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“Now My Eyes Have Seen You”: A Comparative Study of *Secret Sunshine* and the Book of Job

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Abstract: This essay engages in a comparative study of Lee Chang-Dong’s Secret Sunshine (2007) in light of the biblical book of Job, focusing on issues of grief, recovery, and theodicy. Drawing from perspectives in philosophical, mystical, and pastoral theology, three allegorical interpretations of the film’s title are suggested. The eponymous “secret sunshine” adumbrates, first, the female protagonist Shin-Ae’s hidden journey toward her true self, a self in which the theological virtues of faith and love are mystically internalized. Second, it intimates the quiet, unobtrusive presence of an emphatic Immanuel in the figure of Jong-Chan, the film’s male protagonist. Finally, through a meditative exegesis of the film’s closing sequences, it will be argued that “secret sunshine” points toward the transcendent beauty and comfort that may be found in the quotidian and commonplace.

Keywords: Job, Korean cinema, Lee Chang-Dong, religion and film, Secret Sunshine

What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside?
Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings?

—Job 38:19-20

All things are simply God to you, and you see only God in all things. Like one who looks long at the sun, he sees the sun in whatever he afterwards looks at. If this is lacking, this looking for and seeing God in each and every thing, then you lack this birth.

—Meister Eckhart

What does the song of a swallow mean? What is the muffled sound of a hammer trying to tell? And yet as I listened to those sounds, and I listened with something more than just my hearing, I was moved by their inexpressible eloquence and suggestiveness, by the sense I had that they were music rising up out of the mystery of not just my life, but of life itself. In much the same way, that is what I mean by saying that God speaks into or out of the thick of our days.

—Frederick Buechner

Introduction

Though set in a world “so far removed from our own,” David Clines writes of the book of Job, there goes on “beneath the surface a human drama that belongs to every age.”¹ Indeed, as characteristic of Hebrew wisdom literature, the themes explored in the story of Job belong to the universal human experience, posing what some regard as “the most serious

problem that has ever troubled the human mind.”² Why do the innocent suffer? What is the nature of this God who allows or ordains such suffering? When are the explanations offered by traditional wisdom irrelevant or impotent? And how does one struggle, with God and with self, through intense pain?

Well transcending the historical and cultural contexts of the biblical text, these are the exact questions that are also explored in the South Korean director Lee Chang-Dong’s *Secret Sunshine* (2007), a “devastating study in human suffering”³ that raises “heavy theological questions.”⁴ With a focus on issues of grief, recovery, and theodicy, this paper proposes a comparative study of the film in light of the book of Job. This is how the study will proceed: After a brief introduction to the film and a synopsis of its plot, we embark on a detailed exegesis of key aspects of the film that bear remarkable parallels with the Job story, allowing the latter to frame and illumine our understanding of the former and vice versa. Finding methodological justification in this mutual correlation, and drawing from resources in philosophical, mystical, and pastoral theological reflection, I will then offer three allegorical interpretations for the meaning of “secret sunshine” in the film. After considering the redemptive possibilities of the female protagonist Shin-Ae’s existential suffering, we will move on to examine, Christologically, how the male protagonist Jong-Chan serves as an excellent exemplification of incarnational empathy. Finally, through a careful study of the film’s closing sequences, we will explore how *Secret Sunshine* points to the transcendent beauty and comfort that can be found in the quotidian and commonplace.

Synopsis

Let us begin our study with a brief introduction to and synopsis of *Secret Sunshine*. Adapted from Lee Chung-Joon’s 1985 novella *Story of Worm*, the following lines from the author’s introduction afford valuable insights into the film’s philosophical trajectory:

A human being may be the ruler of the universe, and may be properly human, only when human dignity is respected. Yet, if the dignity of a person is trampled underfoot and denigrated to the state of a helpless and worthless being—like an insect—what is there that a human being can do and ask before an Absolute Being?⁵

As Lee Chang-Dong reveals, these themes—the abject dehumanization and helplessness of a human being before an impassive or even malevolent God—served as the inspirational “kernel of the story” that was to become *Secret Sunshine*.⁶ But as we shall see, though wrestling with similar themes, there is a certain sense of hope present in the film, however silent or surprising it may be.

The film opens with Lee Shin-Ae (Jeon Do-Yeon) and her five-year-old son Jun stranded on the highway due to a vehicle breakdown. They are moving to the countryside town of Miryang because it was the hometown of Shin-Ae’s deceased husband, where he had always wanted to move to before he was killed in a car accident. Kim Jong-Chan (Song Kang-Ho), a middle-aged bachelor, is a car mechanic who soon shows up and brings her (with car in tow) to Miryang. He almost instantly develops a romantic liking for her, offering much assistance as she finds a new apartment and sets up a piano school. Shin-Ae’s arrival churns gossip among the townswomen. Meanwhile, her pharmacist neighbour tries zealously to proselytize her. All seems to be going rather well, nonetheless—until tragedy strikes one night with Jun’s kidnap. A series of harrowing phone calls ensue, as the kidnapper blackmails Shin-Ae for the money she had said she had when speaking indiscreetly about plans to buy a plot of land. Her pleas and negotiation (she fails to surrender the full

sum demanded) come to no avail. The police soon find Jun's lifeless young body in a reservoir. The murderer turns out, shockingly, to be Park Do-Seob (Jo Yeong-Jin), Jun's physiognomically-upright kindergarten teacher.

Even after the funeral, Shin-Ae remains in a state of numbness and shock, until the day she decides to register Jun's death at the Town Hall. Here, the reality of his death suddenly hits her with full force. She stumbles out in near-hysterical anguish, and inadvertently into the nearby "prayer meeting for wounded souls" that the pharmacist had earlier told her about. This is the first context that allows her the opportunity for cathartic release of her grief. She promptly converts to Christianity. We next see her actively involved in church activities, gleefully confessing her trust in God's sovereign, mysterious will in all things. The sudden and radical nature of her conversion does not augur well, especially in view of her emotional and spiritual vulnerability at this point. Then one day, after seeing Do-Seob's daughter getting beaten up by ruffians in an alley, she announces her plan to perform what appears to be the ultimate act of Christian discipleship: visiting Do-Seob in prison to forgive him in person. But in the same way that she did nothing to help his daughter while she was being abused, Shin-Ae's desire to visit him may be subconsciously driven by a desire to gloat, to express her latent hatred for him. Her intentions backfire, however, when she learns that Do-Seob too has converted and now speaks glowingly of how God has absolved his sins and granted him peace.

