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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

WSU Libraries  
Student Research Excellence Award

## Application Cover Sheet

Name Caryssa Gilmore  
Title of Paper/Project Biblical Reading in 17<sup>th</sup> century England

Class standing sophomore  
Major Music Education - Choral endorsement

## Contact information for faculty member supporting this application

Faculty member's name Jesse Spohnholz  
Faculty member's department History

Name of course for which work was completed UH 270  
Department and course number UH 270  
When course was taken Spring 2009

If I win the Award, I agree to contribute materials to an exhibit on my research for display in the WSU Libraries. I also agree that this paper will become the property of The Libraries; winning papers will be added to the WSU Research Exchange (online research and publication repository).

Signature Caryssa Gilmore Date 3/7/10

### Research Strategies and Use of Library Resources

As I began researching for my UH 270 class, I set out to learn how people read and understood the bible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England. While researching for my paper, I first looked in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC) portion of the Terrell Library, so I could obtain a quality primary source to use as the foundation of my research. In the MASC I discovered an old bible published in England during the seventeenth century that contained handwritten notes in the margins and references to other books. During the hours the MASC was open, I read the notes and references to specific biblical passages looking for patterns in the anonymous reader's notes. Once I identified specific topics the note taker focused on and how he interpreted different scriptures, I made a list of the background research I needed to obtain in order to make an argument.

I looked for secondary sources primarily in the Terrell Library on various topics on my list such as bible reading in the sixteenth century, literacy in England, and information about the other books mentioned by the note taker. In the Terrell Library I used Griffin to search by a range of subjects, found several books I needed, and wrote down the call numbers so I could locate them. A few of the books were already checked out, so I browsed Summit's online list and requested that specific titles be sent to WSU's Library for pickup. Similarly, when I was unable to find a book on Summit, I searched for it on WorldCat and requested that title be sent to the WSU campus. I struggled finding any information about the literacy in England during this period in either a book or journal at Terrell Library, so the library workers suggested different ways of wording my searches on Griffin. These books I found provided general information and background on the topics on my list. I next needed to find more specific information to fill in the blanks.

The library's online resources also benefited my research by providing resources with a more narrow view. I used the journal article search on the WSU library website and searched for databases containing historical information. JSTOR and EBSCO, among other databases, allowed me to print entire articles about my topic and search for related materials. Although the online databases provided shorter, more specific sources for my research, the sites provided too many unrelated options. The library workers again assisted me in pinpointing particular words and phrases that would produce the results I desired. They also helped me learn to reproduce the same results on my own through this tutorial process so in the future I would be self-sufficient in the library.

Lastly, I took advantage of the Library's long hours and quiet atmosphere when completing my research paper. I lived in a suite with five other girls and had class until late in the evening. Because the library was open and quiet, I read books for my paper, took notes, and worked on an outline of my paper there without disrupting any one or being distracted. When I finished taking notes on all the resources and put together an outline of my argument, I discovered specific areas that required further attention and went back again to the Terrell library and online databases to find the missing information. All in all, the library provided a number of resources for me to use during my research process and an environment for me to complete that research.

Caryssa Gilmore

UH 270, Professor Spohnholz

April 24, 2009

### Biblical Reading in Seventeenth-Century England

In the last thirty years, historians have studied how people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries read the Bible primarily by interpreting the written works of prominent theologians. One good example is the overview, *The Study and Use of the Bible*, in which John Rogerson, Christopher Rowland, and Barbabas Linder offer a general view of Christianity from the first to the twentieth century. They emphasize the ways that theologians shaped how people used the Bible. This tendency is just as true for specific studies as well. John R. Knott's book *The Sword of the Spirit*, for example looks at Puritan beliefs by examining the published works of leading theologians. Similarly, Gerard Reedy explores the Anglican theologians' reliance on reason in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through his book, *The Bible and Reason*. Although these historians and others have demonstrated how theologians studied and read the Bible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they focus solely on books and pamphlets published by theologians and intended for public use. Few historians, however, have researched how lay people actually read the Bible itself. Because lay people usually read the Bible in the privacy of their home, individuals drew their own conclusions about Scripture and possessed unique interpretations. Their interpretations of Scripture sometimes aligned with Protestant beliefs and sometimes did not. In a Bible published in 1676, an anonymous English reader made annotations that provide an excellent example of the kinds of individual conclusions people could come to in private reading.

