12

Intersections, Kairos, and Cyborgs

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Though long assumed at odds, theology and science has become a robust field of study, growing up in the space between formal disciplines. But rather than explaining how a scholar brings two fields together methodologically, I interpret theology and science in terms of an animating trajectory in which theology and science research seeks to re-enchant our experience of the world. Scholars have established that scientific facts need not threaten the process of religious meaning making. Nor are we restricted to hard and fast models of independence – isolating religious belief from the realm of the "real" world science dutifully studied in its workings. At its best, theology and science research (regardless of the religious sensibility informing the theological reflection) is a particular type of public theology engaged in a process of worldview formation.

Theology and science research as a field has had a broader intention in its history, particularly insofar as it is public facing; as it is committed to interpreting sets of religious symbols as a means to ordering existence in congruence with ultimacy,[1] it summons us to a particular way of being in the world with others that constrains how we might live humanly together.[2] In this way, symbols speak to a primordial sphere of vulnerable relationality – a co-constituting, interhuman depth.[3] The relevance and potential meaning of this primordial sensibility communicated by symbols cannot be restricted to any singular, originating community: thus, the public quality of such a theological approach.

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1. See also Robert Cummings Neville, *Ultimates: Philosophical Theology, Vol. 1* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), 15.
2. See Edward Farley, *Deep Symbols: Their Postmodern Effacement and Reclamation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 3-4, 113-15, and 126, ns 4-6.
3. Ibid., 4-6 and 21-23.

Liminal phenomena can provide potent symbols for this public approach to theology and science research. Specifically, liminal phenomena represent kairotic moments in the midst of our everydayness. These moments convey an experience of the divine that challenges our assumptions about what it means to be a self in the midst of the wider world: to understand our ontological status of "being-with" such that we are fundamentally "betwixt and between."

Liminality and Being-With

In Victor Turner's descriptions of liminality, he draws a fascinating connection to Martin Buber's now famous concept of the I-Thou relationship. The connection to Buber provides an existential grounding to Turner's terms: it locates them in wider existential or phenomenological categories that would be familiar to theology and science researchers. Locating liminality in relationship to existing categories used in theology and science research provides a ready-made way to incorporate liminality as a concept.[4] For instance, in describing liminality Turner writes:

> The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial.[5]

The liminal is this space between; it is a state in which the classifications of the everyday are bracketed to reveal an alternative order, a more basic relatedness, which undergirds the everyday power and position exemplified by given cultural norms. When this experience of liminality is consciously recognized, it has an event structure; it is what we might call a "happening" in various forms of philosophical theology. In the liminal event, a dynamic interplay emerges that disrupts or dislocates everyday sensibilities about individuality, socio-spatial borders of convention, and clearly identifiable cultural roles.

It is this dynamism that parallels Buber's account of the I-Thou relationship. For Buber, the experience of relationship – as a "happening" – occurs as a direct and immediate encounter between individuals wherein each recognizes the other as a complete and concrete person. Neither one subsumes

4. It could even be argued that Buber's existential work on the I-Thou relationship is what gives philosophical grounding to Turner's reflections on liminality and communitas as expressions of a relational ontology of co-existence. I have not found any research that makes this case specifically.

5. Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction Publishers, 2011), 95.

the other to a wider universal category.⁶ The I-Thou relationship represents the co-constitutive power of a wholly subject-to-subject relationship. Of course, Buber famously contrasts this I-Thou relation to the attitude of an I-It existence in which the other is objectified.⁷ Crucially, though, in neither pairing can we separate the sense of "I" from its partnered term; when we use the term "I" it stands as a shorthand for one of these pairings.⁸

6. See also Robert E. Wood, *Martin Buber's Ontology: An Analysis of I and Thou*, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 38.

