Responding to the onset of tipping points evokes a combination of fear, bravado, greed, wonder, and worship. The Christian ethos bestows responsibility and care upon the human conscience and behaviour, widening the perspective to compassion, to living for sufficiency, and to sharing burdens. In tipping points there can be hope without fear so long as the ethics are firmly but respectfully in place.

Wonder Reborn
Thomas H. Troeger

This book explores an issue at the nerve of the long-term health of all churches: how godly wonder can be reborn through renewed attention to the place of beauty in preaching and worship. The book opens with an exploration of the theological and cultural difficulties of defining beauty. It traces the church’s historical ambivalence about beauty and art, and how in our own day the concept of beauty has been commercialized and degraded. Troeger develops a theologically informed aesthetic that provides a countercultural vision of beauty flowing from the love of God. The book then demonstrates how preachers can reclaim the place of beauty in preaching and worship. Chapter 2 employs the concept of midrash to mine the history of congregational song as a resource for sermons. Chapter 3 introduces methods from musicology for creating sermons on instrumental and choral works and for integrating word and music more effectively. Chapter 4 explores how the close relationship between poetry and prayer can stir the homiletical
imagination. Each of these chapters includes a selection of the author’s sermons illustrating how preachers can use these varied art forms to open a congregation to the beauty of God. A final chapter recounts the responses of congregation members to whom the sermons were delivered. It uses the insights gained from those experiences to affirm how the human heart hungers for a vision of wonder and beauty that empowers people to live more faithfully in the world.

Taken for Wonder
Naghmeh Sohrabi

This book focuses on travelogues by Iranians traveling to Europe in the nineteenth century. It argues for an interpretive framework that moves away from an overemphasis on the destinations of travel (particularly in cases where the destination, such as Europe, signifies larger meanings such as modernity) and that historicizes the travelogue itself as a rhetorical text in the service of its origin’s concerns and developments. Within this framework, this book demonstrates the ways in which travel writings from Iran to Europe were used to position Qajar Iran (1794–1925) within a global context—that is, narration of travel to Europe was also narrating the power of the Qajar court even when political events were tipped against it—and relatedly, how both travel to Europe and also translations of travel narratives into Persian should be included in our understanding of the importance of geography and mapping to the Qajars, especially during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In this process, it also reexamines the notion that Iranian modernity was the chief outcome of Iranians traveling in and writing about Europe.

The Seven Pillars of Creation
William P. Brown

Funded by the Henry Luce III Foundation, this study explores the significance of the ancient creation traditions of the Hebrew Bible in light of the discoveries and perspectives of science. The aim, however, is not to seek an artificial harmony that forces Scripture to fit science or science to fit Scripture. Rather, the goal is to facilitate a constructive dialogue between two independent disciplines that are rooted in wonder
— biblical theology and science — in order to gain new wisdom about how to live responsibly in the world, to care for creation. The overarching question is: How do we interpret and appropriate the ancient creation traditions in the light of what we now know from science? Put another way, this study is an exercise in hermeneutics, an interpretive venture that seeks to discern how science transforms our understanding of the biblical text in ways clearly unimagined by the biblical authors themselves. In certain cases, science deepens and underscores the interpretive scope of the ancient text. In other cases, science limits and refocuses the text’s relevance. The study concludes with an appeal to forge a working relationship between science and biblical faith for developing a theologically and empirically informed ecological wisdom.

Cosmic Wonder and Cosmological Arguments for God
C. Stephen Evans

in Natural Signs and Knowledge of God: A New Look at Theistic Arguments
Published in print: 2010 Published Online: May 2010
Publisher: Oxford University Press
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Item type: chapter

This chapter argues that a theistic natural sign pointing to God’s existence lies at the core of cosmological arguments; this sign is called “cosmic wonder” and is sometimes elicited by considering questions like “Why is there something rather than nothing?” The author first explains some of the different types of the cosmological arguments, argues that the Easy Resistibility Principle explains why we should not be surprised that they fail as conclusive proofs, and considers the thesis that Cosmic Wonder is the source of the persistent intuition that undergirds the arguments. Finally, it is argued that traditional theists, non-traditional theists, and non-theists often sense the force of Cosmic Wonder. This fact indicates that it is widely accessible as a sign.

Introduction
William P. Brown

in The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder
Published in print: 2010 Published Online: May 2010
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Item type: chapter

This chapter explores how science and faith can be related positively, despite the deep polarization that exists on the cultural level, thanks
to the constant skirmishing between creationism and “soulless scientism.” On the academic level, discussions about theology and science tend to overlook Scripture as a fundamental source of insight. Biblical faith and science share a common sense of wonder, even mystery, that fosters active inquiry about the world. If theology is “faith seeking understanding” and science is “understanding seeking further understanding,” then theology has much to gain from science. But by inviting science into the world of the Bible, traditional notions of authority must be redefined, and the Bible’s diversity must be taken into account. The author identifies seven diverse creation traditions and outlines a method of inquiry that proceeds from exploring the biblical text within its own context to appropriating the text in the context of modern science.