In a Bible published in 1676, an anonymous, English reader in London wrote a spiritual diary within the pages of his King James Version of the Bible. Although the Bible was published in 1676, the books the anonymous man used place his writing somewhere after 1762, since that is the latest date of any published book he referenced. This unique copy of the King James Bible, located in the Manuscript Archive at Washington State University, is split into two volumes with blank pages located in-between each page of the Bible. The Englishman rebound the 1676 Bible into a book of larger dimensions to allow ample space for his annotations about his observations of different scriptural passages. Although his spiritual journal only contained his personal perspective about Scripture, the large quantity of his writings provide a deep insight into the intent with which someone from the seventeenth century read the Bible. This example of the reliance on Scripture itself provides a distinctive look at the reading and understanding of the Bible during the eighteenth century that previous historians have failed to explore. The anonymous English reader's annotations on the blank, interleaved pages of the Bible generally conform to ministered Protestant theology of seventeenth and eighteenth-century England. At the same time, his interpretations demonstrate his willingness to reveal his private opinion. For example, he disagreed with some biblical passages or their accepted interpretation. The individualism and literacy during this time period demonstrate the context in which the Englishman made his annotations.

As the seventeenth century progressed, people increasingly abandoned former concepts about reputation and honor as they moved toward an individualistic private life. Before this time period, people most often socialized outside their home and rarely found time alone. Even when individuals were at home, their families surrounded them and people had no place inside the home to find solitude. Every time someone left home, he or she was accompanied by several

other people.<sup>1</sup> For example, when a young woman left the house, she needed a chaperone to look out for her well-being. Similarly, when a married man left the house, he brought with him either his family or business partners. As the seventeenth century drew on, however, people began to value privacy more and developed individual identities.<sup>2</sup> Although people before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also possessed personal identities, their image most often matched other peoples' beliefs, values, and opinions because their identities resulted from the words of prominent theologians and English clergy. After the seventeenth century, however, increasing opportunities for privacy provided people with the opportunity to cultivate independent thoughts and develop unique identities. New architectural developments in the home during the seventeenth century allowed for more privacy even within the domestic sphere, whereas before, even within the privacy of the home, individuals were surrounded by others and had no place to retreat. Architects built houses with more places where individuals could find solitude and retreat from the rest of the household. Changes to the structure of houses included individual bedrooms, private parlors, and study rooms.<sup>3</sup> Because individuals developed a sense of self separate from society with their newfound places of isolation within the home, they often possessed two separate identities: the one they revealed to the public and the one they cultivated in private, meaning the image individuals revealed to the public did not always match the private one.<sup>4</sup> Individuals had discrepancies between their private and public identities because their private selves would not always follow the ideas of the English church leaders. The private self included the individual's thoughts, beliefs, and opinions. Revealing their individualistic private selves to

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<sup>1</sup> Georges Duby, "Solitude: Eleventh to Thirteenth Century," *A History of Private Life*, (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987-1999), 509.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Finch, "Sacred and Secular Spheres: Commemoration and the 'Practice of Privacy' in Reformation England," *Archäologie der Reformation: Studien zu den Auswirkungen des Konfessionswechsels auf die Materielle Kultur* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2007), 195.

<sup>3</sup> Finch, "Sacred and Secular Spheres," 203.