7. For a helpful, basic introduction to Buber's work, see Sarah Scott, "Martin Buber," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed 3 February 2018, http://www.iep.utm.edu/buber/#SH2b. Of course, the seminal descriptions of these relationships, particularly as they are conditioned by the eternal, appear in Martin Buber, *I And Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Touchstone, 1971)."number-of-pages":"192","source":"Amazon","event-place":"New York","abstract":"Martin Buber's I and Thou has long been acclaimed as a classic. Many prominent writers have acknowledged its influence on their work; students of intellectual history consider it a landmark; and the generation born since World War II considers Buber as one of its prophets. The need for a new English translation has been felt for many years. The old version was marred by many inaccuracies and misunderstandings, and its recurrent use of the archaic \"thou\" was seriously misleading. Now Professor Walter Kaufmann, a distinguished writer and philosopher in his own right who was close to Buber, has retranslated the work at the request of Buber's family. He has added a wealth of informative footnotes to clarify obscurities and bring the reader closer to the original, and he has written a long \"Prologue\" that opens up new perspectives on the book and on Buber's thought. This volume should provide a new basis for all future discussions of Buber.","ISBN":"978-0-684-71725-8","language":"English","author":[{"family":"Buber","given":"Martin"}],"translator":[{"family":"Kaufmann","given":"Walter"}],"issued":{"date-parts":[["1971",2,1]]}}]}],"schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"}

8. This point is stressed repeatedly by Buber. See *I And Thou*, 3-4, 21-22, 62, 66-67, and 70."number-of-pages":"192","source":"Amazon","event-place":"New York","abstract":"Martin Buber's I and Thou has long been acclaimed as a classic. Many prominent writers have acknowledged its influence on their work; students of intellectual history consider it a landmark; and the generation born since World War II considers Buber as one of its prophets. The need for a new English translation has been felt for many years. The old version was marred by many inaccuracies and misunderstandings, and its recurrent use of the archaic \"thou\" was seriously misleading. Now Professor Walter Kaufmann, a distinguished writer and philosopher in his own right who was close to Buber, has retranslated the work at the request of Buber's family. He has added a wealth of informative footnotes to clarify obscurities and bring the reader closer to the original, and he has written a long \"Prologue\" that opens up new perspectives on the book and on Buber's thought. This volume should provide a new basis for all future discussions of Buber.","ISBN":"978-0-684-71725-8","language":"English","author":[{"family":"Buber","given":"Martin"}],"translator":[{"family":"Kaufmann","given":"Walter"}],"issued":{"date-parts":[["1971",2,1]]}},"locator":"3-4, 21-22, 62, 66-67, and 70","suppress-author":true,"prefix":"This point is stressed repeatedly by Buber. See"}],"schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"}

When the equality of the I-Thou relationship, where each is a person of dignity before the other, is extended beyond strictly binary relationships, one I and one Thou, the "essential We" begins to emerge.[9] The community of the "essential We" is one in which each person exists solely in I-Thou relationships to the host of other people who are part of the community. As soon as one member of the community violates the spirit of the I-Thou relation in its fundamental respect for the dignified subjectivity of the other, the "essential We" begins to break apart.[10]

The mutual dignity of the I-Thou relationship creates a feeling of betweenness and belonging to one another. Whether describing the I-Thou, the "essential We," or the liminal phenomenon, Turner's foundational work indicates that liminality provides an experience not of solitary being, but an original way of being-with.[11] Liminality is an entry point to describing a minimal ontological premise; it describes the originating and universal experience of existent being as fundamentally an in-between phenomenon. For public-facing theology and science research, this point is crucial in that it locates liminality in a wider tradition of philosophical theology.

