analysis in a visual reading of the St. John's Bible. It offers insight into the construction of illuminated manuscripts from four historical periods of Western art,[v] including those influenced by the post-modern period of the St. John's Bible.

Conceptual blending—also known as "conceptual integration"[vi]—is a cognitive process creating a productive relationship between an otherwise unassociated source and target in order to better understand the target. When an element of the target conceptual framework, or domain, is

"The realms of religion and theology—once off-limits to scientific investigation—are fertile ground for cognitive scientific inquiry."

cognized in terms of the source domain, and the cognitive blend enriches the target. Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier assume a modular neural architecture: different types of information are handled in distinct "cognitive spaces"[vii] and integrated by intervening processes.[viii] Simple conceptual blending requires four cognitive spaces: one *input space* for the target domain (A); one space for the *source domain* (A'); a *generic space* identifying and containing common elements; and a *blended space* for the synthetic understanding of the target.[ix] Three basic processes operate within and between these four neural spaces: composition, completion, and elaboration. First, *composition* brings the target and source domains together. Then, *completion* identifies the parallel elements by mapping the target domain onto the source domain. Lastly, the target's qualities are elaborated based on the *completed domain map*.

Metaphor is a simple example of conceptual blending.[x] Consider the example: "This surgeon is a butcher."[xi] All the qualities of a butcher occupy input space A; all qualities of a surgeon occupy input space A'. Simultaneous consideration of these two spaces constitutes composition. Completion proceeds by mapping the two input spaces onto each other as follows:

Initially, the metaphor may seem to [be] explainable in terms of direct projection from the source domain of butchery to the target domain of surgery, guided by a series of fixed counterpart mappings: "butcher" onto "surgeon"; "animal" (cow) maps onto "human being"; "commodity" onto "pa-

tient"; "cleaver" onto "scalpel"; and so forth.[xii]

Grady, Coulson, and Oakley note that this may seem like the entire content of the metaphor, but the cognitive blending is not yet complete. A surgeon is surely incompetent if he is being compared to a butcher, but there is no source "incompetency" inherent in "butcher-ness" that could be projected onto the target surgeon. How did it get there? This phenomenon is crucial to elaboration. Productive—or "emergent"[xiii]—content is revealed by the juxtaposition of elements in the generic space. In this example, productive content emerges from incompatible *means-end* relationships between the butcher and the surgeon. In input space A, the butcher's goal is to kill the animal and carve its flesh from its bones; in input space A', the surgeon's goal is to heal the patient. When the source's means-end relationship is mapped onto the target's means-end relationship, the resulting product is an incompetent surgeon. Thus, the characteristic feature of conceptual blending theory is this productive content which emerges from the comparison between target and source.

As mentioned above, Jack Williamson's grid theory offers a particularly effective way to analyze the visual architecture of illuminated manuscripts. The grid—comprised of the interactions between points and axial lines within an image—is present in Western art from the late-medieval period through the postmodern period.[xiv] Williamson pro-

> *"The St. John's Bible is one of the only illuminated bibles produced since Johannes Gutenburg developed the printing press in 1440."*

vides four gradations of possible structural typology observed in that art: the point grid, the field grid, the line grid, and the fracture of the grid, correlating to the late medieval, renaissance, modern, and postmodern periods respectively. The first three variations of the grid theory are applicable to the present analysis only by their progression into the fracture of the grid.

The point grid of the late medieval period emphasizes intersections between horizontal and vertical axes, often coinciding with intersections of heavenly and earthly realms.[xv] The field grid of Renaissance art features converging perspective, privileging experience reality over perceived divinity and shifting "from appearance to structure, from spirituality to rationality."[xvi] The modern era's line grid features geometric elements: overlapping bars that do not intersect leveled on planes extending infinitely. The abstract homogeneity of the line grid denies even experienced reality privilege in art. Thus each progressive shift in the grid is paired with a desire to liberate visual space.