<sup>4</sup> Cecile M. Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1999), 133.

the public might have revealed differences between individuals and the English Protestant church leaders. Along with the new privacy and individual self, people also began to develop an individual spirituality. Puritans and Anglicans alike reverted back to the method of the early church where officials relied on “plain” and “rational” interpretation of the Bible, even though they came to different conclusions about those interpretations.<sup>5</sup>

In their quest for the literal interpretation of Scripture, most English Protestants believed the perfection of Scripture made it undisputable and unarguable.<sup>6</sup> They believed that individuals could not question any part of the Bible because God wrote His words perfectly and helped the church officials grasp the true meaning. By looking at Scripture in such a plain and simple way, English Protestant leaders, Puritans and high Anglicans alike, believed God would reveal Scripture’s true meanings to the people reading the Bible and disprove false hypotheses.<sup>7</sup>

However, the church leaders ran into a problem. What was the actual literal interpretation of Scripture? If Protestant officials left the literal interpretation up to the individual lay members of the church, people could develop separate ideas about the meaning of the Bible and confirm the church’s distrust of the lay congregations’ reading abilities. For example, rather than allowing individualism through unique interpretation, the clergy instructed English churches in a literal understanding of the Bible. Their version of an unembellished interpretation meant an interpretation that exactly followed the accepted doctrine of their faith and which most English church leaders agreed upon.<sup>8</sup> In the face of the English agreement upon the Bible’s importance, the rising literacy of the time provided challenges for these efforts to unite biblical interpretation.

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<sup>5</sup> John R. Knott, Jr, *The Sword of the Spirit* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5-14.

<sup>6</sup> Gerard Reedy, S.J, *The Bible and Reason* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 16.

<sup>7</sup> Reedy, *The Bible and Reason*, 97.

<sup>8</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 22.

Throughout the seventeenth century, literacy grew substantially. Early in the seventeenth century, private reading and writing was limited to very few people. Church leaders were suspicious of private people because of the individualistic thinking and unique ideas that could arise.<sup>9</sup> Protestant leaders generally trusted the upper class more because they received higher education and possessed more status in society. The church officials' distrust of people's privacy mirrored the clerical distrust of private reading. As the seventeenth century drew on, however, the middle class in England grew, and so did literacy rates overall and the time individuals allotted to private reading and writing.<sup>10</sup> By the eighteenth century, people of all reading skill levels shared a common devotion to private study of the Bible.<sup>11</sup> Because of this, people from every part of society increasingly developed individual ideas about the meaning of Scripture. Personal writing also helped shape individual biblical views. As reading increased in England, so did people's ability to write, although learning to read and write often depended on the level of education a person received, and whether or not writing assisted the individual in occupational endeavors.<sup>12</sup> As the ability of individuals to write increased throughout the seventeenth century, many people, most commonly educated elites, began writing in diaries to record their spiritual growth. So, although the rise in literacy and writing characterized social class, most documented spiritual journals were still limited to the upper class, because of the more extensive education and greater amount of time they could set aside from the family. This is most likely the social status into which the anonymous English reader fits.

Out of the select few in comfortable financial situations who chose to document daily spiritual readings, few women took hold of the opportunity. Far fewer women than men kept

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<sup>9</sup> Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print*, 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print*, 64.

<sup>11</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 98.

<sup>12</sup> Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print*, 44.

spiritual diaries due to their exclusion from formal education.<sup>13</sup> As a result, women developed reading and writing skills to a far lesser degree than men.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, as shown by Elaine McKay, even when women did receive an education and possessed reading and writing skills, few kept personal written records, because their duty was to raise healthy children and care for and comfort their husbands, not to set aside time for private reading and writing.<sup>15</sup> However, even though there were far fewer diaries. Both men and women alike documented their personal thoughts and emotions on paper in privacy because government officials, church leaders, or other members of the community would find many of an individual's inner opinions "unusual" and "unseemingly."<sup>16</sup> Because the quantity of male writers was far greater, the anonymous English reader was most likely male.

The widespread Protestant optimism that a united literal analysis of the Bible could be achieved dwindled as people began to read the Bible outside the church because individuals lacked interpretive agreement.<sup>17</sup> Because people more frequently read Scriptures in privacy, they read apart from the influence of their clergy. At the same time, people began to develop their own interpretation of the Bible. The readers no longer based their spiritual beliefs only on the sermons and public prayers presented by officials in the established Protestant churches, but also on the readers' own study of Scripture.<sup>18</sup> As people read the Bible, they sought not "verbatim reproduction" of the Scriptures, but their own explanation, which included both agreements and disagreements with accepted English Protestant theology.<sup>19</sup> But although church officials

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<sup>13</sup> Elaine McKay, "English Diarists: Gender, Geography, and occupation, 1500-1700," *History* 90 (2005), 199

<sup>14</sup> Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> McKay, "English Diarists," 194.

