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MICHAEL COP AND JANEL ATLAS

JUDGING A TYPE OF CHARACTER: THE ANOINTING WOMEN, MINDFULNESS, AND BEGINNER'S MIND

In experiences of all kinds, people tend to interpret current inputs through the framework of past events, scanning for patterns and categories in both exceptional and mundane situations. For example, imagine that you are driving a car. Another driver pulls out and cuts you off when you have the right of way. The occurrence is essentially no more than a large object passing very near to you, but what happens next for you as you experience that event? Most drivers would react on instinct to avoid an accident (experience tells us that getting hit by any large and fast-moving object is bad), but some might also flare up with anger at how bad the other driver is. Have you ever jumped to a judgement that a driver is an inconsiderate person or perhaps even reacted aggressively, like laying on the horn or tailgating the other car? Or, do you usually stay present with the specific experience that you are currently having, an event that might involve different factors from similar types of near misses? A quick judgement of the event-as-iterative can inform one's external reaction, a reaction which is informed by how someone classifies events.[1] Many quick judgements about others and their actions—when unquestioned and unconsidered—may over time result in hardening judgements that reduce empathy, block compassion, limit perspective and decrease psychological flexibility.[2]

This article will argue for mindful awareness and curiosity as correctives to the mindless judgements that sometimes arise from interpreting events that are similar as though they are identical. To make a case for mindfulness as an antidote to judgement, the essay will examine four literary texts that all describe a similar event, an event that triggers judgements within the characters involved in the story world. It will then step back from what's happening in that literary world and trace the differences in details and actions across those four texts, highlighting how readers have over centuries recognised—and yet still often conflated—those differences. The essay will continue to pan out to look at the resulting judgements that have arisen in the process: how real-world readers have tended to fall into the same pattern of judgement that the literary text cautions against. From that textual example and the historic reception of these texts, the essay will then show how an understanding and practice of mindful attention can help prevent similar unquestioned judgements.

SLOWING DOWN

We begin with a literary event for three reasons. The first is purely pragmatic: to place all readers of this paper on equal experiential footing. Unlike the hypothetical example of the car with which we began, any reader of this article can observe an identical literary event (the event has already been written about, and readers can access those writings). The second also has a similar element of egalitarian pragmatism. By virtue of learning to read, many of us will have already experienced the many possible payoffs that close reading offers, such as discovering new stories, understanding ideas in new ways or savouring novelty in language. That is, readers may already be familiar with the benefits of mindfully attending to an activity, and therefore in this essay we remind readers that we are asking them to practice a behaviour that they've likely already done rather than one that they need to learn from scratch. The third reason is the possible belief structures or reactions that might be attached to reading *this* particular text—the Bible. Slow and careful readers of any piece of literature can easily recognise when events repeat in a text, and repetitions in the Bible have drawn voluminous attention precisely because the text had been perceived as salvifically indispensable in much of Western culture for centuries. So many readers attended carefully to the differing accounts of creation in Genesis or to any of the stories in the four Gospels, instances of texts in the Bible that tell of remarkably similar-but-different events.

The Gospel accounts of the anointing of Jesus provide a strong example of repetitions of a seemingly similar event and of how reception of those repetitions has led to judgements about a specific character within those accounts. A woman anoints Jesus once during his lifetime in each of the four canonical Gospels, and the way that those stories have been read over time illustrates the all-too-human tendency to categorise and conflate similar-but-different events.[3] That anointing does not appear in the same relative point of Jesus' life in each Gospel, perhaps making the relationship among the anointings seem less than certain for anyone reading those stories for the first time. Nevertheless, the base details are remarkably similar. A woman anoints Jesus early in his ministry in Luke 7:36-50, then either six days (John 12:1-8) or two days (Matt 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9) before the final Passover before his death. Each Gospel has Jesus and the woman in a social situation (not just he and she alone). The woman performs a similar act without speaking; she doesn't state her motivation for doing what she does. Other men at the occasion criticise the woman's actions, but Jesus, in turn, rebuffs their criticisms in defence of the woman. This event offers at least three levels of judgement: the initial (and apparently wrong) judgement handed down by the men observing in the story; Jesus' correction of those men's judgement; and then centuries of readers' judgements about how those stories might inter-relate.

If readers see these stories as all the same, they may privilege induction, by which a pattern emerges, and that pattern might encourage the readers to theorise how or why similar events are likely to occur in the story of this protagonist: a woman means well, and men misjudge those intentions, but both such actions are really a vehicle for showing how the protagonist (whom readers may or may not believe transcends that story world as a god incarnate) sees more clearly, interprets more generously or accepts more willingly. Such might be an apologist reading (as discussed below). However, if readers examine each of these four stories more carefully in parallel and set aside any beliefs, the differences and nuances among the events become apparent (see Table 1),

and readers might see how events-as-iterative can influence subsequent judgements.