Wonder and the Moral Emotions
Robert C. Fuller

in Spirituality in the Flesh: Bodily Sources of Religious Experiences
Published in print: 2008 Published Online: 2008 Publisher: Oxford University Press
September 2008 DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195369175.003.0003
Item type: chapter

The emotion of wonder is among our genetically encoded programs for responding to unexpected features of the environment. Wonder is distinct from other emotions in its ability to foster receptivity, openness, metaphysical thinking, and moral sensitivity. Biological and psychological studies of wonder help us understand the moods and motivations that distinguish aesthetic spirituality or nature religion.

TRANSCEENDING OUR STORIES: THE POETICS OF SPIRITUAL AGING
William L Randall and A. Elizabeth McKim

in Reading Our Lives: The poetics of growing old
Published in print: 2008 Published Online: 2008 Publisher: Oxford University Press
September 2008 DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195306873.003.0010
Item type: chapter

This chapter argues that spiritual aging is ultimately a narrative endeavor. After considering the relationship between spirituality and wisdom, aging, and religion, it proposes that spirituality has to do with transcending our lifestories. The inevitability of death is then explored from a poetic perspective, with death seen as having an aesthetic necessity, as The End. Along such lines, the chapter critiques the
notion of “successful aging.” The powerful role of master narratives in the formation of individuals' lifestories is considered next, as is the idea that a life can be conceived as a sacred story, or parable, with limitless potential for meaning. The chapter then enlists the concepts of gerotranscendence, generativity, and genealogy to trace the various ways in which, effectively, we let our stories go. It argues that the recognition of the open-endedness of our stories and the experience of wonder at their mystery is a hallmark of spiritual growth.

Wonder Reborn through Beauty
Thomas H. Troeger

in Wonder Reborn: Creating Sermons on Hymns, Music, and Poetry

The final chapter returns to themes of the first chapter: the overtones of beauty and a theologically informed aesthetic. But now the author examines these concepts in light of the illustrative sermons and the experience of particular listeners as they received the sermon and the hymn or music or poem on which it was based. Although each sermon awakened some overtones more than others, there was a broad and grateful response for the sense of the Spirit that came through the integration of sermon and art. Reflecting on these varied responses, the author concludes that the place of beauty in preaching is far more than adding ornament to a fundamentally prosaic proclamation of the gospel. Rather, it lies at the heart of the church’s witness to Christ. We make room in our preaching and worship for beauty so that wonder may be reborn as God is known and experienced anew.

Introduction
Marina Belozerskaya

in Medusa’s Gaze: The Extraordinary Journey of the Tazza Farnese

The Introduction briefly outlines the history of the Tazza and its changing fortunes from a prized possession of the mightiest rulers to little known ancient artifact today. It acknowledges the gaps in evidence and the approach taken in this study—cultural history that seeks to reconstruct
the locations the bowl inhabited, the characters it enthralled, and the significance it held for them.

Introduction
Mushirul Hasan

in Exploring the West: Three Travel Narratives

In this introduction, the author expresses his praise to God as he shares his account of his travel to Europe. A pilgrim and traveller, he compiled his experiences in a book containing the wonders and curiosities that he saw in different European countries. He hopes that ‘those who see this book may reap the whole advantage of it (without labour), I have abridged it, and as a mark by which I may be remembered, I have placed it in the library of the world’.

The Natural Philosophy in Smith's Essays
Gloria Vivenza

in Adam Smith and the Classics: The Classical Heritage in Adam Smith's Thought

Deals with Adam Smith's juvenile essays on natural philosophy, and shows that some of Smith's methodological principles were partially grounded on ancient theories. The content of the chapter analyses both Smith's historical reconstruction of the ancient doctrines, and the classical heritage in his own scientific and methodological approach.

Rethinking Innocence
Gary Cross

in The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture
Innocence may define the modern child, but it has done so with great ambiguity. One version of the innocent presumes virginal sanctity in the spontaneous child, the other, a vulnerable but malleable creature on a course to maturity. All this has left modern parents rehearsing again and again the same frustrations as they endlessly shift between permissiveness in search of the self-actualizing youngster and control in an effort to mold the superchild. There is no simple solution to the dilemma, and any answer will require us to go beyond conventional child-rearing strategies to thinking about how adults use children to cope with their own contradictions. The commercialization of wonder was a product of aggressive marketing, revolutionary media, and an increasingly child-centered, child-indulgent family. Is there any alternative to the path from the cute to the cool? This depends on whether wonder can be separated from commercialism.