The rest of the film, which most of our study will be devoted to, forms in its own right a fascinating case study in the process of grief and eventual coming together. After her visit to the prison, Shin-Ae's psychological and spiritual states start spiraling wildly. She now goes through the other necessary stages in the grief process, hitherto suppressed by her excessively triumphalistic conversion: anxiety, sadness, despair, isolation, and perhaps above all, anger. She then launches a series of destructive acts against the church and herself, culminating in her cutting herself bloody and subsequent admission into a mental health facility. After an indefinite period she is released, and the film closes with a depiction of her adaptation and readjustment to life, which much grief literature regards as the final stage of the grief process.

"Shin-Ae the Patient": Comparison with Job

Suffering / Devastation

With a sketch of the basic plot of *Secret Sunshine* in place, we are now ready to embark on a comparative study of the film, employing central themes in the book of Job to frame our understanding. Perhaps the most striking parallel between the two stories lies in the nature of the devastation to which both Job and Shin-Ae are subjected. Within this we distinguish three areas of similarity. The first pertains to the *scope* of their loss. Job, quite literally, loses "all that he has"—his livestock, property, offspring, and finally his own health.⁷ Shin-Ae's losses are no less severe. Like Job's, they span the entire spectrum of what Kenneth Mitchell and Herbert Anderson delineate as the six major forms of losses: material (she loses the familiar surroundings of Seoul, and to a lesser extent, loses much money); relationship (her husband and son die); intrapsychic (her plans of setting up a piano school and starting a new life in Miryang are dashed); functional (her physical and mental health suffer in the aftermath of Jun's death); role (as wife and mother); and systemic (her "interactional system" with her family).⁸ If Jong Tae Lee is correct in identifying the mother-child relationship as the foundational relationship type in Korean culture, then Shin-Ae's case is indeed "rock-bottom," ravaging the very core of her identity and personhood.⁹

The second aspect of similarity concerns the *suddenness* of their loss. In the biblical account, the swiftness with which Job suffers losses is reflected in the triple repetition of the formula “while he was still speaking, another messenger came and said”; almost breathlessly, Job’s surviving servants report to him one tragedy after another, establishing a palpable sense of abruptness.¹⁰ The deaths of Shin-Ae’s husband and son—by car accident and murder, respectively—are equally sudden in their occurrence; there was no way she could have anticipated them occurring. Thus the first words we hear from her lips as she stands lost on the highway—“I’m not sure where we are”—serve as a proleptic foreshadowing of her Heideggerian “thrownness” into being-toward-death, or rather, into being-toward-tragedy.

A third similarity between their suffering is found in its common *intensity*; “when sorrows come,” we read in *Hamlet*, “they come not single spies, but in battalions.”¹¹ Like Job surrounded by “miserable comforters” who only end up heightening his sense of aloneness, Shin-Ae’s pain is accentuated by feelings of utter isolation.¹² Her desperate cry to the kidnapper over the phone—“nobody’s here, I’m all alone”—prefigures the lonely path of grief that she must traverse herself. After receiving the phone call, Shin-Ae runs to Jong-Chan in the middle of the night, only to turn back defeated outside his shop when she sees him singing karaoke—perhaps a guilty reminder of how she failed to take seriously Jun’s pleas to come home when he called her at the noisy karaoke lounge, to inform her of strange phone calls he had been receiving. After Jun’s death, Shin-Ae is consumed by an inner restlessness, as rest eludes her even when she lies down. Lying on her couch, she deliberately snores in memory of both her husband and son (Jun used to mimic his father’s snores when he missed him). Sleepless at night, she startles awake and replays in her tormented imagination the terrifying telephone games the kidnapper used, in vain begging him to spare her child. With uncanny precision, Job’s laments describe the psychological hell Shin-Ae endures: “When I say, ‘My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,’ then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, so that I would choose strangling and death rather than this body.”¹³ Arguably, the intensity of Shin-Ae’s trauma may be further traced to the quashing of the natural grief process, in her premature assent to the hand of divine providence in her sufferings. “The repression and suppression of the early reactions of the loss,” Y. Spiegel observes, “tend to lead to a greater severity of the grief symptoms later.”¹⁴

Coram Deo

Another stark parallel between Job and Shin-Ae lies in the shared awareness that their lives are *Coram Deo*, ever before the face of God, the “watcher of humanity.”¹⁵ Though Shin-Ae initially confesses not to “believe in that kind of stuff,” as soon as she converts she demonstrates a perpetual consciousness of how there is nowhere she can go to “flee from [God’s] presence,” whether she ascends into transports of spiritual bliss, or whether she descends into the depths of emotional hell.¹⁶ This is evident, for example, in the way she frequently casts her gaze into the skies, such as when she challenges Jong-Chan to profess his faith before God (“God is watching us now. Can you swear that you have faith in him?”), or when she is about to visit Do-Seob in prison, perhaps uttering a hasty orison for strength from on high. In the wake of her conversion, she whimsically testifies to the womenfolk of Miryang about the joy and comfort that an awareness of God’s watchful eye has brought her: “You’re happy to know there’s someone always thinking of you. God loves me and watches over me. I feel it every moment, deeply, and it gives me much happiness.”

However, Shin-Ae's view of *Coram Deo* undergoes a grotesque transformation after her visit to the prison. Like Job, the presence of God in whom she lives and moves and has her being is no longer kind and loving, but rather, cold and distant: "I cry out to you and you do not answer me; I stand, and you merely look to me."¹⁷ This conception of a God who watches impassively upon the blighted plight of humanity is powerfully conveyed in the film's penultimate scene. Running maniacal about the house to turn on the lights, she reveals the "land of deepest night" that her soul inhabits; here, even "light is like darkness," for all the lights she switches on now serve only as lighting for the gory spectacle that is to follow.¹⁸ Spectrally, the telephone rings and stops (recalling the horrific sequence of telephone calls she had been put through), leaving a haunting silence punctuated only by the sound of her muted groans. As the camera pans solely upon her grimacing face, cast upward in unspeakable agony, the silence of the scene becomes a dreadful analogue for the silence of God, who watches dispassionately as she mutilates her arm.

