


## Commentary

# Interpreting Literary Ecologies and Extending Spheres of Concern: A Note on Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* for Eco-Theology

Jolyon G. R. Pruszinski 

Department of Religion, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544, USA; jolyonp@princeton.edu

**Abstract:** This critical note addresses two key features of eco-theology with regard to future prospect: that literary analysis is an important mode of eco-theological work and that an important function of eco-theology is to expand readers' spheres of concern to include even the most remote of global environmental issues. Working from Tweed's contention in *Crossing and Dwelling* that a central function of religion is the process of making homes, the note emphasizes the home as the primary sphere of concern and the need for eco-theological work to extend the concern naturally associated with the private home to the broadest possible sphere: the whole earth as conceived as human home. As pertaining to literary-analytical resources for this eco-theological endeavor, the note highlights the importance of Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. Bachelard's work offers a compelling exploration of the psychological connection between the most intimate spheres of concern (the private home) and the most extended ones (the broader world). Broader eco-theological engagement with his work will employ resources both for understanding relations between the relative scales of human ecology and for expanding spheres of concern, particularly in extending that concern often reserved for the most intimate ecological sphere to the most expansive.



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## 1. Eco-Theology and Expanded Spheres of Concern

Eco-theology, as currently conceived, involves a diverse set of interests and a variety of modes of inquiry.<sup>1</sup> Among the interests that appear repeatedly in the work of those engaged in eco-theology is the interest to support a broadened sphere of concern among readers beyond their natural, more private, or parochial spheres of concern, to include a larger sphere which extends to include the entire earth, its people, and ecosystems.<sup>2</sup> Embedded in this idea is the conviction that the responsibility humans more readily feel for their proximate home, or their intimate ecosystem, weakens with distance. In spite of scientific evidence of the interconnectedness of various far-flung environments, and the repercussions of seemingly local choices that redound across remote geographies, humans seem to persist in their concern for the apparently immediate and proximate at the expense of concern for the apparently removed or distant.

This type of observation has long been made in various spheres of inquiry, particularly in geographically-interested fields, perhaps most famously in social-science circles in which the phenomenon is called the "Gravity model" (Reilly 1931).<sup>3</sup> Suffice to say, the observation that for humans the primary sphere of concern is the most proximate and that more peripheral spheres receive more marginal attention is not new. In eco-theological discourse, Michael Northcott suggests as much with his discussions of "parochial ecology" (Northcott 2015).

This dynamic takes on particular importance in the study of religion, especially when considering Thomas Tweed's thesis from his critical-geographical study of religion, *Crossing and Dwelling* (Tweed 2006). If, as he suggests, religion amounts to a kind of

home-making,<sup>4</sup> and he is not the only scholar to connect religion closely with “dwelling” (e.g., [Pogue Harrison 2003](#); [Barker 2010](#); [Coloe 2007](#); [Elliot 1981](#); [Meeks 2003](#); [Moxnes 2003](#); [Osiek et al. 2006](#); [Trainor 2001](#); [Pruszinski 2021b](#)),<sup>5</sup> then one’s conception of home matters for how widely one conceives of one’s theologically-informed spheres of concern. A narrowly conceived theological understanding of home necessarily results in a narrower sphere of concern, perhaps limited to the nuclear family or an insular community. A more broadly conceived understanding, conversely, results in a broader sphere of concern, perhaps extended as far as including non-human living things, distant ecosystems, the whole earth, or even extra-terrestrial life and worlds. It would seem then that a persistent eco-theological concern regarding the extension of spheres of concern necessarily implicates the human understanding of “home”, which should of course be clear to anyone who considers the etymology of the word “ecology”.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Eco-Theology and the Importance of Literature

A further recurring theme suggested by much eco-theological work is that literature plays a significant role in shaping eco-theological convictions.<sup>7</sup> This theme is paired with an attendant insistence that literary analysis plays an important role in theorizing eco-theology.<sup>8</sup> If one considers religious texts to be “literature”, then of course this is an obvious conceit. However, plenty of scholars have insisted on the inclusion of literature that is neither scriptural, nor even overtly theological, as germane to the eco-theological endeavor. Suzanne Keen’s *Empathy and the Novel* ([Keen 2007](#)) is certainly among the texts which suggest a significant role for literature in moral formation, the development of empathy, and the extension of spheres of concern.