The Coy Cult Text: The Man Who Wasn’t There as Noir SF
Mark Bould

in Science Fiction Double Feature: The Science Fiction Film as Cult Text
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
DOI: 10.5949/liverpool/9781781381830.003.0003

This chapter first discusses the genre proficiency and playfulness of the Coen brothers. It then considers the ways in which the Coens situate specific objects in their mise-en-scéne so as to imbue them with meaningfulness, while simultaneously rendering their meanings ambiguous. These objects function like metaphors (and, indeed, puns), pulling together otherwise distinct conceptual domains so as to create brief, sometimes awkward, moments of playful, energetic semiosis. In The Man Who Wasn't There (2001), the objects combine, in a science-fictional mode, two key cult effects: what Stephen J. Greenblatt describes as resonance — ‘the power of the object displayed to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke the complex dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which ... it may be taken ... to stand’ — and wonder — that is, the power ‘to stop the viewer in his tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention'.
The Reluctant Tourist
Naghmeh Sohrabi

in Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe

In 1809, Mirza Abul Hasan Khan Ilchi Shirazi set off for England to negotiate a treaty on behalf of the king, Fath ‘Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834). This chapter examines his account of this journey, Hayratnamah, or The Book of Wonder. Specifically, it argues that Hayratnamah, by detailing the English reception of the king's envoy, was an imperial text that narrated the glory and power of the Qajar king to readers back home at a crucial moment in British-Persian relations.

The Swamp Aesthetic
Matthew Rebhorn

in Pioneer Performances: Staging the Frontier

At the same time as Forrest's Metamora, the frontiersman Wildfire in James Kirke Paulding's drama The Lion of the West (1829) also played a key role in dismantling the kind of performance that led to Buffalo Bill's imperialist melodramas. Wildfire's embodiment of the "wild" frontier challenged the dominant conception of the frontier as sublime, a notion inherited from Edmund Burke, by defining it instead as wondrous. The play represents this aesthetic rift between the wondrous and the sublime through the opposition of its two main characters, the suggestively named Wildfire and the European aesthete, Amelia Wollope. Much to the latter's dismay, Wildfire's performance of the frontier does not identify as the sublime, which uses its reliance on terror and "rules" to reinforce an imperial hierarchy of power. Rather, Wildfire's performance draws from what Philip Fisher calls "the neglected emotion of wonder," an emotion whose reliance on delight and "play" is inherently destabilizing. In this area of encounter and exchange between Europe and America, this play brings Paulding's audience in contact with a frontier that frustrated rather than facilitated imperialism.
Monuments and Megaliths: From Stonehenge to ‘Stonage’
Angus Vine

in In Defiance of Time: Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England
Published in print: 2010 Published Online: September 2010
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199566198.003.0005
Item type: chapter

This chapter considers the antiquarian response to ancient monuments through a detailed account of early modern discussions of Stonehenge. The Wiltshire stone circle enthralled the antiquaries, but it also taxed their imaginations. Enigmatic and inadequately explained in historical sources, it was perhaps the archetypal antiquarian curiosity. The chapter proposes that a new, practical methodology emerged to enable viewers to make sense of such monuments: measurement, or, as it was known at the time, mensuration. This became an important way of describing ancient remains, conveying both their size and their wonder, but it was also increasingly a strategy to interpret or make sense of them. The chapter also explores how Stonehenge became an important locus for the poetic imagination, as poets increasingly commented on the speculation over the monument and also found in its enigma moral and epistemological lessons.

Dickinson’s Precarious Steps, Surprising Leaps, and Bounds
Maurice S. Lee

in Uncertain Chances: Science, Skepticism, and Belief in Nineteenth-Century American Literature
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Item type: chapter

Dickinson’s approach to the limitations of knowledge can be understood in terms of probabilistic expectation, which has profound epistemological and aesthetic consequences for her poetry. As chance becomes increasing visible in American thought and culture, Dickinson pushes beyond a romantic skepticism most powerfully represented by strands of Emerson’s thought to challenge from a probabilistic perspective the providential argument from design. Dickinson is a philosopher of science whose intellectual and formal experiments trace the dynamics between repetitious and aleatory experience. Painfully and wonderfully aware of the impossibility of perfect prediction, Dickinson’s poems enact and theorize chance through its affective correlative, surprise. Surprise not
only describes the effects of Dickinson’s poetry, it also composes a philosophical and religious attitude toward a world that is experienced but never entirely known.

Selected Documents on Eschatological Expectations and Social Change around the Year 1000
David C. Van Meter

in The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050

This chapter provides a collection of selected documents on eschatological expectations and social change around the year 1000. The documents include apocalyptic expectations. The first document mentions Thietland of Einsiedeln on the binding of Satan for one thousand years in Apocalypse. In the second document, a letter about the Hungarians speaks of widespread millenarian reactions among the population. The third document mentions Abbo of Fleury's description on apocalyptic expectations prior to the year 1000. The fourth document was taken from the Chronicle of the Pseudo-William Godellus. Finally, the fifth document speaks of Richard of St. Vanne's description of the second vision of the otherworld experienced by a monk of St. Vaast in 1012. The other documents deal with signs and wonders, relic delations, public penance, and apocalyptic anxieties.

Poetry in Review
Willard Spiegelman

in Imaginative Transcripts: Selected Literary Essays

This chapter discusses Americans poets A. R. Ammons' Bosh and Flapdoodle and John Ashbery's Where Shall I Wander. It suggests that both works are filled with black humor, nostalgia, regret, anticipation, and wonder. It argues that both poets have mastered the American dialect, especially its slang, and neither shies away from plain goofiness, nor does Ammons shy away from bad puns.