In the same way that the author of Job "rejects the anthropomorphism of all the rest of Scripture" at the end of the book "by disregarding man," in this scene a simplistic, ever-optimistic understanding of *Coram Deo* is repudiated.¹⁹ Seeing that "the sentence of mortality" has been passed, as it were, on Shin-Ae through her self-destructive drive, are we not compelled to "experience the fact that we are *only* human, *only* dust, separated from God by an infinite qualitative distinction"?²⁰ The feel of the filmic "eye of God" in this penultimate scene, further, recalls the indifference of the skies Shin-Ae beheld while sitting in trepidation in the car, by the reservoir in which Jun's body was found. Treading in fear and trembling toward his corpse, insects buzz around her head—the merciless objectivity of the camera perhaps conveying the sense that "man in the world enjoys no *a priori* privilege over animals and things."²¹

But more than regarding God as a cold and distant spectator of humanity's travails, Shin-Ae often holds to a view of a God who is actually *malevolent*. Akin to the Jobine parody of the *Coram Deo* celebrated in Psalm 8, the Deity whose mindful care is ever upon humanity now morphs, in Shin-Ae's mind, into a sadistic cosmic Fiend who "visits [her] every morning" and "tests [her] every moment," taking sadistic glee in her afflictions.²² In the midst of a prayer meeting that her church members hold for her in her house, she rages:

If he's been absolved, how can I forgive him again? How dare God forgive him even before I've forgiven him myself. I am in so much pain. And yet he says he's been absolved, and has gained peace. How could God that to me? Why? WHY?²³

On the one hand, as an expression of anger, Shin-Ae's "why" arises from a sense of deep betrayal by God, who seems to have let Do-Seob off scot-free too easily.²⁴ On the other hand, the "question behind the question" belies a deeper hatred toward the wicked God directly responsible for her bewildering existential anguish, almost as a cat plays with a hapless mouse.²⁵ Borrowing Dorothee Soelle's astute observations on Job, we might say that in *Secret Sunshine* "the realistic theme of suffering is combined with the motif of the tyrannical tester."²⁶ While in the film there is no folklorist prologue (as in the biblical text) announcing the higher reasons for Shin-Ae's suffering, we may discern in its opening scenes ominous signs foretelling the doom that shall come upon her son. Whether it be the threnodic ticking of the hazard light as Jun sits listless in the car, staring at the distant skies; him playing dead by the road as she tries to prop his limp body up; or the game of hide-and-seek that they play after coming home from school one day, which soon turns into a terrible rehearsal for the real thing: to Shin-Ae as well as to the viewer, these all work

together in suggesting the awful fate that has been decreed upon them by the God of this cinematic universe.

Shin-Ae's conception of God, though, can also be attributed to her experiences with her human father. Toward the end of the film, as she mutters deliriously to herself while wandering the streets, we learn that he had locked her in the bathroom for crying when she was twelve, smoked at home, and frequently hit her with a spoon. Given her traumatic childhood, it is little surprise that it should surface within her to see God as the destroyer of hope whose "terrors . . . are arrayed against [her],"²⁷ who "assails [her] and tears [her] in his anger and gnashes his teeth at [her]."²⁸ Toward the end, as Shin-Ae staggers out into the night with blood-covered arm, shrieking for help, her descent into the hell ordained for her is complete. The phantasmagorical quality of this scene—accomplished through the soaring of dark violin strains, the garish glow of streetlamps, and the pandemonium of oncoming cars swerving and honking—recall the "imagery of shadows and darkness" behind the mythological netherworld evoked in the book of Job, "where the physical and supernatural merge in to each other" under the influence of a God who emerges as an "underworld demon."²⁹

Rebellion

It is against this "daemoniac divine"—this *Deus Absconditus et Incomprehensibilis* who is "not only *above* every human grasp, but in *antagonism* to it"—that Shin-Ae rebels.³⁰ Immediately following her conversion, in which like a typical Korean believer she "becomes a Christian . . . through a highly *affective* experience," Shin-Ae is very much like "Job the Patient" in the first two chapters of the biblical text.³¹ In cheery equanimity, she testifies to her small group about her trust in divine sovereignty over all has transpired, confessing in as many words, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."³² Though admirable to some degree, her fideistic fortitude turns out to be premature: humble submission soon collapses into violent revolt after her prison visit. Just as Job complains to God in the manner of a legal dispute, doggedly insisting on his righteousness, Shin-Ae attempts to summon God to trial for alleged injustices toward her.³³ As she drums livid upon the church pews—reminiscent perhaps of a courtroom hearing—the trial begins.

"[Loathing] her very life," Shin-Ae "give[s] free utterance to [her] complaint" and "[speaks] in the bitterness of [her] soul," embarking on a series of escalating acts of rebellion against God and the church.³⁴ Her thwarted pickpocketing from a music store; her sabotaging of an outdoor preaching rally by outlandishly popping a CD into the audio system; her hurling of a rock into the house where a prayer meeting for her is being held: these are all ways that she wreaks havoc in the church, as if to "get back" at God for the vagaries of fate dealt to her. And it is precisely because Shin-Ae knows her life to be *Coram Deo* that she seduces her church elder, all so that she might glare into the heavens and challenge in vengeful defiance, "do you see?"³⁵

Yet it seems that even her efforts to defy God are foiled. After fumbling upon her for a while, the church elder suddenly stops and reports, sheepishly, that he is unable to go further because he thinks "God is watching." Convinced that an antagonistic *Deus Absconditus* is out to torment her, while pacing the streets she mutters resolutely under her breath, "I will not lose to you. Never." Unfortunately, as Albert Camus observes, "one can live in a state of rebellion by pursuing it to the bitter end"—there is no middle ground, no stopping in between.³⁶ And as Ray Anderson notes, "the originating cause of suicide is the freedom of the human person to act in self-justification over and against God. Despair becomes the

occasion for this act of self-justification to take place.”³⁷ In this light, like Job who “[justifies] himself rather than God,” Shin-Ae’s absent, quasi-suicidal self-laceration must be understood to be as much an expression of the misery of her existence as it is her act of ultimate rebellion against God.³⁸