For instance, interpreted this way liminality prefigures Jean-Luc Nancy's compelling parallel argument in *Being Singular Plural*, namely, that our being in the world is always a form of being-with that determines our existence from the start. Or, it offers a similar parallel to Martin Heidegger's recognition that there is no being-in-the-world without "being-with" one another.[12] Liminality could denote the fleeting experience of the *mitsein,* being singular/plural, the I-Thou, the chiasmic flesh, relational being, theopoiesis, agentive realism, or processual experience that, when understood, theologically emphasizes the pre-eminence of panentheism. These approaches stress the primacy of relationship to religious or theological thinking because it is through relationality as a fundamental, if impermanent, mode of our experiencing that the divine is made manifest in the midst of the world. Instances of liminality are the symbolic spaces where the premise of ontological relationality is manifest.

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9. Buber stresses that this "we" is not simple collectivism – a conglomeration of individuals. See *Between Man and Man* (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2014), chap. 5.
10. Others have noted the importance of this concept for anthropology and sociology. See, for instance, Maurice Friedman, "The Interhuman and What Is Common to All: Martin Buber and Sociology," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 29, no. 4 (1 December 1999), 403-17, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5914.00110.
11. This is the *Zwischenmenschliche* that Turner twice identifies as the critical piece of Buber's thinking for his own work. See *The Ritual Process* (2011), 127 and 136.
12. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarie and Edward Robinson, Reprint (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008), secs. 25-27.

Religion and Science as Discovering Moments of Liminality

Theology and science research are in the business of re-enchanting our experience of the natural world.[13] At its best, this would entail equipping individuals to discover experiences of liminality in the world around them and providing a framework for analyzing those experiences to become more aware of our grounding in relationality. Within the Christian tradition, these moments of discovery or re-enchantment have been called kairos moments.

For Paul Tillich there were three theological conceptualizations of time: *kairos*, *chronos*, and *eschatos*. Kairos refers to an in-breaking of eternity. It is a moment of opportunity, a qualitative time of an "event" or "happening," designating a special time in history that reorders our subsequent experience.[14] The kairos moment is specifically an event in which the ambiguities of life's station and status are overcome in an experience that manifests the unifying power of the Spirit of God.[15] It is an experience of ultimacy to which all other moments of time might be subjected.

Theologians usually contrast kairos with chronos. Chronos describes the quotidian experience of time. Specifically, we understand kairos as the "right" time and chronos as "formal" time, or kairos as qualitatively fulfilled and chronos as an expression of quantitative measurement.[16] There is a dialectical movement between these two. Kairos moments are meant to condition the ongoing action of chronos. Chronos time is the scale of history on which our decisions are played out, made manifest in the kairos moment. The kairos moment remains fleeting, though, and its permanent fulfillment in the ordinary history of chronos time is impossible.[17] The dialectic of these two remains inherently incomplete, provisional, and in need of persistent reinterpretation.

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13. Implicitly, I am also suggesting that religion and science research should *not* be primarily pursued, or interpreted, as a form of confessional apologetics: offering a defense of specific religious doctrines in light of scientific discoveries.

14. See also Mary Ann Stenger and Ronald H. Stone, *Dialogues of Paul Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), 168ff. The approach I am outlining with regard to these three terms is heavily influenced by Tillich's approach, though it is not exactly the same as that found in the final section of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*.

15. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 3* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 369-72.

16. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1948), 32.

17. Paul Tillich, *Political Expectation*, ed. James Luther Adams (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1981), 179.

Eschatos can then be understood as the sense of time against which the dialectic of kairos and chronos is to be judged: it is what Ted Peters calls an *adventus* (a teleological aim of history that draws us from the future) instead of a mere *futurum* (the future characterized as the upcoming series of events in chronos time).[18] Eschatos should not be understood as being removed from that dialectic of kairos and chronos, but rather serves as a proleptic anticipation of realizing the fullness of the unconditional made manifest in the kairos moment, thereby continually drawing the time of chronos toward this hope.

This drawing is accomplished by co-presence: where an eschatological moment is distinct but non-separable in its relation to a moment in our current experience. The eschatologically significant, proleptic event is co-present to every moment in our daily experience (i.e. it subtends all of chronos time). A kairos moment is one where this co-presence of the eschatological is available to our awareness; it makes some new understanding of the dynamic force of God's presence to history possible. Herein the dynamic co-presence of the eschatos entangles with our present experience, which then conditions what we experience as the future possibilities of chronos time.

