

Perhaps the major limitation of Taylor's remarkable text is where and how he locates the source of evil in today's world. One must ask whether in an increasingly volatile and conflict-ridden globe with previously subordinated and/or colonized groups vying for ideological space the struggle is solely against the logic of empire. Recent texts such as Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*, Benjamin Barber's *Jihad versus McWorld*, Mark Jürgensmeyer's *Terror in the Mind of God*, Robert Jay Lipton's *Destroying the World to Save It*, Lee Griffiths' *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God*, and the recent events circa September 11, point to a broad and variegated stream of corporate and systemic evils around the world, most of them tied to religious systems. As the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and the history of the twentieth century reveal, no cultural, ethnic, or political identity is exempt from expressions of will-to-power that so easily contravene the insecurity and estrangement that so readily pervade group consciousness. The best we can hope for is the creation of context and problem-specific public discursive and dialogic spaces across the new global landscape.

What is refreshing about Taylor's work is not simply his potent critique of interlocking systems of global domination, his exposure of the moral pretentiousness of mainstream Christians, his strident observations of the grinding inertia within Christendom, and his disdain for the obscurantist politics of revolutionaries. Rather, it is his perceptiveness in accenting the movement of God on the margins of society within the forgotten interstices of "civilization." Such work reflects a growing willingness among North American religious scholars to highlight the active spirituality of religious identities and not simply their creedal postulates. By developing a praxis-oriented theology *within* history and *through* culture, Taylor develops a mode of discourse that critically affirms and appreciates the cultural and spiritual capital of subaltern identities as they form communities of reform and resistance. This makes his work a healthy example of the attempt to forge a balance for Christianity between its cognitive ideals and its myriad concrete expressions, a worthy response to Kierkegaard.

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Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. x+228 pp. Paper, \$14.00.

While teaching students how to write from an academic perspective in any field is never easy, it can be especially difficult in the field of Religious Studies because the neophyte must learn to write from a nonconfessional perspective. This has been an almost annual challenge at the University of North Carolina with freshmen who enroll in the Religious Studies Link through the Writing Across the Curriculum Program—a dual enrollment in English Composition 12 and Introduction to New Testament Literature. The goal of the composition section of the link is to help students take what they have learned in their NT course and write specifically for religious studies. Fortunately, this year's pedagogical task was made much easier with the publication of Vyhmeister's book *Quality Research Papers*, which was the required text for the twenty-three freshmen enrolled in my

Spring 2002 section. While my comments in this review will be based on my classroom experience with *Quality Research Papers*, it should be noted that the majority of my students were not Religious Studies majors.

Unlike many authors on religious writing, Vyhmeister, a former editor and seminary professor at Andrews University, does not concentrate on bibliography and sources. Rather, she deals with the fundamental aspects of research, organization, and form that are the crux of writing. The 21 chapters are divided into three sections. The first 12 comprise the main part of the book. This section begins with a definition of what research is and is not, and then presents the various steps of how research is done. *Quality Research Papers* covers everything from how to find sources, choose a topic, plan research, take notes, and prepare bibliographies. It even includes detailed information on how to organize and properly format a paper. With the exception of the bibliographical examples taken from the field of religious studies, these opening chapters contain helpful information for any undergraduate or graduate student, regardless of his or her academic area.

The second section, chapters 13 through 17, focuses on the steps for more specialized types of research: how to do biblical exegesis, descriptive research, program development, and case studies. The final section is even more specialized for graduate students in that it provides valuable information about the use of statistics, tables, and graphs, and how to write theses, dissertations, and D.Min. projects. In addition, *Quality Research Papers* has a select bibliography, a subject index, and four appendices that deal with APA Citation Style, Transliteration of Biblical Languages, Common Abbreviations, and Tips for the Typist.

While the primary strength of *Quality Research Papers* is its treasure trove of information on the how-to's of research and writing, its value is augmented by clarity of presentation. In addition to being well-written, the book is laid out in a fashion that makes its information easily accessible. Clear, visible levels of headings allow the reader to quickly see how each chapter topic is divided and subdivided, in order to locate the information most needed. Also, while each of the first twelve chapters are related, their material is presented in such a way that the chapters do not have to be followed sequentially. This, along with references to other helpful materials for writers, allows the book to function as a reference tool. Clarity is further strengthened by an abundance of helpful examples distributed throughout the book. My students found the numerous samples of bibliographical entries and the eight-page example of a properly formatted research paper to be particularly helpful.

While *Quality Research Papers* has no major weaknesses, it could be improved if the following areas were enhanced. First, the list of abbreviations on p. 67 would be more useful to departments of religion and divinity schools if it were not limited to the Protestant biblical canon, but also included the deuterocanonical books and other sources such as the Apostolic Fathers, Philo, Josephus, and the Nag Hammadi texts. Instead of being listed at the end of the chapter on footnotes, this expanded list of abbreviations would be more useful if it were included as an additional appendix. The bibliographical examples could also be strengthened if they included similar diversity of religious material. Second, while the section on library resources was helpful, I was surprised at the cursory explanation of the

ATLA Index. Since ATLA is a "veritable gold mine of information" (12) for the student of religion, I would have liked to see this section more fully elaborated, perhaps even with examples from ATLA's new Windows-based interface. The book has a few typographical errors, of which the most serious is the abbreviation "Zac" instead of "Zech" for Zechariah (67). The main chapter on formatting correctly describes a block quotation as "usually two sentences of eight lines or more" (105), but Appendix D, "Tips for the Typist," given an older rule ("one sentence and four lines") that should be updated (220). Of more minor significance are the typos "exudes" for "exodus" (46), "hear" instead of "heart," and "basies" instead of "biases" (95).

These minor points, however, should not detract from the fact that *Quality Research Papers* fills a void, providing a much-needed research and writing resource for both undergraduate and graduate students of religion and theology. Therefore, I would recommend that it become a required text for any seminary or religion department research/writing course. The clear information on the research process in the first twelve chapters also makes *Quality Research Papers* a valuable resource for students in other fields. The vast majority of my students planned to retain it for use with other classes. *Quality Research Papers* has become an indispensable text that I plan to continue using for my composition course in the future.

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Williams, Michael James. *Deception in Genesis: An Investigation into the Morality of a Unique Biblical Phenomenon*, Studies in Biblical Literature, vol. 32. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. xviii + 252 pp. Hardcover, \$60.95.

This insightful study deals with a controversial topic that has not formerly been thoroughly analyzed. It is a comprehensive treatment of the phenomenon of deception in the book of Genesis, where this factor occurs surprisingly often. The writer handles with profound skill and erudition the unusual feature that in this Hebrew book deception is sometimes treated positively.

Williams's book is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter presents an exhaustive catalogue of deception events in Genesis, where this phenomenon occurs in fifteen passages. In chapter 2, each incident is carefully analyzed and characterized, and three of these events are positively evaluated (Gen 38:1-26; 42:7-28; and 44:1-34). Chapter 3 introduces comparative biblical data (Prophetic Literature and Writings) into the picture. William's brings biblical material about deception into dialogue with later Jewish tradition (chap. 4), ancient Near Eastern parallels (chap. 5), and world folklore literature (chap. 6). The author stresses that all extrabiblical stories about deception are always negative (173), and admits that the folklore material in particular is not specific enough to make mature comparative evaluations (212). In chapter 7, Williams draws his final conclusions. The book ends with an 18-page bibliography and a subject index.

Crucial for the present study is a definition of deception. Williams offers the following description, which governs his treatment of the topic: "Deception takes place when an agent intentionally distorts, withholds, or otherwise manipulates information reaching some person(s) in order to stimulate in the person(s) a belief