Critique of Conventional Wisdom

The final parallel between the book of Job and *Secret Sunshine* we will examine is their common critique of applying conventional theological wisdom to their protagonists’ sufferings. Both Job and Shin-Ae are fortunate to have people who attempt to support them in their loss: the former, his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar; and the latter, members of her new church. But however well-meaning they may be, more often than not they do little more than spout “proverbs of ashes” and “defenses of clay” that fail to bring true emphatic comfort:³⁹

The friends cope with it by denying it, as people often do when they refuse to acknowledge the reality of loss and grief and questions. The friends insist on fitting what has happened to [them] into the framework of what they thought they already knew about the way God elates to us and runs the world.⁴⁰

Like Job’s friends who interpret his suffering according to their understanding of retributive justice, insisting that he has must have sinned to merit his plight, Shin-Ae’s church members recourse frequently and glibly to how “times like these are a test of [her] faith.” Through the friends, both the biblical story and the film present a “parody of the smug prophets and wise teachers who assure people that everything will be all right.”⁴¹

In particular, Shin-Ae’s friends lack a sense of pastoral sensitivity and humanness in their theological understanding. For one, by suggesting that Shin-Ae should simply will herself into forgiving her son’s murderer (“God has forgiven him, so you should too”), they reveal their ignorance about how forgiveness—especially one of this magnitude—is a long and difficult journey.⁴² By trying to silence her when she interrupts the pastor’s pontificatory, platitudinous prayer for her (“Hush, the Reverend is praying”), they demonstrate what Soelle terms as “Christian masochism,” whose features include: “the low value it places on human strength; its veneration of one who is neither good nor logical but only extremely powerful; its viewing of suffering exclusively from the perspective of endurance; and its consequent lack of sensitivity for the suffering of others.”⁴³ With a strain of excessively spiritualistic otherworldliness in their piety and their conception of God, like Job’s friends they deny Shin-Ae the “extraordinary freedom in what . . . one may legitimately say to God,” as if the Christian ideal was *always* one of silent obedience.⁴⁴ This otherworldliness is further exemplified in the outdoor rally scene, in which the preacher exalts the importance of living “a life beyond the mortal plane.” As Shin-Ae’s unruly soundtrack plays unexpectedly, both preacher and congregation are clearly perplexed, but opt instead to *drown out* the distraction by praying even more loudly. The chorus of a popular Kim Choo-Ja song—“lies, lies, lies”—stand as a damning indictment of this sort of spirituality, to a certain extent typical of revivalistic Korean Protestantism.⁴⁵

In the same way that “the falsity of [the friends’] position against Job” is revealed by its inability to “achieve its goal,” the explanations offered to Shin-Ae are demonstrated to be impotent in alleviating her situation.⁴⁶ To be fair, it needs to be noted that the positions parroted by Job’s or Shin-Ae’s friends are not theologically wrong *in and of themselves*. As Brevard Childs argues, the author of Job “does not offer an absolute value judgment on

the wisdom concept proffered by the friends or the responses of Job *apart from that specific context*.”⁴⁷ Arguably, regardless of one’s denominational persuasion, submission to God’s “inscrutable decrees” and trusting in God’s mysterious will are important aspects of discipleship within the Christian religion. Thus, in Shin-Ae’s case, we can similarly contend that her church’s error lies essentially in its blind, mechanical application of conventional theological explanations to her particular situation.

In contrast, the God who shows up at the end of the biblical text is one who exceeds—and indeed, defies—all rational explanation:

The book of Job ... is not so much concerned with the *awefulness* of the majesty of the numen as with its *mysteriousness*; it is concerned with the non-rational in the sense of the irrational, with sheer paradox baffling comprehension, with that which challenges the ‘reasonable’ and what might be reasonably expected, which goes directly against the grain of reason.⁴⁸

In the same way that God’s awesome interrogation of Job about the scope of creation does not so much answer Job’s questions about his suffering and the injustice in the world as it *transcends* it, the conclusion of *Secret Sunshine* resists all attempts at easy doctrinal formulation. As Shin-Ae is released from the mental facility, visits a hair salon (before storming out because the hairdresser turns out to be Do-Seob’s daughter), and finally ends up in her own backyard trying to remedy her own hair, neither Shin-Ae nor the viewer is given an explicit answer to the common theodicy question of how and why a good God could allow the kind of suffering she has endured. The film’s final shot—an entirely nondescript patch of soil in her backyard, littered with a yellow plastic container and flanked by a puddle of muddy water, set to the murmur of indecipherable background noise—is *thick with enigma*. Like the biblical text, the mysterious poeticism of the film’s final sequences is “continually astonishing in its power and inventiveness,” fraught with a “compression [that] allows multiple possibilities of interpretation” and “compelling us to see things in new ways.”⁴⁹

“Secret Sunshine”: Three Allegories

In *Answer to Job*, Carl Jung writes:

[The] ruling moral principle, although excellent to begin with, in time loses its essential connection with life, since it no longer embraces life’s variety and abundance. What is rationally correct is too narrow a concept to grasp life in its totality and give it permanent expression.⁵⁰

As we have seen, the conclusion of *Secret Sunshine*, like the biblical text, disables rigid applications of conventional theological principles to Shin-Ae’s situation. Such principles are “too narrow ... to grasp life in its totality,” and any framework of understanding that is to do proper justice to the film must be sensitive, dynamic, and creative enough to capture the profound existential tensions and mysteries it raises. If the message of the film is not simply one of nihilism, which the final shot could ostensibly suggest, then what wisdom does it offer? Taking cue from Goethe’s reading of Job, might we not say that the “wisdom” *Secret Sunshine* proffers, mirroring the life of its protagonist, straddles the paradoxical line between “meaning and meaninglessness, sense and nonsense, that which promotes and that which frustrates human ends”?⁵¹ In this section, based on the conviction that *allegory* stands as a fundamental method of “saving whole texts” from the “charge of falsehood and nonsense,”

I will attempt to unravel the mystery behind the eponymous “secret sunshine” by proposing three allegorical interpretations of the film.⁵²

Shin-Ae’s Suffering as Journey Toward True Self and God

The first allegorical interpretation that the film invites us into plays on two significant names: in the Chinese (*hanja*), the town to which Shin-Ae relocates is called “Miryang,” which literally means “secret sunshine”; her own name is composed of two characters meaning “faith” and “love.” As the film opens, we see her asking Jong-Chan pensively: “what is Miryang like?” In diverse ways, all that she learns in the rest of the film comes as a protracted answer to this question. Hence, Shin-Ae’s story tells the necessary journey of faith and love: as she discovers Miryang to be a place of suffering and desolation, she existentially experiences the true meaning of *her* name and the One whom it points to, paving the way to the hope and life that might be hidden there.

