Theology and Poetry: Literary Aesthetics in the Writing of Ann Voskamp

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Abstract
Because of her work as an author, speaker, blogger, and Compassion International advocate, Christianity Today cited Ann Voskamp as one of the 50 most influential women in shaping the North American evangelical church. Through her poetic, spiritual memoirs, Voskamp has challenged and inspired Christian women in their walk with God while simultaneously raising an important question for Christian literature: What roles does the poetic imagination play in communicating theology? To be sure however, Voskamp's unique blend of poetic lyricism and personally applied theology has incited significant criticism regarding her loosely constructed language and narrative interpretation of Scripture. This thesis evaluates Voskamp's literary aesthetics in terms of her theologically infused memoir and poetic prose while interacting with criticism of the author's writing. It concludes by analyzing the effects of Voskamp's published work on Christian literature, women, and evangelical culture.

Literature - Writings on literature: Research by scholars into the literary past began almost as soon as literature itself—as soon as the documents accumulated—and for many centuries it represents almost all the scholarship that has survived. The most extensive text of the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh, the first of the world's great classics, is a late Assyrian synthesis that must have required an immense amount of research into clay tablets, written in several languages going back to the beginning of Mesopotamian civilization. In the 19th century, literary scholarship was dominated by the exhaustive, painstaking German academician, and that Germanic tradition passed to the universities of the United States. Theological aesthetics is the interdisciplinary study of theology and aesthetics, and has been defined as being “concerned with questions about God and issues in theology in the light of and perceived through sense knowledge (sensation, feeling, imagination), through beauty, and the arts”. This field of study is broad and includes not only a theology of beauty, but also the dialogue between theology and the arts, such as dance, drama, film, literature, music, poetry, and the visual arts.