If we adopt this framework of kairos, chronos and eschatos, there is an interesting resonance with liminality. The experience of liminality is a kairos event. It is a moment where the entangled co-presence of the divine as eschatos reveals itself through the betweenness of the liminal event. In short, the liminal reveals a divine hope for realizing our fundamental relationality that is so often covered over in our everyday experiences. This kairotic break of the liminal into the structure of chronos then draws us toward a transformed future.

Cyborg Bodies as Exemplars of Being-With

One example of theology and science research that engages with the liminal domain is the cyborg body, set between our inherited categories. The

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18. There are a number of theoretical constructs I am employing here from proleptic approaches to eschatology in Christian theology. The most important would include: Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), chap. 5; Ted Peters, *God, the World's Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 319-21; Robert John Russell, *Time in Eternity: Pannenberg, Physics, and Eschatology in Creative Mutual Interaction* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), chaps. 2 & 3. Russell's account of co-presence as a means of integrating time *into* eternity is the most critical insight because it gives a specific way of integrating kairos and eschatos.

stable, fixed notion of a "natural" body separate from its world, bounding what is legitimately me (subject) as distinct from everything else (object), is antiquated in light of the posthuman.[19]

The cyborg body makes this clear insofar as it blatantly blurs these boundaries of subject and object, specifically the boundary between organism and machine. Succinctly, a cyborg body is one in which the activity and interplay between human beings and technology affects individual agency. In the cyborg body there is a technological amendment of the body that opens up new freedoms and manifestations of agency.[20]

When most of us think of cyborgs, it is the wild imagination of science-fiction that comes to mind. Perhaps we imagine the Borg from *Star Trek*, hacked bodies from *Deus Ex*, artificial intelligence becoming human in *Electric Dreams*, or superheroes like the Atom whose powers come from drastic technological development. Given the definition I have offered above, however, cyborgs need not be so fanciful. In fact, a cyborg could be living next door to you without you even realizing it. For instance, my daughter seems a little like a cyborg based on this definition. She recently learned to swing a baseball bat. At first, the bat was foreign to her, an object in the world that stood against her body. Gradually, with practice and time, she has come to swing the bat more naturally – to experience it as an extension of her arms and hands in hitting a baseball. Even more simply, we could claim the regular use of shoes might make each of us into cyborgs. Shoes are basic technology whose interplay with our bodies opens up new freedoms (an ability to walk over different terrains more easily for longer periods of time) and possibilities for our relationship to the world.

In both cases, a bodily attunement between self and worldly technology blurs the border between my sense of "me" and "not-me." It is important to emphasize that, even in this radically intimate action of incorporation, the cyborg body is not simply contiguous with the wider environment. There is not a merger but a hybridity: throwing askew our well-bounded concepts of what constitutes the self as distinct from the wider environment or "nature" in which a cyborg body is situated. Yet, in this proximity of hybridity there remains a separation – a distance (what Buber would have called *Urdistanz*) without which the proximity would not be possible and

19. My work is making use of a critical distinction between posthumanist and transhumanist accounts of cyborg hybridity and only deals with the posthumanist account. See Jeanine Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves: A Theological Anthropology of the Posthuman*, Ashgate Science and Religion (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012). Parts of this section of the paper also appear in a different format in Adam Pryor, *Body of Christ Incarnate for You: Conceptualizing God's Desire for the Flesh*, Studies in Body and Religion Series (Lanham, MD: Lexington 2016), chap. 7.

20. Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves*, 19.

only fusion would occur. Instead, posthumanist accounts of the cyborg affirm an understanding of technologies as tricky agents with which our bodies reveal tentative and shifting relationships that are formative both of ourselves and the world we inhabit.