In the epilogue of the book of Job, we are told that Job suffers precisely because God declares him a “blameless and upright” believer; the trials that come his way are all designed to vindicate God’s confident pronouncement upon him, to demonstrate the extent of his devotion to God.⁵³ In the plot of *Secret Sunshine*, the sequence seems to be reversed: *because* Shin-Ae suffers, she ends up in church and converts. But allegorically, it will be argued that suffering comes upon her according to the same logic as it does with Job: it *illustrates* and *vindicates* the meaning of “faith and love” (an epithet not unlike Job’s). Though radical, this interpretation is actually something to which director Lee Chang-Dong leaves his film open. “Shin stands for belief and ae is for love,” he points out, “you can interpret them as having a particular meaning.”⁵⁴ And if the Deity whom Shin-Ae seeks to worship, rebel against or flee from is indeed a God of faith and love, then what God said of Paul can also apply to her: “I myself will show [her] how much [she] must suffer for the sake of my name.”⁵⁵

Though apparently similar, the difference between Christian masochism and this mode of theological reasoning lies here: whereas the former elevates “the passivity of a ‘quietistic endurance,’” the latter views suffering essentially as “a form of change that a person experiences,” as a “mode of becoming” that seeks to creatively allow suffering to *make one more human*.⁵⁶ Arguably, at many points within the film there appears to be a grave disjuncture—an ontic detachment, as it were—between the habits of Korean evangelicalism and the all-too-human suffering that Shin-Ae is enduring.⁵⁷ This is evident, for instance, in the scene where the prim and proper church ladies affectedly sing birthday songs to Shin-Ae in a café, utterly oblivious of her obvious unease and absence of mind, as pristine classical music pipes faintly in the background. Further, right before we are given an internal glimpse of the prayer meeting that has again been called for Shin-Ae toward the end of the film, we see her standing in a distance from the apartment where it is being held. Alone in the dark, her arms are tightly folded, her eyes seething with mute pain as she looks in. This visage is promptly juxtaposed with a cut to the apartment’s bright-lit interior, where her well-meaning friends engage in fervid supplication for her healing—until the shattering of a window rudely breaks the thin serenity. And while it is not our place to condemn the church elder for succumbing to Shin-Ae’s advances (in spite of his decent demeanor), what we can observe in his brand of religiosity is a grave disparity between professed faith and lived life.

The final sequences of the film, as Shin-Ae leaves the hospital and returns home, form a deep meditation on the humanizing nature of suffering. Viktor Frankl’s reflections on his experiences in Auschwitz provide a platform for our discussion. He writes:

For what then matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one's predicament into a human achievement. When we are no longer able to change a situation—just think of an incurable disease such as inoperable cancer—we are challenged to change ourselves.⁵⁸

Though devastated by the loss of all that she holds dear in her life, Shin-Ae's achievement at the end of the film comes not in any grandiose or triumphalistic fashion, but simply in her will to carry on. Her desire to cut her hair on her day of discharge reveals an internal decision of hope she has made for "what shall become of [her]," to retain her human dignity in the face of her suffering.⁵⁹ The incident at the salon can also be seen as a microcosm of her falling apart and eventual coming together. In the same way that she moved to Miryang after the death of her husband for a fresh start, only to be struck by tragedy, Shin-Ae opts to cut her hair in order to mark another new beginning to her life—but that, too, is interrupted as she storms out indignantly. However, her attempt to remedy her haircut herself shows a certain tenacity of spirit to make the best out of her situation, signaling the "human capacity to creatively turn life's negative aspects into something positive or constructive."⁶⁰

As Shin-Ae sits placidly snipping away at her hair, looking into a *mirror* at her scarred being-in-the-world, what she has attained is not just a greater self-knowledge, but also, perhaps, a deeper knowledge of *God*. The strength that she finds within herself comes from her acceptance of pain as "part of [her] nature";⁶¹ as Lee Chang-Dong himself notes: "She is in such pain, but in the end, she finds something inside herself."⁶² In this way, is not the *Imago Dei* that Shin-Ae bears in her humanness the very conduit through which she inchoately experiences the life of God revealed in the figure of the suffering Christ? After she barges out of the salon, we see vestigial signs of her awareness that her life is *Coram Deo*. Glaring up into the skies, thinking that it was God who ordained for her to have her hair cut by Do-Seob's daughter, Shin-Ae's heart still dwells in the land of God-forsakenness; she cannot hide from her belief that God exists, but she feels abandoned and taunted. Yet there is redemption even here. Jung's trenchant analysis of Christ's cry of dereliction—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—applies with as much force to Job's situation as it does to Shin-Ae's:

Here his human nature attains divinity; at that moment God experiences what it means to be a mortal man and drinks to the dregs what he made his faithful servant suffer. Here is given the answer to Job and, clearly, this supreme moment is as divine as it is human, as 'eschatological' as it is 'psychological.'⁶³

It is thus in this very state of "divine conflict," where she carries "the symbol of the cross" in her soul, that her "human nature attains divinity" by unwitting participation in the God-forsakenness of Christ upon the cross.⁶⁴ At the same time, does not the loss of her son thrust her straight into the Trinitarian pain of the Father separated from the Son? In this dark night of Shin-Ae's suffering, the "secret sunshine" of mystic illumination enkindled within—"so secret that the soul cannot speak of it and give it a name whereby it may be called"⁶⁵—may be named as the illumination of the hidden Christ "who gives light to [everyone]."⁶⁶ And like Job, whose protests fall to silence after his eyes have seen God, the silence that Shin-Ae carries at the end of the film is one born of having beheld, however dimly, the image of the suffering God through the mirror of her own being.⁶⁷