Following the same trajectory, the post-modern fracture of the grid—much like its analogues in academia and culture—sought to liberate visual space from all established conventions, including the grid itself. Mary C. Olson explains,

> *The post modern attitude explodes or violates the grid to reveal the chaos at the atomic level behind the superficially predictable and "defiles the typographic message" . . . . The explosion of the grid reveals a loss of belief in the ability to control, and signals a shift in interest from the creator to the domain of the receiver.[xvii]*

The essence of the postmodern grid will be especially relevant considering the attitudes of the St. John's Bible's predecessors. Successive restructuring of the visual grid converted formerly passive viewers into active participants in images, emphasizing the interaction between the individual's interpretation and standard interpretations. The previous three grid theories and their corresponding historical

periods accorded the artist considerable control over the viewer's interpretation. This was particularly true of the late medieval illuminations that took advantage of standard iconography and schematization. As Olson notes, however, "[Postmodern] readings of graphic space are not concerned with control, but with individual interpretation."[xviii]

By juxtaposing text and image within this fractured grid space, the postmodern art community began presenting language as art. Belgrad explains that the goal of the postmodern artistic community was "to create a 'language' of painting [that paralleled] the poetic project to restore 'spatiality' to writing."[xix] Some artists in parallel with literary theorists were influenced by deconstructionism. The ambiguous references and arbitrary regulations inherent in language were criticized and satirized endlessly in the postmodern literary community. By extension, postmodern artists deconstructed typographic conventions: fracturing the grid progressively translated to fracturing the text. Projects like *Cranbrook Design: The New Discourse* destabilized visual processes associated with reading by turning linguistic graphemes (e.g. standard letters, numbers, ideographs) into visually ambiguous elements composing a larger image. Artists mixed fonts, created uneven baselines, merged text into images, divided the text against itself—anything that would "call into question traditional values of consistency and order."[xx] According to Olson, "In terms of typography, the construction of the graphic space [of the fractured grid] subverts its own readability, violates its own boundaries and generally attacks the whole concept of transparency [of linguistic graphemes]."[xxi]

Fracturing the textual grid gave rise to a culture of spontaneity; art organically grew out of the subjective self, eliminating many of the strictures of convention. According to Daniel Belgrad—a historical and cultural theorist who investigates the culture of spontaneity—"[s]ubjectivity suggests that there is no ultimate truth to be arrived at—only differing perspectives that can perhaps be synthesized. This is how a dialogue is structured."[xxii] He argues that the postmodern culture—essentially equivalent to his "culture of spontaneity"—builds community not on the basis of objective standards, but on variable, intersubjective relationships between individuals. This process proceeds by creating a dialogue between competing individual interpretations. According to Williamson's grid theory, this postmodern intersubjectivity should be manifest in the visual grids of postmodern works. St. John's Bible offers a stunning example of the intersubjective visual grid at work.

COGNITIVE HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE ILLUMINATED BIBLE

Though a detailed history of illuminated bibles is not necessary, the long lacuna (fifteenth century until the present day) in the production of illuminated bibles is noteworthy. The St. John's Bible is one of the only illuminated bibles produced since Johannes Gutenberg developed the printing press in 1440; evidently, the invention of the printing press catalyzed a rejection of manuscript culture and an espousal of print culture.

Manuscript culture was based on a community of scribes governing the literary community through their production of texts. This more personal transmission of texts manifestly influenced the presentation and subsequent cognitive processing of manuscripts. The rise of print culture and the uniform, mechanical transmission of texts removed that human influence, particularly on linguistic graphemes. Print culture subsequently developed a cognitive blindness to the graphic nature of the graphemes composing printed words. This is what Mary Olson calls the "transparency" of text—when text is no longer image but word.

The manuscript culture was more acutely aware of the aesthetic of printed words. Olson suggests that the manuscript culture was "less concerned than ours is with the transparency of writing. . . . But many early manuscripts . . . employ these devices [large initials, rubrics, glosses, or illustrations] which disrupt transparency particularly at points of division."[xxiii] Curiously, most of the medieval audience of illuminated bibles was illiterate, and

for this majority the graphic nature of writing and the illuminations were the only point of entry into the content. Thus, the aesthetic of linguistic graphemes was crucial in medieval illuminated bibles.