<sup>16</sup> McKay, "English Diarists," 195.

<sup>17</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 113.

<sup>18</sup> Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print*, 41.

<sup>19</sup> Paul J. Griffiths, "Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 49.



worried about individual interpretation conflicting with authorized English Protestant theology, they were powerless to diminish the people's right to "pass public ceremony, to read and pray outside the community of believers" and to record thoughts about scriptural text.<sup>20</sup> Individuals developed a stronger sense of individual spirituality, and religious reading rose, so people began documenting their spiritual journeys through personal private writing. The anonymous English reader's annotations in the 1676 Bible provide an example of such a spiritual diary, in which the anonymous reader documented both agreements and disagreements with the English church leaders' interpretations of the Bible.

Many of the anonymous English reader's annotations in his spiritual diary align with the Protestant theology that clergy preached in English churches. For example, the Englishman's focus on mercy conformed to the Protestant theology during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As early as the sixteenth century, prominent Protestant theologians emphasized the "gracious" nature of God's mercy toward his people. Clergy encouraged people to be wary of forgiveness through repentance and instead to rely on God to bestow his mercy and salvation.<sup>21</sup> An English minister named Thomas Hooker demonstrated this clerical focus on mercy in his book *The Applications of Redemption* published in 1659. Hooker believed God's mercy "exceeds all [human] wants," and God bestows mercy in the midst of people's "weakness" and "infirmities."<sup>22</sup> In a similar manner to theologians like Hooker, the anonymous reader commented about God's mercy. The Englishman first revealed his concentration on God's mercy in his annotation in reference to Genesis 9:13, the passage that describes the time after the great flood subsided when God had placed a rainbow in the sky as a reminder of His promise to never destroy the world by water again. The Englishman viewed the "colours" of the rainbow as

<sup>20</sup> Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print*, 24-25.

<sup>21</sup> Berndt Hamm, "How Innovative Was the Reformation," *Archaologie der Reformation*, 34.

<sup>22</sup> As cited in Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 85.

“evident proof” of God’s mercy and grace with regards to all of humanity.<sup>23</sup> The anonymous reader pointed out God’s mercy again in Genesis 16:16 when he referred to the birth of Ishmael to Abram in his old age. The reader claimed, “There is a voice in affliction which cries to the mercy of God.”<sup>24</sup> In Exodus 26:36, God instructed Moses to tell his people how to build His tabernacle. The English reader viewed the details of the tabernacle curtains as an “emblematic” example of God’s “covenanted mercies.” The verse demonstrated to the reader God’s promise of safety and security for His people.<sup>25</sup> Each example from the Englishman’s writing demonstrates his agreement with the Protestant officials’ trust in God’s mercy since both the English reader and the Protestant clergy focused on the need of God’s mercy for safety and salvation.

The anonymous diarist also focused on the salvation of mankind through Christ’s suffering. The English church authorities at the time believed the Bible contained the steps to salvation within it.<sup>26</sup> The clergy believed that because Jesus suffered and died, men could receive salvation. The English people of every class during the eighteenth century saw examples of Christ’s suffering daily through sculptures, sermons, and even artwork, causing them to focus on Christ and turn to him for salvation even during their everyday lives.<sup>27</sup> In William Perkin’s book, *The Arte of Prophecyng*, published in 1592, he demonstrated the English Protestant focus on Jesus’ suffering. The English theologian said Jesus “[offered] up himself a sacrifice for the sinnes of the faithfull.”<sup>28</sup> The anonymous English reader possessed a similar focus in his annotations. The Englishman noticed that God “sanctified” every covenant He made, such as His covenant with Moses in Exodus 24:8, through spilled blood. He compared the bull’s shedding of

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<sup>23</sup> King James Bible, vol.1, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old Testament*, (London: Printed by Christopher Parker, 1676), WSU Masc Bs187 1676.L65, Notes on Genesis 9:13

<sup>24</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Genesis 16:16

<sup>25</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Exodus 26:36

<sup>26</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 138.