Jong-Chan as Empathic Immanuel

The second allegorical interpretation we shall now consider concerns the Christological significance of the male protagonist Jong-Chan, the genial mechanic in love with Shin-Ae. In an interview, Lee Chang-Dong reveals his intention to cast him as the “light and bright and funny” foil to Shin-Ae’s “tragic character.”⁶⁸ In fact, in a deft moment of dramatic irony, the director has Jong-Chan himself confess (to a chef friend) about the “comic melodrama” role he plays, as if he were the bridge between a smile and a tear. Upon closer examination, we may discern a deeper theological discourse within this character. Arguably, the characters of his name in Chinese—“Jong” could mean “religion” or “ultimate”, and “Chan” could mean “praise” or “radiance”—seem to invite allegoresis. But without making too much of this, in many ways Jong-Chan’s story does incarnate a form of “radiance of religion” that brings “ultimate praise” to God. For if Job’s call “for the advocate, the redeemer . . . is to be understood only as the unanswered cry of the pre-Christian world which finds its answer in Christ,” then in the Christianized world of *Secret Sunshine*, Shin-Ae’s anguished cries for help (as she staggers wounded through the streets), as we shall see, find their answer in the unlikely person of Jong-Chan.⁶⁹

Jong-Chan’s Christological role as Shin-Ae’s advocate plays, to begin with, in the way he gently stands up for her when her mother-in-law hurls abuses at her after Jun’s funeral. “Surely you can see that the mother is suffering more than anyone,” he says in her defence, incurring the ire of her relatives. It is also interesting to note that when Do-Seob is first hauled into the police station, Jong-Chan lunges at him in violent indignation, performing for Shin-Ae the very thing, she later reveals, she wanted to do but did not (“When I saw him under arrest . . . why did I turn away? I wanted to tear him in pieces”). All these gestures arise essentially from Jong-Chan’s posture of love and kindness toward her, from his will to perpetually come alongside in her suffering. As he squats down uncouthly after the funeral for a smoke, the camera cuts from him to the dazed Shin-Ae, who is also squatting: a sign of his caring identification with her situation. He soon expresses his concern for her by asking if she would like a cup of coffee. In contrast to the “demonic divine” whom Shin-Ae thinks is stalking her, Jong-Chan, who is with her even before she reaches Miryang and who stays with her till the very end, embodies the compassionate solidarity of God who is “always with a man in suffering.”⁷⁰

Indeed, throughout the film Jong-Chan exemplifies nothing less than the incarnational empathy characteristic to the best forms of pastoral counseling,

the ability to identify with and experience another person’s experiences. This is accomplished by (as much as possible) suspending one’s own frame of reference in order to enter the perceptual and emotional world of the other.⁷¹

Unlike Shin-Ae’s zealot neighbour whose chief agenda is to convert her to the faith, and unlike the church elder who succumbs to the opportunity to lie with Shin-Ae in her moment of grieving psychological instability, Jong-Chan puts her needs and feelings before all else, seeking first to enter into her world. For instance, when Shin-Ae calls him in the middle of the night and tells him that Do-Seob had called her from prison, he willingly suspends his own frame of reference. Assuring her that he would contact the prison the next day to check if Do-Seob really did call, no matter how absurd this claim might be, he illustrates an empathy marked by “a sense of openness, wonder, flexibility, and play.”⁷² Jong-Chan’s empathic care toward Shin-Ae proves all the more valuable in light of the context they are in, where “the ministry of comfort to grieving Korean Christians is inhibited by the Korean cultural values of collectivism and authoritarianism.”⁷³ Where Shin-Ae’s

Christian community proves less than conducive for her to properly come to terms with her grief, and where Shin-Ae's relatives are either absent or unsympathetic, Jong-Chan emerges as virtually the only presence whom she is able to call out to in her distress.

Because of Jong-Chan's capacity for and desire toward empathic understanding, the "secret sunshine" that he brings her to *and* brings to her is one that illuminates Shin-Ae's road toward deeper self-understanding. Throughout the film, he exhibits an amazing perceptiveness toward the inner workings of Shin-Ae's heart. Not only does he dissuade her from registering Jun's death so soon, knowing that she will not be able to take it ("Why go through this when it will break your heart?"), he also senses something amiss when she announces her intention to visit Do-Seob ("This doesn't feel right . . . Going to the prison to forgive him in person. It just doesn't feel necessary. You're not a saint, you know"). And in the same way that he is the only one in Miryang who calls her by her real name (others address her as "Mrs Lee," in reference to her dead husband, or as "June Piano," according to her profession), like the mirror of God's word in which believers come to know themselves he is also the one who holds up the mirror for Shin-Ae to cut her own hair—a poignant representation of how "we *can* coach each other on finding access to the resources that will permit us to summon courage and faith from within ourselves."⁷⁴

Despite his provincial demeanor, in caring for the widowed Shin-Ae and not taking advantage of her in her weakness, Jong-Chan consistently proves himself to be a practitioner of "true religion."⁷⁵ What is even more remarkable, though, is his complete lack of self-consciousness about his virtues. Unlike the strenuous, deliberate religiosity of many other Christians depicted, all that he does flows spontaneously from who he *is*. The naturalness of Jong-Chan's internalized faith in God is encapsulated in his explanation, to Shin-Ae's brother toward the end of the film, of why he still attends church: "I started going because of Shin-Ae. Now it's become a habit. If I don't go, I miss it. If I do go, I feel kind of peaceful." Free of religious jargon, the honesty and simplicity of his words witness to an entirely different kind of *Sensus Divinitatis*.

The Transcendent Quotidian

The preceding discussion on the simplicity of Jong-Chan's faith leads us to our third and final allegorical exploration of the "secret sunshine" presented in the film. In an interview, Lee Chang-Dong speaks of a specific message he sought to convey through the film:

I wanted to throw this question out to the audience: In our lifetime, what is God? And if there is a God, what is the hidden truth? *If* there is a God, I think the meaning of God is that we need to find reality for ourselves right here on Earth, in terms of the meaning of life, grace, redemption, all of that. It's all right here before us.⁷⁶

From the vantage point of theological aesthetics, Lee Chang-Dong's "if" is a "wager on transcendence": the "conjecture that God is," and that because of this the film medium "lives on and generates worlds."⁷⁷ This final section attempts to affirm the wager by exploring the ways in which *Secret Sunshine*—in particular its final scene—reflects the director's own vision: that the glory of the Divine, if it exists, is to be found not in some removed or distant reality, but rather in the hidden midst of this-worldly, quotidian existence.