Amidst a remarkable variety, rigorous ornamentation stands out as a common element of all medieval illuminated bibles. Olson writes, "The style reflects a love of pattern and surface texture. According to Wilson, 'It also reveals that *horror vacui* which is so obvious an element of the Germanic art of the post-Roman period. No space can be left unornamented.'"[xxiv] Within that ornamentation, a conscious use of standard iconography and schematization is evident. While iconography and schematization are relatively consistent in medieval illuminated bibles, the St. John's Bible diverges significantly from these standards. In order to understand this divergence, it is necessary to examine briefly the standard medieval iconography and schematization.

Iconography and schematization greatly aided in the visual transmission of doctrine from artist to viewer. Though similar, iconography and schematization differ in their cultural domain. Schematization creates classes of people, objects, and so forth according to current cultural biases in representation. For example, illuminations of groups of people eliminate idiosyncrasies in favor of visually establishing a collective identity by the reproduction of some prototypical element of that group. A group of angels might all fly with wings splayed, knees bent, square shoulders, and light flowing locks, but will not be individually identifiable unless demanded by the narrative. St. Michael the Archangel, for instance, might be outfitted with a flaming sword. This is where iconography fits in, distinguishing important figures from schema by including easily identifiable visual elements. Olson suggests that iconography "looks at ways a type is consistent across the spectrum of times and cultures; for example, St. Peter is always depicted with keys, a king with a crown."[xxv] How do these two techniques of representation affect the interpretation of these illuminated bibles?

In a manuscript culture, scribes painstakingly copied texts stroke by stroke. On a practical level, standard iconography and schematization offered scribes a guide for accurate translation of the content. Standard iconography and schematization also standardized transmission of doctrine to the audience. John Williams writes, "In a history infatuated with the archetype, the artist tends to remain a passive agent of descent and is seldom granted the role of creative respondent to expectations that go beyond mere replication."[xxvi] The astute viewer is also relegated to a passive role: "The role of the viewer is to situate her- or himself within an established, culturally constituted edifice of meaning and being where schematic codification encourages social adhesion among its members."[xxvii] Both the medieval artist and the medieval viewer were subject to standard visual representations and interpretations.

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH: THE ST. JOHN'S BIBLE

Postmodernism dramatically influences the art of the St. John's Bible. The culture of spontaneity, discussed earlier, drives the aesthetic. Illuminations, like the one found in "Matthew 24: The Last Judgment" bristle with dynamic energy. The frontispiece for the Gospel of John, illuminating John 1:1-14 (" . . . and the Word become flesh and lived among us . . . "), is characterized by layered geometric patterning, sporadic patches of color, infinite extension of space, images crossing borders, text merging with image, and linguistic graphemes losing transparency. These characteristics are highly indicative of the postmodern grid fracture.

These postmodern illuminations exert a clear influence on the viewer's cognition of the biblical content. Psycholinguistic models of mind—like the connectionist model or the cohort model—can help clarify this influence. *Priming*—a cognitive process in which a priming stimulus is used to prepare and direct the subject's response to a target stimulus.[xxviii] The St. John's Bible illuminations were developed such that the relevant text would prime the
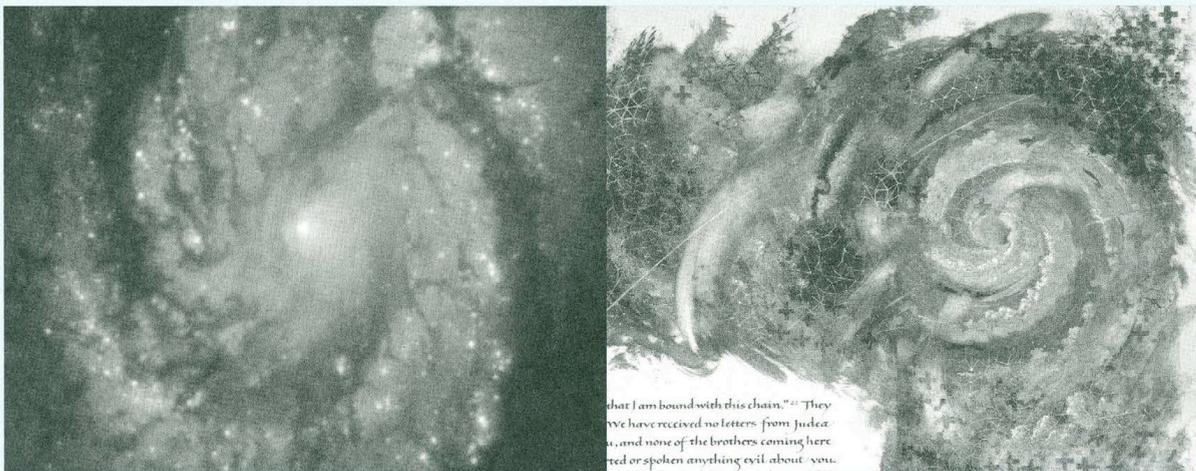
ELEMENTS OF THE ST. JOHN'S BIBLE ILLUMINATIONS HAD MODERN-DAY INSPIRATIONS, INCLUDING IMAGES FROM THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE.