Taken together, these persistent eco-theological interests (literary analysis as an important resource for theorizing eco-theology and the necessity of the extension of spheres of concern to the widest possible scope)<sup>9</sup> point to the potentially significant and, as yet untapped, value of Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*<sup>10</sup> for eco-theology.

## 3. Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*

Gaston Bachelard was a French philosopher of the twentieth century and a key figure in the development of French postmodern critical theories of space. *The Poetics of Space* ([Bachelard 1994](#))<sup>11</sup> is a careful and insightful literary analysis of the psychologies of intimate space and has been influential in the fields of theory, literature, and architecture. It has not yet been influential in the fields of religious or biblical studies, only marginally influential in anglosphere theology (e.g., [Sheldrake 2001](#), pp. 7–10; [Wynn 2009](#), pp. 101–12ff.), and not at all employed in English language eco-theology as self-consciously practiced.<sup>12</sup> This state of affairs is unfortunate and hopefully will soon be remedied.

If Thomas Tweed’s observations regarding the crucial role religion plays in homemaking are to be considered seriously, then a careful analysis of the psychologies of “home” as undertaken by Bachelard should likewise be considered crucial for theology generally and eco-theology specifically. Especially as regards the expressly spatial concerns of eco-theology pertaining to cosmology, environmental influences, externalization of consequences, globalization, and the details of human ecology itself, the relevance of attention to spatial theory generally, and *Poetics* specifically, should be clear. Practitioners of an academic sub-discipline so ostensibly interested in “ecology” will no doubt see the benefit of consideration of the psychologies of the intimate human “ecology”, but a brief consideration of some of these benefits for the sake of the skeptical will follow.

## 4. Hermeneutical Utility of *The Poetics of Space*

Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* has significant utility for the literary analyses germane to the eco-theological work for at least four reasons beyond the bare fact that his work is specifically oriented around literary analysis. Among these reasons are that (1) all texts are the products of experiences of protected rest (dwelling); (2) texts particularly interested in how humans understand space, dwelling, and ecology are the special purview

of Bachelard's analysis; (3) eco-theological literary analysis requires attention to relative spheres of dwelling, which is a strength of Bachelard's analytical work; and (4) analysis of literary representations of peripheral areas of concern (e.g., remote environments or non-human ecology) require interpretation through the lens of areas of primary concern (human experiences of dwelling).

#### 4.1. σχολή

Firstly, Bachelard is relevant to almost any text at all because all texts are the product of a locus of protected dwelling. Without at least a marginally protected space, it is not really possible to write. Bachelard's work is about the psychologies of loci of protected dwelling, therefore his work is germane to analysis of any text. In spite of the fact that this sounds overly simplistic and reductionistic, it is true. The semantic range of the Greek word σχολή elucidates this reality. It refers not only, and unsurprisingly, to "scholarship", "writing", and "study",<sup>13</sup> but also to the leisure and comfort necessary to engage in them.<sup>14</sup> It conjures the whole *habitus* of writing which implicates the location of protected dwelling necessary for writing. There is a "solidarity" of images involved here, as Bachelard rightly notes, and it is important not to "break up the[ir] solidarity" (Bachelard 1994, p. 6). Thus, as many scholars have insisted upon the importance of literary analysis as a resource for eco-theology, Bachelard's theory is specifically relevant for such work since it is relevant to interpreting any work of writing in light of its locus of production.

#### 4.2. Texts Interested in Human Understanding of Dwelling/Ecology

Secondly, Bachelard's analysis is particularly oriented toward literary representations of dwelling in all its various forms: not merely the human, as already mentioned frequently, but the non-human as well. In this sense, one can best describe Bachelard's interest as "ecological", that is to say, interested in "home-logic". Eco-theology is oriented toward theorizing both human and non-human ecology and how humans understand these theologically.<sup>15</sup> However, beyond this, Tweed's contention that religion is about homemaking suggests that all home-logic (ecology) pertains to theology. As such, Bachelard is relevant to eco-theology because eco-theology is also interested in ecology/home-logic.