Unlike the happy ending in the book of Job, at the end of film we see neither a child given to Shin-Ae nor her fortunes restored. Yet, there are seeds of promise. Just as Job is reconciled to his friends by praying for them, the boutique owner (who had formerly gossiped about Shin-Ae) tells Shin-Ae that her suggestion to brighten the colour of the

shop has worked to improve her business; that Shin-Ae has brought a blessing to some of Miryang's inhabitants suggests that a peace of sorts has been made between her and the town of her desolation. And though she still seems to treat Jong-Chan rather coldly, her brother's acceptance of him (he reminds Jong-Chan to give the flowers to her at the hospital, and agrees to meet him for drinks the next time he returns to Miryang) and the fact that she assents to Jong-Chan's proposition to a celebration date hints at her tacit acceptance of his affections. All these are signs, as noted earlier, of Shin-Ae's slow and gradual readjustment to life *in* her loss. Reflecting on the nature of God's love that abides with patients of post-traumatic stress disorder, Serene Jones and Cynthia L. Rigby write:

What is the form of love? It has no corollary, no mimetic twin. It simply is the truth of that moment, in all its inexhaustible particularity. And the good news it reveals to her and yes, to us is that even if she never knows or acts as the creative, glorifying woman she was created to be, her glory shines nevertheless. It shines in the inexhaustible and brilliant particularity of her existence, in all its horrifying, lost details. *That glory is simply the truth of her life.* What could be more unexpected, more unmerited, than the sturdy reality that in God, she is loved; she is glorified and glorifies . . . her future need not depend on past memories she will never reclaim; her acceptance by God—and God's trust in her—transcends and thus renders impotent her nonexistent trust in others.⁷⁸

Far from the theology of glory that sees divine presence only in strength and might, Jones's and Rigby's words aptly describe, from the perspective of the theology of the cross, the *scarred beauty* that Shin-Ae's human frame bears. Whether or not she is able to rise again to be the accomplished pianist she used to be before the death of her husband and child, the music she now creates is the *music of her very existence*, where (as J. R. R. Tolkien would put it) the cacophony of tragedy has been weaved into the larger symphony of divinely-graced-being-in-the-world.⁷⁹ In all this, what is adumbrated is the presence of an invisible Providence that ensures "a creative and saving possibility implied in every situation, which cannot be destroyed by any event."⁸⁰

At the end of the biblical story, Job's confession is an "admission of inward *convincement* and conviction" of God's transcendence and mystery, and "not of impotent collapse and submission to merely superior power";⁸¹ Job falls silent because with his eyes he has seen the God who creates and upholds "things too wonderful for [him] to know."⁸² In light of the remarkable propinquities between the biblical text and *Secret Sunshine* that we have hitherto developed, perhaps the final shot with which the film closes is the very revelation of the same God unveiled to Job, only now found in the ordinary and dilapidated. Though *Secret Sunshine* opens with a shot of the vast panorama of the skies, and though Shin-Ae constantly gazes heavenward when referring to God, the closing shot of the patch of ground in Shin-Ae's backyard bears eloquent testimony to how transcendence is to be sought in *immanent* reality. While certainly more humble than the splendid pageant of creation that Job beholds, do not the soiled earth, the forgotten litter, and the weed that sways softly in the wind no less flow from the same "fountain of all being?"⁸³ Indeed, as Karl Rahner puts it, "the very commonness of everyday things harbors the eternal marvel and silent mystery of God."⁸⁴

Conclusion

In the same way that Miryang, in Jong-Chan's words, is "like anywhere else—same place, same people," the story of *Secret Sunshine* could too be the story of anyone who treads the

path of faith and love. By way of supplementing the one absent theological virtue in Shin-Ae's name, in the final analysis there are three things that the present study hopes to have achieved. First, from our comparative study of the film in light of essential themes from the book of Job, it is hoped that some light has been cast on the Dostoevskian "eternal questions" of theodicy, loss, and human suffering raised in the film. Second, by considering three allegorical possibilities for the hidden significance of "secret sunshine," it is hoped that this essay might offer some insights into how the film could be used, in conjunction with myriad theological resources (whether biblical, systematic, pastoral, philosophical, or existential) for pastoral counseling purposes in grief, loss, or trauma. Above all, it is hoped that this study might have helped open our ears to hear—in our own existential tongues—the voice of the Lord that speaks, ever so secretly, through the film. For if "to listen to [the book of Job] is to listen to the Master's voice,"⁸⁵ the "inexpressible eloquence and suggestiveness" of the indecipherable background noises accompanying the final shot—even that of the sound of our own heartbeats, when the music eventually fades—could perchance be the very voice of God to us in the midst of our suffering, in the thick of our days.⁸⁶