This experience of bodily extension and incorporation of the world reveals a liminal "betweenness." The single individual is not a solitary ego standing against the world as a series of objects that threatens to dissociate any sense of distinctive self. [21] Instead, in these liminal instances of bodily extension and incorporation there is a recognition of the flexibility of our bodily boundaries. We experience ourselves in terms of a lived wholeness of self and technology characteristic of Buber's I-Thou relation instead of an I-It relation.[22] The technology is no longer a tool enabling us to "travel over" or absorb the reality around us, persistently remaining at an objective distance from our sense of self; instead, it is experienced as something lived with, never appropriated, and complexifying the ways we can encounter the world.[23]

One may intuitively critique these two examples (swinging the bat and wearing shoes) as not being quite reflective of the cyborg. The cyborg forms an indelibly shaping relationship with technology that is highly somatic.[24] While my daughter may put down the bat when she is done

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21. Martin Buber, *Die Frage an den Einzelnen*, Martin Buber Werke, vol. 1 (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1962), 221-25. Here Buber contrasts *der Einzige* as "the only one" associated with the radical egoism of Max Stirner as a characterization of the I-It relation, and *Die Einzelne* "the single individual" associated with Søren Kierkegaard as characterization of the I-Thou relation.

22. To claim an I-Thou relationship with technology does not violate the spirit of Buber's argument, which gives numerous examples of I-Thou relationships with various non-conscious living things. This may require the "lively" quality of technology. Addressing this issue goes beyond the scope of this chapter, but it has been well theorized by others such as Anne Kull in her works, "The Cyborg as an Interpretation of Culture-Nature," *Zygon* 36, no. 1 (March 2001), 49-56, and "Speaking Cyborg: Technoculture and Technonature," *Zygon* 37, no. 2 (June 2002), 279-87.

23. I am relying here on a distinction in German that Buber employs but is not necessarily clear in English translation. To describe the experience of the I-It relationship, Buber uses *Erfahrung*. However, to describe the experience of the I-Thou relationship, Buber uses *Erlebnis*. There is a rich distinction between these two terms in various German philosophical traditions. See Buber, *Ich Und Du*, Martin Buber Werke, vol. 1 (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1962), 80-91.

24. Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves*, 142-49. Her reconfiguring of Wesley Wildman's metaphor for human beings as "walking, thinking ecologies" is particularly apt (146). See also Wildman, "Distributed Identity: Human Beings as Walking, Thinking, Ecologies in the Microbial World," in *Human Identity at the Intersection of Science, Technology and Religion*, eds Nancey Murphy and Christopher C. Knight (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 165-66.

playing baseball, or I can take of my shoes when I come in the house, the cyborg bodily attunement is more permanent. To quote Jeanine Thweatt-Bates: "This reconfiguration of human subjectivity through the increasing integration of self and environment makes this technological-biological merger an ontological, not merely practical, matter."[25]

Medical cyborgs, or human beings with self-regulating machine systems, are perhaps a better example to consider because of the more permanent nature of their technological hybridity. Here are clear examples of how blurring the boundary between organism and machine has opened new freedom and agency. Speech devices for patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) are an easy example because they are so visible, personalizable (Stephen Hawking copyrighted his voice), and the effect they have is quite dramatic (enabling communication which before would have been impossible or far more difficult). However, the blurring of the machine/human boundary occurs in more subtle ways as well.

Permanent surgical mesh used in hernia repair is a good example. The permanent mesh fuses with the body, offering otherwise unimagined freedoms by enabling enhanced mobility and faster recovery. However, a fundamental dependence on the mesh as a visceral incorporation of a technology cannot be denied. The widening use of insulin pumps is a good example as well: a machine regulates the regular release of a synthetic hormone that allows diabetics increased freedom in their daily lives.