#### 4.3. Relative Spheres of Dwelling

Thirdly, responsible eco-theological literary analysis must attend to hermeneutical issues pertaining to *relative spheres of dwelling*. If a significant concern of eco-theology is to extend the sphere of concern from the exclusively and immediately domestic out to the broadest inclusive view of the whole world as human home, it is crucial to employ theory which addresses the psychological links between these various spheres. It is easy to think of meaningfully extending this sphere of concern as prone to failure due to failure of imagination, or distraction, or compassion/empathy fatigue. Michael Northcott, for one, acknowledges the difficulties of these dynamics, particularly in contrast to the ready extension of colonial/imperial power to connect and extract across distance (e.g., Northcott 2015, p. 43). While he highlights societal re-orientation toward a more "parochial ecology" as a solution that is more sustainable, in some ways this solution constitutes an admission of the real difficulty of the problem. The conundrum suggests just how important it is to consider theory which both details exemplars of modes of engagement between the spheres and envisions healthy connection across spheres of homemaking concern. Bachelard manages to weave together human and non-human, proximate and distant, intimate and ultimate while still conveying useful psychological content:

The nest, quite as much as the oneiric house, and the oneiric house quite as much as the nest . . . knows nothing of the hostility of the world. Human life starts with refreshing sleep, and all the eggs in a nest are kept nicely warm.<sup>16</sup> The experience of the hostility of the world—and consequently, our dreams of defense and aggressiveness—come much later. In its germinal form, therefore, all of life is well-being. Being starts with well-being. When a philosopher considers

a nest, he calms himself by meditating on the subject of his own being in the calm of world being. And if we were to translate the absolute naivete of his daydream into the metaphysical language of today, a dreamer might say that the world is the nest of mankind. For the world is a nest, and an immense power holds the inhabitants of the world in this nest. In Herder's history of Hebrew poetry there is an image of the immense sky resting on the immense earth: 'The air,' he wrote, 'is a dove which, as it rests on its nest, keeps its young warm.' (Bachelard 1994, pp. 103–4)

Indeed, as seen here, Bachelard's own language often bleeds into the theological,<sup>17</sup> as has at times been the case for a number of twentieth century critical geographers.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.4. Interpretation of the Peripheral through the Lens of the Primary

Fourthly, we should note that eco-theology is most typically concerned with "ecology" as it is traditionally understood; that is to say, with the non-human environment. This concern, of course, is related to humans inasmuch as humans affect the non-human ecology, and in eco-theological scholarship inasmuch as humans' relation to the non-human ecology is shaped by human theological understanding. As regards the aforementioned spheres of concern, one must regard the non-human ecology as naturally more peripheral to human interest than the directly or proximate human ecology.<sup>19</sup> As counter-intuitive as it may seem, Bachelard is useful for eco-theology with respect to this interest precisely because of his significant attention to the primary, most intimate, and least extended human sphere of concern: the individual experience of dwelling.

Even as key strands of eco-theology are motivated to expand the human sphere of concern to include all remote, non-human, world-wide elements (the human home broadly construed), this is only possible through attention to the human psychology of concern for the most intimate and personal human spheres (the human home most parochially construed), as Northcott (2015) suggests.<sup>20</sup> The reason for this involves the aforementioned "gravity model". Not only does the gravity model suggest that the most proximate sphere of experience will hold more sway over human concerns than more peripheral spheres of experience, but the hermeneutical implication of this relation is that any language or experience of the peripheral must be interpreted through the lens of the proximate.

It is very tempting to take literary descriptions of the peripheral areas of concern (e.g., animal habitats, remote environments, global-scale climate changes) at face value or to interpret them as they ostensibly appear. However, as has long become the standard practice in literary analysis, in order to engage in the most responsible interpretation, one must always interpret an author's work through an understanding of their life experiences, their *habitus*, their overall *σχολή*. That is to say, the best interpretation accounts for authorial context. (It is easy to make significant interpretive mistakes if in our zeal to consider the peripheral we do so in neglect of the primary lens.) Peripheral ecologies must be interpreted through what we know of primary ecologies.<sup>21</sup> It is here that Bachelard is perhaps most helpful for eco-theology.

As previously mentioned, Bachelard's work regularly touches on the psychological relation between the primary and peripheral spheres of concern. He says that the home "is the human being's first world" (Bachelard 1994, p. 7); "Our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word" (Bachelard 1994). He emphasizes especially how dynamics at play in the primary domestic sphere affect the peripheral imagination:<sup>22</sup> "The two kinds of space, intimate space and exterior space, keep encouraging each other, as it were, in their growth" (Bachelard 1994, p. 201); "It would seem, then, that it is through their 'immensity' that these two kinds of space -the space of intimacy and world space- blend. When human solitude deepens, then the two immensities touch and become identical" (Bachelard 1994, p. 203). For those eco-theologians who would seek to transfer some of the natural human concerns and sense of responsibility for the primary, proximate home to the more broadly conceived and extensive peripheral home, Bachelard provides ample resources.<sup>23</sup> Among these resources

are his observations regarding perennial obstacles to extending such spheres of concern: experiences of traumatized dwelling.