<sup>27</sup> Knott, *The Sword of the Spirit*, 13.

<sup>28</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 18.

blood, which Moses used to confirm his covenant with God, to the blood Christ shed to offer “redemption” to mankind.<sup>29</sup> He believed that Christ’s suffering connected directly to man’s salvation, which aligned with common Protestant belief. In Exodus 30: 15, when God directed his people about proper tithing, the English annotator connects the passage to the “atonement” of all man’s sin through Christ who was “slain.”<sup>30</sup> The anonymous reader connected Christ’s suffering to that of Aaron’s in Numbers 18:20, when the Lord denied Aaron a worldly inheritance and instead promised him wealth in heaven.<sup>31</sup> The Englishman demonstrated a reverence and respect for Christ’s suffering through the positive references and connections he made in his writing, similar to major theologians’ focus on people’s need of Christ for redemption.

Belief in God’s mercy and Christ’s suffering were common not just to the English Protestants in the eighteenth century, but to most Christian faiths. Combining similar passages from the Bible to create clarity was more unique to the English Protestant belief. Many Protestant officials believed that because God wrote Scripture in such a perfect manner, verses from different parts of the Bible “clarify each other.”<sup>32</sup> For example, Thomas Shepard, an English minister, strung together many different passages in order to express what he believed was the true meaning of the verses. In one of his unnamed sermons in the late seventeenth century that examined the Jewish hope for the coming messiah, Shepard used John 14:2-3, John 17:23-24, Matthew 25:31, and 1 Peter 1:3 to write his sermon. The use of Scripture to clarify meanings of other verses and to develop individual ideas occurred frequently in spiritual diary writing because religious readers re-read the same passages multiple times. They could therefore recall

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<sup>29</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Exodus 24:8

<sup>30</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, notes on Exodus 30:15

<sup>31</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Numbers 18:20

<sup>32</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 24.

scripture relatively easily and compare multiple passages of the text.<sup>33</sup> The anonymous Englishman's annotations within the Bible conform to most Protestant theologians' belief that different passages in Scripture worked together in unity. For instance, the English writer frequently pointed out the resemblance between Christ and Moses. In Exodus 3:5, God used Moses to "Deliver" Israel from the "bondage" of the Egyptians, much like how God sent Christ to save humanity from the burden of sin.<sup>34</sup> The Englishman made another connection between Moses and Christ in Numbers 20:9, when at God's command, Moses struck a rock so he could provide his people with water. Many theologians of the time believed that "blood" poured from the rock before the water when Moses "smote" it. Blood also poured from the crucified Christ when the soldier struck him in the side with a spear.<sup>35</sup> The Englishman's connection of two figures from the Bible not even present in the same part of the Bible demonstrates his similarity to the Protestant leaders' reliance on different passages of the Bible to bring transparency to the meaning of the text.

The anonymous man referenced similarities between specific verses as well as specific figures in the Bible. The English reader compared Exodus 17:16 to Psalm 75:9 because both passages referenced the "wrath of God" toward the Amalekites when different nations waged war against them.<sup>36</sup> The English diarist noticed how Christ established himself as "the only Door" to heaven in both Leviticus 17:4 and John 10.<sup>37</sup> In Judges 5:8, the Canaanites restricted the Israelites from using iron to "[till] their grounds", which resembled the Philistines' refusal to let the Israelites commit the same act in 1 Samuel 13:9.<sup>38</sup> Each example of the anonymous

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<sup>33</sup> DUBY, *History of Private Life*, 46.

<sup>34</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Exodus 3:5

<sup>35</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Numbers 20:9

<sup>36</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Exodus 17:16

<sup>37</sup> King James Bible, vol 1, Notes on Leviticus 17:4

<sup>38</sup> King James Bible, vol 1, Notes on Judges 5:8

reader's connection between different scriptural passages demonstrates his use and reordering of the Scriptures to make his own interpretations.