viewer for the image, involving the viewer by catalyzing viewer-specific representational expectations and viewer-specific fulfillment and frustration of those expectations. Though creators of the St. John's Bible do not call this "priming," their practice of *lectio divina*, developing into *visio divina*, relies on the same principles.

It is common practice for Benedictine monks to take part in *lectio divina*, a meditation on devotional and biblical texts in which a small portion is reiterated and contemplated for a long period. Commissioned by the Benedictine order, the St. John's Bible was constructed aiming to facilitate *lectio divina*. The Committee on Illumination and Text (CIT)—the group of biblical scholars from the St. John's community charged with matching text to illuminations—commissioned illuminations based on notes taken after extensive practice of *lectio divina*. Artistic director Donald Jackson then created original drawings incorporating not only the meditative notes, but his own aesthetic as well. The St. John's Bible illuminations were created by a process aiming to engender variety of interpretation and a concurrent sense of viewer creativity absent from medieval illuminations. This new process of illumination construction based in *lectio divina* was named *visio divina*.

The Benedictine act of *visio divina* separates the St. John's Bible from its medieval Catholic tradition, complicating the cognitive blend of the St. John's Bible (as target) and its medieval counterparts (as source). Whereas the medieval artist and the viewer were subjected to a collective machine of religious dogma, the modern artist and viewer had control over the interpretation of ancient biblical texts. The divergent motivations—the source's motivation as ideological imposition, the target's motivation as theological meditation—productively blend to create a postmodern aesthetic for an ancient subject.

Where iconography and schematization were used previously to standardize interpretation within the religious community, the St. John's Bible employs a taxonomic system to invite subjectivity where it was discouraged. For example, in the frontispiece of the Gospel of John, Jesus cannot be identified except by abstract inference. Amorphous masses of gold are etched into a general body-like form attached to a haloed head bearing a featureless face. Moreover, this featureless golden Jesus appears variously in the Gospels and Acts (e.g. Matthew 16 or Mark 9). John's gospel certainly prefigures a representation of Jesus prior to object or dimensional space,[xxix] but medieval iconography—indeed, medieval art—could not have accommodated such a picture. Postmodernism's fractured grid,

however, can capture concepts at "the border of a mysterious, often nonmaterial dimension"[xxx] with relative ease. While some standard iconography is preserved (e.g. cross within a halo or gold as divinity) it is clear that the St. John's Bible has created a new, postmodern iconography based on abstract, subjectively malleable visual elements. This Jesus of abstract features and colors constitutes a novel visual identity for " . . . the Light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it."[xxxi]

Schematization receives a similar postmodern update. Divisions of the point grid separated divine space from earthly space in medieval schematization. For the medieval mind space generally in the upper portion of an image was reserved for the sky, clouds, stars, and other heavenly bodies; earthly space, likewise, was depicted in the lower portion. The twenty-first century mind, however, has a radically different conception of the extent and contents of that upper space. The postmodern schematization in the St. John's Bible greatly deemphasizes the earthly realm not only to accommodate current cultural attitudes about expansive upward realms, but to call attention to them and make them the focus of contemplation. A representative example would be the incorporation of images from the Hubble Space telescope into illuminations depicting the divine realm.[xxxiii] Volume six of the Saint John's Bible (the Gospels and Acts) poignantly concludes pairing the illumination on the preceding page[xxxiv] with the exhortation to be witnesses to Christ "to the ends of the earth."[xxxv] Once again, the fractured grid allows the schema itself to influence the viewer in innovative ways.