There is certainly precedent for experiences of traumatized or marginal dwelling resulting in the development of empathy or an imagination for the peripheral sphere beyond experience. As Bachelard writes:

The hermit's hut is a theme which needs no variations . . . Its truth must derive from the intensity of its essence, which is the essence of the verb 'to inhabit.' The hut immediately becomes centralized solitude, for in the land of legend there exists no adjoining hut. And although geographers may bring back photographs of hut villages from their travels to distant lands, our legendary past transcends everything that has been seen, even everything we have experienced personally. The image leads us on towards extreme solitude. The hermit is *alone* before God. His hut, therefore, is just the opposite of the monastery. And there radiates about this centralized solitude a universe of meditation and prayer, a universe outside the universe. The hut can receive none of the riches 'of this world.' It possesses the felicity of intense poverty; indeed, it is one of the glories of poverty; as destitution increases it gives us access to absolute refuge. (Bachelard 1994, p. 32)

However, a common result of marginal, traumatized, or "cornered"<sup>24</sup> existence is reactionary recoiling from the broader world. He writes, "in many respects, a corner that is 'live in' tends to reject and restrain, even to hide, life. The corner becomes a negation of the Universe" (Bachelard 1994, p. 136). The result has too often been that "The dreamer in his corner wrote off the world in a detailed daydream that destroyed, one by one, all the objects of the world" (Bachelard 1994, p. 143). However, perhaps an even more challenging obstacle for the expansion of spheres of concern is the development of sensibilities of confrontation with the peripheral world that result even from *positive* experiences of protected dwelling:

Such a house as this invites mankind to heroism of cosmic proportions. It is an instrument with which to confront the cosmos. And the metaphysical systems according to which man is 'cast into the world' might meditate concretely upon the house that is cast into the hurricane, defying the anger of heaven itself. Come what may the house helps us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world. The problem is not only one of being, it is also a problem of energy and, consequently, counter-energy. In this dynamic rivalry between house and universe, we are far removed from any reference to simple geometrical forms. A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space.<sup>25</sup>

Even when positive affinities can be developed with previously peripheral spheres of concern, they may be superficial, self-aggrandizing, or colonial:

Distance disperses nothing but, on the contrary, composes a miniature of a country in which we should like to live. In distant miniatures, disparate things become reconciled. They then offer themselves for our 'possession,' while denying the distance that created them. We possess from afar, and how peacefully!<sup>26</sup>

Thus, through both his explicit suggestions and through his unintentional failures, Bachelard provides many useful analytical examples and warnings for the eco-theological endeavor.

## 5. The Caveat of J. Z. Smith

As previously mentioned, there has been an apparent hesitancy to employ Bachelard's observations from *Poetics* in the fields of religious and biblical studies. An easily accessible English translation dates to the mid-1960s, but around the time American scholars of religion were in earnest beginning to attend to the work of French theorists of space, J. Z. Smith published his well-received book, *To Take Place*, in which he explores spatial issues in ritual (Smith 1987). It is to this book that we should trace the hesitancy to work with



Bachelard among scholars of religion because, in it, Smith suggests that Bachelard's work has little utility.

Smith lumps Bachelard into a category of geographical thinking that is marred by nostalgia and anachronism, preventing its beneficial employment for analysis (Smith 1987, p. 29). The problem with this observation is that Bachelard himself admits to the presence of anachronism and nostalgia and indeed claims that these are critical elements of the literary psychology of dwelling. He notes them in many of the texts he analyzes and does not shy from deploying and exhibiting them himself in his own writing, a feature (not a bug), to his mind, of faithful writing on the subject.

On this issue, I agree with Bachelard. Many texts that imagine homes, or describe dwelling, are rife with anachronism and nostalgia, religious texts included.<sup>27</sup> A psychological examination of "dwelling" that neglected major components of the psychology of dwelling would be negligent and defective. On the grounds Smith suggests, Bachelard's theory is not, in fact, inadmissible, but rather one of the best options available.