In the anonymous reader's annotations, he referenced several other books written during the time period to draw ideas from and to help articulate his own thoughts. As he used these books other than the Bible to cultivate his thoughts toward Scripture, he moved away from accepted Protestant methods of the study of the Bible. While English clergy encouraged sole reliance on Scripture to develop interpretations of the Bible, the anonymous English reader used the Bible itself, but also several other sources. In the seventeenth century, private writers often referenced numerous other published works in their writing to help clarify their thoughts, including spiritual books and biblical dictionaries.<sup>39</sup> In this case, the English writer often referenced a book he called "Bryant's Mythology," or more properly, *An Analysis of Ancient Mythology* by Jacob Bryant. In his book, which was published in the mid seventeenth century, Jacob Bryant explored the connection between ancient mythology and the stories from the Bible. By comparing Greek and Roman myths, and even analyzing myths about the Bible itself, Bryant sought to show that all mythology derived from factual events.<sup>40</sup> The anonymous English reader referenced this text in Genesis 6:14 when Noah built the ark out of gopher wood. As drawn from the *Mythology*, gopher wood originated from the "Island of Cupher."<sup>41</sup> The anonymous writer's connected the island and gopher wood because of his study of the *Mythology*, a book other than the Bible. He referenced the book again in Joshua 8:3 when he connected Baal, a false God, to the people descended from Noah. Many of the people who had fallen away from God viewed the "Arkite God," Baal, as an idol worthy or worship. His knowledge about Baal originated not from Scripture itself, but from the book by Bryant. His constant reference to this book and others

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<sup>39</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 33.

<sup>40</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., s.v. "Bryant, Jacob."

<sup>41</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Genesis 6:14

demonstrates his use of published works to develop his individual thoughts and ideas, which was in clear contradiction to the Protestant practice of solely relying on Scripture.

The anonymous Englishman also commonly referenced “Parkhurst’s Hebrew Lexcion.” This book, formally called *A Hebrew and English Lexicon without Points*, by John Parkhurst, contains a search for the true significance of scripture, meaning Parkhurst looked at original Hebrew to make conclusions about his interpretations of the Bible. In this book, also published in the mid-seventeenth century, Parkhurst uses literature and stories from his travels, as well as the original Hebrew for the Bible, to develop his ideas.<sup>42</sup> During the seventeenth century, many Protestants learned Greek and Hebrew so they would be versed in the original language of the Bible, and the English reader can be counted among them.<sup>43</sup> With the aid of the Greek and Hebrew languages, lay people could examine Scriptural passages with the original meaning and formulate their own interpretations of the text.<sup>44</sup> Because they were able to reference back to the original meaning of words in Scripture, people sometimes found discrepancies between the written text and the actual intended meaning. In Joshua 2:10, the Englishmen discovered Hebrew words for the Red Sea which Moses parted literally translated to “the weedy sea<sup>45</sup>.” Based on what he read in Parkhurst’s book, the English reader developed interpretations of scripture that differed from the accepted Protestant translation of the Bible. Similarly, when the people in Judges 9:45 sowed the ground with salt to reverse the unfertilized land, the anonymous writer found that according to the original Hebrew, “salt land is synonomous with a Baran Land.”<sup>46</sup> He

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<sup>42</sup> Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., s.v. “Parkhurst, John.”

<sup>43</sup> Griffiths, “Religious Reading,” 149.

<sup>44</sup> Gordis, *Opening Scripture*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> King James Bible, vol. 1, Notes on Joshua 2:10

<sup>46</sup> King James Bible, Notes on Judges 9:45

believed the Bible contained some faulty information, which directly conflicted with most English Protestant clergy's belief that the Bible was perfect and undisputable.<sup>47</sup>