What the cyborg body can reveal in terms of liminality is put well in the question that Donna Haraway asks so provocatively in her "Cyborg Manifesto:" "Why should our bodies end at the skin or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?"[26] Thinking with cyborg bodies calls for recognizing an "attunement" whereby the body incorporates the world around it in a permanent or semi-permanent fashion such that thinking of our bodies in terms of a fixed, dermal boundary is made more notably arbitrary. This resonates with Haraway's further insight that all incarnation, the shape of our bodily space in the world, is prosthetic.[27] We construct our sense of body betwixt and between the blurry borders of self and world; cyborg bodies just make this construction more noticeable.

The bodily attunement of the cyborg is a liminal phenomenon that can be kairotic, opening us to a new way of relating in the world that can otherwise remain latent or hidden. The technological enhancement of cyborg

25. Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves*, 21.
26. Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 178.
27. Ibid., 180.

bodies implies a wider breakdown of traditional boundaries (indicative of its liminality), reconfiguring conceptions of human subjectivity and environment. The incorporation of technologies to the cyborg body is fundamentally an experience of liminality that re-enchants our sense of the world by calling us to pay careful attention to the porous border between self and world that is our body. This makes us aware of a fundamental relationality that prevents any simple objectification of self and world into distinctive categories.

More specifically, the cyborg body opens us to a subtending power of being-with the technologies of the world, that makes these technologies into more than a tool for our use as subjects. In the cyborg body, technology is not governed by the pattern of I-It relations, but of a liminal I-Thou encounter. This subtending power of being-with manifest in liminality is also eschatologically significant as a form of co-presence. It expresses a hoped-for, proleptic, unconditional respect of authentic and freeing encounters that is itself a manifestation of divine encounter without becoming mired in the objectification of the I-It relation. Taken this way, the betweenness of the cyborg body is kairotic, making us aware of this subtending eschatos where our sense of being-with is no longer threatening to the integrity of our selfhood. Recognition of this minimal ontological premise can then transform our experience of chronos time. As symbol, the liminal body of the cyborg represents a norm for our continued engagement with technology in terms of I-Thou relationships. It encourages the pursuit of a future that frees us to recognize the depth of our mutual interdependence with the world in increasingly complex ways.

There is an important caveat to all of this, though. The attunements of the cyborg body must not be pursued in service of realizing a mythical, natural wholeness. The prosthetic incarnation of Haraway must give way to what Sharon Betcher calls "prosthetic erratics:" a stitching together of body and machine unconstrained by unspoken normativity.[28] In this regard, disability theology is a critical dialogue partner. It looks to those who take up prostheses, thereby incorporating technology into their bodily spaces, each day. Taking the experience of bodily attunement in disability theology seriously draws the cyborg futurist back from any transcendent dream of enhancing the body towards the realization of some (mythical) perfect body.[29]

Nancy Eiesland expresses this need for disability theology well: "Unless the notion of embodiment is deliberately deconstructed, the cultural norms of 'body as natural' seep into the subtext;" we can lose sight of "the 'mixed blessing' of the body in the real, lived experience of people with disabilities" who help us imagine how to "explicitly deconstruct any norms which are

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28. Sharon V. Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 102ff.

29. Thweatt-Bates, *Cyborg Selves*, 155ff.

part of the unexpressed agenda of 'normal embodiment.'"[30] Eiesland's examination of the narratives of Dianne DeVries and Nancy Mairs is then helpful in pursuing this end.[31] For both DeVries and Mairs the presentation of their body space includes devices and technologies that confound any sense of a normalizing body pattern.