This is not to say that Bachelard's ideas of house and home map perfectly onto every other literary construction of the same (Gorringe 2004, p. 86). However, differing semantic ranges for "house" in different languages and time periods need not be taken as grounds to ignore the utility of elements of Bachelard's psychological analysis (*pace*, Gorringe). As Bachelard himself regularly suggests, he is interested in the whole constellation of related phenomena and resists simplistic one-to-one mapping. Even texts that work hard to emphasize homelessness, as Gorringe suggests is true of much of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament,<sup>28</sup> are themselves reacting against certain ideas and experiences of "home" and "dwelling" which must be understood in order to appreciate the text's critique. In such instances, Bachelard's analysis remains relevant for interpreting the "germ of dwelling" behind even "anti-home" literary productions. However, even as harsh a critic as Gorringe, who asserts that "Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*' can seem a trivial irrelevance", still acknowledges the legitimacy of Bachelard's key contention: "yet it is true that human beings have found and continue to find, great significance in the houses in which they live and invest them with meaning" (Gorringe 2004, p. 90).

If heeded for any reason, the warning from Smith is perhaps somewhat more defensible as regards the spatial analysis of *ritual* specifically but not as regards the analysis of the psychologies of intimate space in literature. As previously mentioned, nearly all texts are the products of authorial environments of protected rest and, as such, Bachelard's observations from *Poetics* have significant analytical relevance.

## 6. Conclusions

Gaston Bachelard's literary analysis in *The Poetics of Space* of the psychologies of dwelling, the human "ecology", if you will, deserves greater attention in the field of eco-theology. Two recurring elements of eco-theological scholarship particularly militate in favor of this conclusion: (1) the persistent claim that literary analysis is an important resource for theorizing eco-theology and (2) the abiding interest among many eco-theology scholars to extend their readers' spheres of concern to the widest possible scope, including the whole earth and all its interconnected ecosystems within the theological understanding of the human home.<sup>29</sup> Bachelard's *Poetics* is a rich and largely untapped resource for the work of eco-theology and I look forward to seeing his observations engaged, adopted, and deployed more broadly.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> An excellent primer on this diversity of interests and approaches is catalogued in *Eco-Theology* by C. E. Dean-Drummond (2008).

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si: On Care for Our Common Home* (Pope Francis 2015); the various articles in the issue of *Concilium* edited by Wainwright et al. (2009); the essays birthed from the Tenth International Whitehead Conference, "Seiz-

ing an Alternative: Toward an Ecological Civilization”, including [Hughes et al. \(2019, p. 4\)](#), [Moe-Lobeda \(2019\)](#), [Rieger \(2019\)](#), [Hinga \(2019\)](#); and, most recently, essays from the Sigurd Bergmann *festskrift* including [Kurtén \(2021\)](#), [Skrefsrud \(2021\)](#), and [Heimbrock \(2021\)](#).

According to this theory, following the model of the physical laws of gravitation, the closer two entities are, or the larger they are, the more they will influence each other. The further apart they are, or the smaller, the less they will influence each other. This is true of gravitational force between heavenly bodies, of the volume of travel between cities, and myriad other relationships.

[Tweed \(2006, p. 54\)](#): “Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and superhuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries”.

[Pogue Harrison \(2003\)](#) suggests that ancient homes, as embodied in the domestic religious practice, were the primary places in which the dead were understood to protect the living ([Pogue Harrison 2003, p. 38](#)). [Barker \(2010\)](#) deals with the modern environmental crisis through the lens of an early church “temple theology” oriented around appreciation for the “home of God”. Various biblical scholars (e.g., [Elliot 1981](#); [Trainor 2001](#); [Meeks 2003](#); [Moxnes 2003](#); [Osiek et al. 2006](#); and [Coloe 2007](#)) address the importance of the home and household in the formative stages of the early Jesus movement. [Pruszinski \(2021b\)](#) establishes the role of experiences of “dwelling” in the formation of various early Jewish and Christian texts.

From the Greek *oikos* (home) and *logos* (reason, word, logic).

E.g., [Northcott \(2021\)](#).

Even from the present volume alone, there are [Marsden \(2021\)](#); [Gerlier \(2021\)](#); [Brennan \(2021\)](#); [Sen \(2021\)](#); [Pruszinski \(2021a\)](#); [Kotva and Mebius \(2021\)](#); and [Burkemper and Mahan \(2021\)](#).

With the acknowledgement that this requires consideration of the various understandings and conceptualizations of “home” ([Gorringe 2004](#), pp. 86–90), and an extension of concern typically reserved for the more proximate and personal understanding of “home” out to a wider, more public, more world-encompassing sphere.

French original: Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de L'Espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France: 1958).

I am working from the 1994 edition of the original 1964 M. Jolas English translation.