As the anonymous writer continued his spiritual diary, he discovered more discrepancies in scriptural text as he relied on his own deduction skills as well as his referenced books. The English reader's annotations demonstrate this, for instance when he commented on Chronicles 34:36. He believed the words "my desire" in the verse conflicted with the original Hebrew, which he thought should have translated to "my Father."<sup>48</sup> The Englishman also asserted that the Children of Uz in Genesis 10:21 and not the Children of Eber contained the "Holy Line," as another published book he referenced mentioned.<sup>49</sup> In 2 Samuel 15:31-32, the diarist discovered a blatant error in the dates about the peace between Asa, Judah's King, and Baasha, Israel's King, during Asa's reign. 2 Samuel said Asa and Baasha remained peaceful throughout Asa's entire reign, but 2 Chronicles 15 said there was no war up until the "five and thirtieth year of Asa." All of the differences in text the Englishman discovered demonstrate his independent and individualistic thinking during his spiritual growth, and his differences from the English clergy's theology during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The anonymous reader's annotations contained many such differences from the English clergy, both the Anglican and Puritan interpretations, because he failed to follow the English Protestant clergy's reliance on Scripture alone when he used other books to help develop his own thoughts and opinions about Scripture. This provides just one example of the individualism that was on the rise during the eighteenth century. Although people could have been developing individualism before this time period, the increasing literacy allowed people to express individualism in forms people can study today. Before, if people did express individualism, they

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<sup>47</sup> Gerard, *The Bible and Reason*, 16.

<sup>48</sup> King James Bible, Notes on 2Chronicles 34:36

<sup>49</sup> King James Bible, Notes on Genesis 10:21

were not remembered because their thoughts and opinions lacked documentation. In the eighteenth century, however, people wrote out ideas in forms that could be studied today.

Whether privacy allowed for the new expression of individualism or just the documentation of it, the eighteenth century's rise in personal privacy led to greater differentiation between personal identities and the influence of English churches.



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**WSU Libraries Student Research Excellence Award**

**Faculty/Instructor Letter of Support Cover Sheet**

**Faculty/Instructor Name** Jesse Spohnholtz  
**Date** 4 March 2010  
**Department** History  
**Student name** Caryssa Gilmore

Please indicate on a signed attached sheet your comments regarding how this student's work meets the prize criteria. The panel is especially interested in your assessment of the originality and depth of this work, and the level of self-sufficiency demonstrated by this student in pursuing research.

Deadline for this letter of support is **March, 12 2010**. You may give your letter to the student for inclusion in his/her packet, or you may send it in campus mail to Beth Blakesley, 5610. You may email the letter to [elindsay@wsu.edu](mailto:elindsay@wsu.edu) to meet the deadline, but we will need a signed hard copy in addition to the electronic copy.

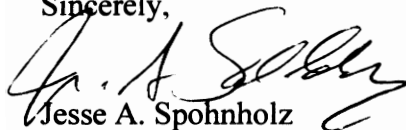
March 4, 2010

Dear Members of the Student Research Excellence Award Committee,

I am writing to recommend Caryssa Gilmore for the 2010 WSU Libraries Student Research Excellence Award. Ms. Gilmore was in my Honor's College Freshmen History Seminar at Washington State University in the spring of 2009. The intensive and demanding seminar requires that students produce an independent research topic. Not only did she produce one of the three strongest research essays, but her determination, interest, positive energy, and personal drive for self-improvement made her a joy to work so closely with. I would rate her in the top 5% of all WSU freshmen in terms of intellectual ability, and in the top 1% in terms of her passion for learning. In short, she is ideal type of student any college professor would hope teach.

Ms. Gilmore's research paper was titled "Biblical Reading in Seventeenth-Century England." Her research entailed reading the marginal notes inscribed inside a seventeenth-century English Bible held in the Holland and Terrell Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections. Her goal was to understand how men and women in that era read books and understood religion. In her research, she developed an understanding of scholarly approaches to this subject and developed an independent and imaginative conclusion based on many hours in MASC deciphering the seventeenth-century handwritten notes of anonymous reader. She concluded that the reading process itself provided tools for individuals to critique standard understandings of their Christian faith, even as they had greater opportunities to internalize other widely-accepted interpretations of the Bible. This project was one of the most sophisticated and complex among these freshmen-level research papers. I have encouraged her to continue work on this project for her Honor's Senior Thesis project. I do not casually make this opportunity available to my students. I only supervise those projects that offer genuinely compelling research that could prepare them for graduate school or other advanced training. This the type of library research in the humanities that the WSU's libraries and the university as a whole should be proud to recognize and encourage.

Sincerely,

  
Jesse A. Spohnholz

Assistant Professor of History  
Washington State University.