For DeVries this took the shape of persistently rejecting prosthetic devices from childhood that facilitated the "normalcy" of bipedal, upright movement in favor of functional devices. As Eiesland aptly notes, DeVries is truly subversive with her subtle linguistic shifts: referring to the battery pack for her wheelchair as her legs or moving her wheelchair as walking.[32] For Mairs, this incorporation is slightly different and she describes it developmentally, which matches the progressive changes to her body space that accompany the onset of multiple sclerosis. Her account says not so much about adaption and linguistic subversion of normalizing body patterns, but concentrates on what is revealed about human experience through the lived experience of her own body as it incorporates "insensate" technologies. Here too, though, the bodily awareness is tied to functional adaptation – physical and social adaptation.[33]

These examples further reveal that the body is mutable; it is not well described by a natural wholeness or senses of normativity. The skin is not a divisive barrier, cordoning us off from the environment and technologies around us. Instead, the body is cyborg; its incarnation is prosthetic as it incorporates technologies that augment functionality in the world around it. However, appreciating the importance of this hybridity, and thereby also the kairotic potential of this liminal phenomena, requires a shift in beliefs about the incorporation of technology in order to embrace the idea of cyborg existence.

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30. Nancy L. Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 22.

31. Ibid., 47: "[T]he narratives highlight an alternative understanding of embodiment, recognizing it as an intricate interweaving of physical sensations and emotional attachments, irrespective of socially constructed notions of 'normal' bodies or 'appropriate' relations. DeVries and Mairs include as integral parts of their bodies braces and wheelchairs. Both rely on close relationships to increase their own sense of body. Their experiences reveal painstaking processes of putting themselves together using whatever resources that are available. In contrast to romantic notions of 'natural' embodiment, both discuss embodying technology. Some devices, for example, wheelchairs and braces, are integrated into their body awareness, while other appliances that frustrate their sense of body are rejected."

32. Ibid., 37-38; referencing Geyla Frank, "On Embodiment: A Case Study of Congenital Limb Deficiency in American Culture," in *Women with Disabilities*, ed. M. Fine and A. Asch (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 51.

33. Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 43-44; referencing Nancy Mairs, *Carnal Acts* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 111, and *Ordinary Time: Cycles in Marriage, Faith and Renewal* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 167-68.

In this regard, the critical critique Sharon Betcher offers of the cyborg is invaluable. Speaking from her own experience with leg prostheses, she observes the body patterns that are too often reinforced by the cyborg. As she eloquently puts it:

> That this unveiling (of the donut hole of my limb loss), rather than the curious, cosmetically covered endoskeletal structure standing in for my leg, should throw off the light switch of desire is a clue for me that Haraway's analysis may be slightly off course. When considering inclusion among the human community, the cyborg's machine/human interface seems not to be as troubling as a prosthetically unprosthelytized body – a disabled body refusing social comeliness or seemliness.[34]

If the prosthetic limb covers over a social disgust and discomfort, then Betcher fears that thinking about the cyborg inadvertently re-inscribes a sense of bodily holism and wholesomeness. Betcher admits that this is certainly not an organic wholeness, but rightfully fears that the fusion of organism and machine covers, instead of (dis)covers, the somatic realities and discourses of real bodies using prosthetics most akin to the cyborg.[35] Betcher's critique is crucial to keep in mind because the hybridity of the cyborg will be lost if the technology with which we are fused is merely passive: if nature and technology are even remotely thought of as tools to approximate a prevenient wholeness, or even a means of enhancing a natural wholeness, then we simply return to a social problematic about the use of these tools and what counts as natural. When this sense of hybridity is lost, the cyborg body is not experienced in its liminality, thus silencing the potential it opens as a kairotic event expressing an eschatological co-presence of the divine.

The cyborg body is but one example of the many liminal spaces between theology and science that have yet to be explored. Emergence theory, studies of mutualism, astrobiology, deep ecology, and environmental ethics all provide rich areas of theology and science research where boundaries are being blurred and liminality may become an exceptionally helpful conceptual category. Connecting liminality to a theological understanding of kairos clarifies the value of this concept for theology and science research. In the liminal intersections between theology and science, kairos moments may emerge that transform ordinary time into something quite extraordinary, re-enchanting the world and revealing our sense of absolute dependence on being-with one another.

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34. Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*, 97.
35. Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*, 99.