Notes

1. David J. A. Clines, "Job," *New Bible Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 484.
2. Theodore H. Robinson, *The Poetry of the Old Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1947), 68.
3. The New York Film Festival, "Secret Sunshine," <http://filmlinc.com/archive/nyff/2007/program/films/secretsunshine.html>, (accessed 1 April, 2010).
4. Dennis Lim, "A Portraitist of a Subdued Literary Korea," *New York Times*, September 30, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/30/movies/30lim.html> (accessed 25 May 2008).
5. Lee Chung-Joon, *Story of Worm*, cited on <http://blog.naver.com/damho67?Redirect=Log&logNo=150017852534> (accessed 4 June 2008). I am indebted to Charity Kwon for her inestimable help in research and translation here.
6. Joan Dupont, "Cannes: 'Secret Sunshine,' a Mysterious Journey of Faith," *New York Times*, May 23, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/23/arts/23iht-cannes24.1.5835562.html> (accessed 1 April 2010). In an interview prior to the film's release, Lee Chang-Dong explains: "The motif—a woman losing her child to a kidnapper is the same. But the way the film unfolds is different. The film doesn't focus on the incident. It focuses on what happens after the incident" (Young-jin Kim, *Lee Chang-dong*, trans. Sang-hee Park [Seoul: Seoul Selection, 2007], 80).
7. Job 1:12–19 (NRSV). Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotations are from the NRSV.
8. Kenneth R. Mitchell and Herbert Anderson, *All our Losses All our Grievs* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 36–46.
9. Jong Tae Lee, *Grief, Loss, Death, and Dying*, Lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, California, June 2, 2008.
10. Job 1:16–8.
11. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Harold Jenkins ed., (New York: Methuen, 1982), 4.5.78–9.
12. Job 16:2.
13. Job 7:13–15.
14. Y. Spiegel, *The Grief Process; Analysis and Counseling*, 62–83, qtd. in Gu-Hwa Hong Yi, *The Role of Comfort to Korean Grieving Christians*, Th.M. Dissertation, Calvin Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 2001), 30.
15. Job 7:20.
16. Psalm 139:7.
17. Job 30:20.
18. Job 10:21–22 (NIV).

19. Moshe Greenberg, "Job," In *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 299.
20. Helmut Thielicke, qtd. in Ray S. Anderson, *Theology, Death and Dying* (New York: Basil, Blackwell & Sons, 1986), 58.
21. André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* 106.
22. Job 7:17–18.
23. *Secret Sunshine*, dir. Lee Chang-Dong, 2007, DVD.
24. Cf. Mitchell and Anderson, *All Our Losses, All Our Grievs*, 118.
25. John Goldingay, *Walk On* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 33.
26. Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1975), 112.
27. Job 6:4.
28. Job 16:9 (NIV).
29. Robert S. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 113, 117. I am in part indebted to this book for the title of this essay.
30. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 31, 185.
31. Jinsoon An, "Christianity in Korean Melodrama," *South Korean Golden Age of Melodrama: Gender, Genre, and National Cinema* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 70.
32. Job 1:21.
33. Cf. Job 27:5–6: "Far be it from me to say that you are right; until I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness, and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days."
34. Job 10:1.
35. Cf. Job 10:4: "Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as humans see?"
36. Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Knopf, 1956), 55–61.
37. Anderson, *Theology, Death, and Dying*, 133.
38. Job 32:2.
39. Job 13:12.
40. Goldingay, *Walk On*, 35.
41. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Paulist, 1984), 482.
42. Lewis Smedes, *Forgive and Forget* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 95–8.
43. Soelle, *Suffering*, 22.
44. Goldingay, *Walk On*, 35.
45. Timothy S. Lee notes, in fact, that "(Korean) Protestantism is predominantly Revivalism" (quoted in An, "Christianity in Korean Melodrama," 94). See Timothy S. Lee, "Born Again in Korea: The Rise and Character of Revivalism in (South) Korea, 1885-1988" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1996).
46. Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 535.
47. *Ibid.*, 536, italics mine.
48. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 100.
49. Greenberg, "Job," 303.
50. Carl Jung, *Answer to Job*, qtd. in J. Marvin Spiegelman, "C. J. Jung's Answer to Job: A Half Century Later," *Journal of Jungian Theory and Practice*, 8, 1 (2006): 1.
51. Quoted in Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 151.
52. Gerald Bruns, "Midrash and Allegory: The Beginnings of Scriptural Interpretation," in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, ed., *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 641.
53. Job 1:1.
54. Amber Wilkinson, "Secrets Behind the Sunshine," <http://www.eyeforfilm.co.uk/feature.php?id=442> (accessed 27 May 2008).

55. Acts 9:16.
56. Soelle, *Suffering*, 98, 5.
57. The “characteristic features” of Korean Protestantism observed by Jinsoo An—such as “loud and fervent praying, combined with confessions of deep-felt faith, cheerful singing, and praise for the Lord”—are all depicted, plainly and objectively, in *Secret Sunshine* (An, “Christianity in Korean Melodrama,” 70).
58. Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), 135.
59. *Ibid.*, 87.
60. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, 162.
61. Kazoh Kitamori, qtd in Soelle, *Suffering*, 44.
62. *New York Times*, “Cannes: ‘Secret Sunshine’, a Mysterious Journey of Faith.”
63. Jung, *Answer to Job*, qtd in Spiegelman, “C. J. Jung’s Answer to Job,” 5.
64. *Ibid.*, 6.
65. St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, trans. E. Allison Peers (New York: Image, 2005), 170, 173.
66. John 1:9.
67. Job 42:5.
68. Wilkinson, “Secrets Behind the Sunshine.”
69. Soelle, *Suffering*, 119.
70. Meister Eckhart, qtd. in Soelle, *Suffering*, 97.
71. D. E. Massey, “Empathy,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Rodney J. Hunter, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 354.
72. Marie McCarthy, “Empathy: A Bridge Between,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 46, 2 (Summer 1992): 124.
73. Gu-Hwa Hong Yi, *The Role of Comfort to Korean Grieving Christians*, 2.
74. Anderson, *Theology, Death, and Dying*, 136.
75. James 1:27.
76. Scott Foundas, “Lee Chang-Dong Lets the Sunshine In,” *LA Weekly*, October 31, 2007, <http://www.laweekly.com/2007-11-01/film-tv/lee-chang-dong-lets-the-sunshine-in/> (accessed 1 April 2010).
77. George Steiner, *Real Presences* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 4.
78. Serene Jones and Cynthia L. Rigby, “Sin, Creativity, and the Christian Life,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, XXV, 3 (2004): 283, emphasis mine.
79. See Ralph Wood, “The Catholic Fantastic of Chesterton and Tolkien,” *First Things*, <http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2008/01/the-catholic-fantastic-of-ches> (accessed 10 April 2010).
80. Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Scribner, 1948), 107.
81. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 78.
82. Job 42:3 (NIV).
83. The Westminster Confession of Faith, II.2.
84. Qtd. in Robert K. Johnston, *Useless Beauty: Ecclesiastes Through the Lens of Contemporary Film* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 11.
85. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You*, 190.
86. Frederick Buechner, *The Sacred Journey: A Memoir of Early Days* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1982), 3.

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