Thus far in my discussion of the St. John's Bible, I have only spoken to the illuminations contained therein. Now I will address their interaction with the text, for as Olson writes, "Language is not just read, decoded, but also seen, the body is involved in an interactive process with the environment."[xxxvi] Just as with its medieval predecessors, the text of the Saint John's Bible is handwritten[xxxvii] and can be viewed as straight-forward linguistic graphemes, as caption, and as an image unto itself. Given my focus on the

reader as viewer, text as image is most intriguing and is complexly enriched by its cohesive relationship with the illuminations.

The frontispiece for John's Gospel, an illumination of "the Word became flesh," incorporates Colossians 1: 15-20.[xxxviii] Just as with iconography and schematization, the illuminators defy standard typography and exhaustively subvert the text's transparency. For example, according to Mary Olson's research, leading (space between the lines of type) increases readership by 12 percent.[xxxix] The *hand* (calligrapher's jargon for "font") in the illumination, however, encroaches upon lead space with graceful descenders (the part of a letter which hangs below the baseline) disorienting a reader accustomed to conventions of the print culture. Moreover, the text merges with the image of Christ, drawing the reader into this new typographic image space. Interestingly, after all this transgressing of conventions, the experience of a contemporary viewer before this illumination approaches that of the average medieval viewer before text he could not discern except by its graphic quality.

The text in this image appears in gold with a black underscript and accordingly has a dual nature. The golden words echo the color of Christ, but echo also Christ's departure from iconographic standards in their departure from analogous standards. The viewer blends form (image) and signification (word) together: in a real sense the "word is made flesh," extending from and falling into the Christ. In contrast, the black underscript does not confine itself to its gold counterpart, extending, curling, and falling off to hint at Christ's facial features. Just as the postmodern Christ icon demands that the viewer supply Christ's features, the black script visually outlines the process directing viewers to the task at hand. In this way, the viewer is primed for contemplation not only by postmodern iconography and schematization, but also by the script itself.

EFFECTS OF TEXT-IMAGE INTEGRATION

While integrating images into biblical text can illuminate difficult scripture, it can create tensions. When illumi-

nated bibles gained currency in the fifth century, many contemporary scholars criticized the ostentatious presentation of self-effacing teachings:

> *Saint Jerome . . . whose translation of the biblical books was to become more or less the standard one for the Latin Church, felt it necessary to condemn what he considered extravagant attention to the decoration of Scripture: "Parchments are dyed purple, gold is melted into lettering, manuscripts are decked with jewels, while Christ lies at the door naked and dying."*[xl]

Despite protests like St. Jerome's, illuminated bibles continued to be popular until the invention of the printing press. This "efficient rejection" was succeeded by a fierce ideological campaign against illuminated Bibles in the sixteenth century, when Luther and other Protestant reformers echoed the sentiments of Saint Jerome. They stressed the dangers of attachment to devotional aides like icons, illuminated Bibles, stained-glass windows, and so forth, which could easily slip into idolatry if these images were mistaken for their subjects. As an example:

> *the loss of confidence in the transubstantiation of the host as evidence of the Incarnation [the Word made flesh]. Analogous and equally serious is the loss of confidence in the visual image, especially in the icons . . . both feeling the suspicion that sense knowledge can no longer provide satisfaction.*[xli]

The origins of the Protestant attitude toward illuminated bibles are significant because our nation's religious foundations are Protestant,[xlii] evidenced often enough today: "Protestantism helped define the nation, operating as simultaneously the happy enabler and the unhappy conscience of the American republic—a single source for both national comfort and national unease."[xliii] Protestants gave America freedom of religion; some current communications theorists suggest that religious influence plays a strong role in media censorship even today. Olson claims that the history of iconoclastic controversy and "even the de-

sire to establish boundaries between word and image categories suggest a deep-seated fear of images. This fear . . . results from the belief that images can become what they represent."[xliv] The St. John's Bible, therefore, cannot be isolated from the broad cultural context in which it appears.