See, for example, [Gorringe \(2004\)](#) for a somewhat more recent dismissal of Bachelard’s utility.

E.g., in Acts 19:9.

E.g., in Plato, *Resp.* 370b.

I think of one of Bachelard’s observations that fuses these interests so well: “When we imagine a nest, we place ourselves at the origin of confidence in the world, we receive a beginning of confidence, an urge toward cosmic confidence” ([Bachelard 1994, p. 103](#)).

Survivor bias notwithstanding.

See also observations on pp. 168, 187, 189 ([Bachelard 1994](#)).

E.g., [Tuan \(1968\)](#) and [de Certeau \(1980\)](#).

Even as eco-theologians work to subvert this relation.

Though [Northcott \(2015\)](#) seems to suggest that the challenge may be too great to extend responsible and sustainable concern to more peripheral spheres (distant engagement being most effective through oppressive and colonial structures) and appears to propose smaller scale solutions.

[Bachelard \(1994, p. 7\)](#): “From my viewpoint, from the phenomenologist’s viewpoint, the conscious metaphysics that starts from the moment when being is ‘cast into the world’ is a secondary metaphysics. It passes over the preliminaries, when being is being-well, in the well-being originally associated with being. To illustrate the metaphysics of consciousness we should have to wait for the experiences during which being is cast out, that is to say, thrown out, outside the being of the house, a circumstance in which the hostility of men and of the universe accumulates. But a complete metaphysics, englobing both the conscious and the unconscious, would leave the privilege of its values within”.

Referring regularly to “the house’s ‘cosmicity’” ([Bachelard 1994, p. 29](#)) and its “anthropocosmic” nature ([Bachelard 1994, p. 4](#)).

[Bachelard \(1994, p. 202\)](#): “In this activity of poetic spatiality that goes from deep intimacy to infinite extent, united in an identical expansion, one feels grandeur welling up. As Rilke said: ‘Through every human being, unique space, intimate space, opens up to the world ...’”.

“Every retreat on the part of the soul possesses, in my opinion, figures of havens. That most sordid of all havens, the corner, deserves to be examined. To withdraw into one’s corner is undoubtedly a meager expression. But despite its meagerness, it has numerous images, some, perhaps, of great antiquity, images that are psychologically primitive. At times, the simpler the image the vaster the dream” ([Bachelard 1994, p. 137](#)).

[Bachelard \(1994, pp. 46–47\)](#). Or see [Bachelard \(1994, p. 40\)](#): “Outside the occupied house, the winter cosmos is a simplified cosmos. It is a non-house in the same way that metaphysicians speak of a non-I, and between the house and the non-house it is easy to establish all sorts of contradictions”.

[Bachelard \(1994, p. 172\)](#). He also writes ([Bachelard 1994, p. 161](#)): “Too often the world designated by philosophy is merely a non-I, its vastness an accumulation of negativities. But the philosopher proceeds too quickly to what is positive, and appropriates for himself the World, a World that is unique of its kind. Such formulas as: being-in-the-world and world-being are too majestic

for me and I do not succeed in experiencing them. In fact, I feel more at home in miniature worlds, which, for me, are dominated worlds. And when I live them I feel waves that generate world-consciousness emanating from my dreaming self. For me, the vastness of the world has become merely the jamming of these waves. To have experienced miniature sincerely detaches me from the surrounding world, and helps me to resist dissolution of the surrounding atmosphere. Miniature is an exercise that has metaphysical freshness; it allows us to be world conscious at slight risk. And how restful this exercise on a dominated world can be! For miniature rests us without putting us to sleep. Here the imagination is both vigilant and content". Here we can see his useful insights in parallel with deeply problematic statements that appear to show a failure to recognize the problem with domination and the colonial imagination.

- 27 There are, of course, many psychological studies that deal with nostalgia directly, but a recent monograph that addresses nostalgia in biblical texts is [Prusinski \(2021b\)](#) including, especially, pp. 9–38 on the Gospel of John.
- 28 Which he uses as a reason to emphasize the irrelevance of Bachelard for understanding the bible ([Gorringe 2004](#), p. 87).
- 29 As perhaps envisioned by [Bachelard \(1994, p. 51\)](#): "Thus, an immense cosmic house is a potential of every dream of houses. Winds radiate from its center and gulls fly from its windows. A house that is as dynamic as this allows the poet to inhabit the universe. Or, to put it differently, the universe comes to inhabit the house".

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