The St. John's Bible can be contextualized on three separate levels: the macro-historical, the micro-historical, and the cultural. On the macro-historical level, the Saint John's Bible rises out of the centuries of Catholic history and the tradition of medieval illuminated manuscripts. Micro-historically, it was conceived in a nation founded on Protestant ideals.[xlv] Finally, the postmodern, media-soaked culture of our world has created a uniquely visuo-centric modern audience. As Brother Dietrich Reinhart, OSB—president of St. John's University—recently said:

> *"If it was an anachronism, I wasn't interested," he [Brother Dietrich] said. He wasn't going to live in the past. . . . "It wouldn't work if it was clichéd or if it was some project out there in cuckoo land. No. It had to be great art. It had to be about the real world today. It had to resonate with Catholic tradition but not in a dogmatic way. It had to connect to the curriculum."*[xlvi]

The St. John's Bible from its inception has aimed to blend these disparate sub-cultures: "great art," the "real world today," and "Catholic tradition."

The tensions of any cross-modal presentation present themselves in this ambitious blending exercise. Some will criticize ostentatious visual displays both as distractions from text and as an impediment to proper interpretation. Inevitably some will reject certain illuminations because the text primes them for different images that cannot be reconciled. Traditionalists from an artistic perspective may reject the startling postmodern aesthetic of the Saint John's Bible, preferring bibles that maintain some sense of "historical decorum"—that is, adherence to conventions. A project integrating aural and visual sensory experiences, constantly asks "whether we learn different things by hear-

" . . . this new synthesis preserves the . . . Christian message, while generating an iconography, schematization, and typography consistent with a postmodern aesthetic."

ing a story than by seeing and by touching. What kind of learning is surest?"[xlvii]

The conceptual blending in the St. John's Bible tolerates and even encourages moments in which the target and the source conflict with or relate ambiguously to one another. No doubt the medieval and the postmodern periods are typically not paired. In other words, "*Composition* and *completion* [the first two steps in conceptual blending theory] often draw together conceptual structures previously kept apart."[xlviii] Turner continues, "As a consequence, the blend can reveal latent contradictions and coherences between previously separated elements. It can show us problems and lacunae in what we had previously taken for granted." General acceptance of the St. John's Bible and its unique cognitive blend hangs on the following questions: Will emergent contradictions overwhelm emergent insights for the audience at large? If the answer is yes, then this ambitious project will fail; if the answer is no, the St. John's Bible will gain currency and could inspire new interest in this ancient biblical mode.

Still, the unique historical and cultural dialogue occurring in the text and illuminations of the St. John's Bible yields a new synthesis regardless of its success or failure. As Brother Dietrich says:

But the thing is, we're guys. We're living a middle-class lifestyle. We're part of a mainline tradition. So we don't like to wear our faith on our sleeves. We need props. We need vestments and an altar to say sacred words. . . . We need roles to allow people to open up and ask advice. But when you look at the discussions which take place around the St. John's Bible, people allow themselves to say they were moved. People who aren't ordained find themselves talking about Christ. Very practical, down-to-earth people ask 'What about religious art?' . . . The Saint John's Bible is a celebration of the non-linear.[xlix]

The explicit and imminent presence of postmodern inter-subjectivity in the St. John's Bible encourages personal interpretation of texts in innovative and culturally conscious ways.[l] Supported by the textual analysis above, this new synthesis preserves the medium and the Christian message, while generating an iconography, schematization, and typography consistent with a postmodern aesthetic. The resultant intersubjectivity is in many ways ironic from a Catholic perspective, for it encourages the Protestant concept of personal revelation and individual interpretation of scripture. This was a project that began with the determinacy to build a bridge uniting two divergent time periods, two divergent cultures, two divergent traditions. What remains, never present before in either of the two original elements of the blend, is a synthesis of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. It was a true project of materializing the cognitive blend.

ENDNOTES

i. Crane (123)
ii. Turner 1998
iii. Turner 1996
iv. Olson 2003
v. Williamson 1989
vi. Turner 1998
vii. These cognitive spaces need not correspond to specific neuroanatomical spaces.
viii. For more information on the modularity of the mind, see Ellen Spolsky's *Gaps in Nature: Literary Interpretation and the Modular Mind.* Albany: State University of New York Press (1993), p. 19-41, in which she writes a thorough analysis.
ix. Grady 1999
x. Turner 1996 (57-84)

xi. Grady (2)
xii. Grady (3)
xiii. Grady (4)
xiv. Williamson (171)
xv. Olson (25)
xvi. Ibid.
xvii. Ibid.
xviii. Grady (25-26)
xix. Belgrad (81)
xx. Olson (26)
xxi. Ibid.
xxii. Belgrad (111)
xxiii. Olson (31)
xxiv. Olson (40). Cites Wilson, David. *Anglo-Saxon Art.* Woodstock, NY: Overlook (1984).
xxv. Olson (xxi)
xxvi. Williams (5)
xxvii. Olson (46)
xxviii. Reeves 1998
xxix. John 1: 10: "All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being," and, "He was in the world, and the world came into being through him . . . "
xxx. Williamson (182)
xxxi. John 1: 4-5
xxxii. Sink (90)
xxxiii. Also interesting in this particular modernization is the presentation of science as part of religion, a concept the Catholic Church has only recently accepted, though with eagerness.
xxxiv. HubbleSite:
http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/galaxy/spiral/pr1994002c/.
xxxv. Acts 28
xxxvi. Olson (7)
xxxvii. Mass copies are bound books of digital photographs of the original manuscript.
xxxviii. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the Church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."
xxxix. Olson (24)
xl. Williams (2)
xli. Spolsky (16)
xlii. Bottum
xliii. Ibid.
xliv. Olson (18)
xlv. Growing up in central Minnesota, the influence of

Protestant ideals on Catholicism is striking to me, especially in our stark, unadorned modern churches.
xlvi. Calderhead (27)
xlvii. Spolsky (29)
xlviii. Turner (84)
xlix. Calderhead (27)
l. Ironically, this might make the essence of the text more Protestant than Catholic.

REFERENCES

Belgrad, Daniel. *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1998).

Bottum, Joseph. "The Death of Protestant America: A Political Theory of Protestant Mainline." *First Things: The Journal of Religion, Culture, and Public Life* (August/September 2008). http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6254.

Crane, Mary Thomas and Alan Richardson. "Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity." *Mosaic* 32.2 (June 1999).

Grady, Joseph E., Todd Oakley, and Seana Coulson. "Blending and Metaphor." *Metaphor in cognitive linguistics.* Eds. G. Steen and R. Gibbs. Philadelphia: John Benjamins (1999). http://cogweb.ucla.edu/CogSci/Grady_99.html.

Olson, Mary C. *Fair and Varied Forms: Visual Textuality in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts.* Ed. Francis G. Gentry. *Studies in Medieval History and Culture,* a Routledge Series. New York: Routledge (2003).

Reeves, Lauretta et. al. "Words and Meaning: From Primitives to Complex Organization." *Psycholinguistics.* Eds. Jean Berko Gleason and Nan Bernstein Ratner. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers (1998). 157-226.

Turner, Mark. *The Literary Mind.* New York: Oxford University Press (1996).

Turner, Mark and Gilles Fauconnier. "Conceptual Integration Networks." *Cognitive Science* 22.2 (1998): 133-187.

Williams, John. "Introduction." *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible.* Ed. John Williams. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press (1999).

Williamson, Jack. "The Grid: History, Use and Meanings." *Design Discourse: History, Theory, Criticism.* Ed. Victor Margolin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1989). 171-181.

44