Matthew's and Mark's stories are the most similar, and John's falls somewhere in between theirs and Luke's. In Matthew and Mark, an anonymous woman (Matt 26:7; Mark 14:3) anoints Jesus' head (Matt 26:7; Mark 14:3) with "very precious" ointment (Matt 26:7; Mark 14:3) two days before the Passover (Matt 26:2; Mark 14:1) at the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany (Matt 26:6; Mark 14:3). A collective character (the "disciples" in Matt 26:8; "some" in Mark 14:4) rebukes the woman for her wasteful extravagance (Matt 26:8-9; Mark 14:4-5) with money that could be given to the poor. Jesus in turn criticises the disciples' judgement, commends the woman's actions and prophetically asserts that she has anointed him for his burial (Matt 26:11-12; Mark 14:6-8), noting that she will be known in perpetuity for her actions (Matt 26:13; Mark 14:9). In John, the anointer has a name, Mary (John 12:3), the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 11:1). Six days before the Passover (John 12:1), Mary anoints Jesus' feet (John 12:3) with "very costly" ointment (John 12:5) and wipes them with her hair (John 12:3). One specific disciple, Judas Iscariot, criticises Mary for her extravagant action (John 12:4-5), but the text explains that he criticises her not because "he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (John 12:6). Jesus in turn rebukes Judas and, as in Matthew and Mark, prophetically reports that Mary has anointed him for his burial (John 12:7-8). In Luke, a woman, identified as "a woman in the city, which was a sinner" (Luke 7:37), comes into Simon (Luke 7:40) the Pharisee's house (Luke 7:36-37) and weeps on and kisses Jesus' feet, dries them with her hair and anoints them with ointment (Luke 7:37). The Pharisee objects "within himself" to the woman's actions, not because they were wasteful but because she is a sinner and because a prophet should know as much (Luke 7:39). Jesus rebukes the Pharisee by way of the parable of the two debtors (Luke 7:40-43) and by contrasting the Pharisee's hospitality with the woman's actions (Luke 7:44-46). The parable implies that the woman's actions are part of a forgiveness/repentance act as opposed to a preparation for Jesus' burial (as they are in Matthew, Mark and John). The episode culminates with Jesus forgiving the woman's sins and lauding her faith (Luke 7:48-50).[4]

Looking at the judgements made against the anointers by the characters in the story world, readers can see notable differences emblematic of the characters and what they most value. In Matthew and Mark, the objections are to waste: the money could be better used for the poor. The Gospel of John censures differently. Certainly, it raises the issue of waste, but only to immediately castigate the objector, Judas, who doesn't really care about the poor, but about the money. That is, the judgement in John is far less about the woman herself. In Luke, the judgement also isn't about waste, but about the moral quality of the anointer and the anointed: she's a sinner, and a prophet should know better than to allow himself to be touched by such a sinner. So, while the anointings appear similar on their face value, the judgements made about them are quite different: waste, dishonesty, sin and lack of insight. If one conflates those accounts, the woman would always be the initial target of the censure, and the reasons for censure become compounded: she's wasteful *and* a sinner. More importantly, taken separately, two accounts (John's and Luke's) make explicit that the judgement isn't even really that much about the woman: the criticism being levelled is about the judger himself and what he believes or wants, rather than about what is actually happening.

Detail	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
When	Two days before Jesus' final Passover	Two days before Jesus' final Passover	(the second year of Jesus' ministry?)	Six days before the Jesus' final Passover
Location	Bethany at the house of Simon the Leper	Bethany at the house of Simon the Leper	House of Simon the Pharisee	Bethany (house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus?)
Anointer	"a woman"	"a woman"	"a woman in the city, which was a sinner"	Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus
Container for ointment	Alabaster box	Alabaster box	Alabaster box	Pound of ointment—no container defined
Anoints with	Ointment	Ointment, Spikenard	Ointment, tears, kisses	Ointment, Spikenard
Ointment description	"very precious"	"very precious"		"very costly"
Ointment price	"sold for much"	"more than three hundred pence"		"three hundred pence"
Body part anointed	Head	Head	Feet	Feet
Who contests the anointing	"his disciples"	"there were some"	Simon the Pharisee	"one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him"
Reason for objecting	Wasteful; money could be given to poor	Wasteful; money could be given to poor	A 'prophet' should know that the woman is a sinner	Pretext of giving to poor, but objector is "a thief" who holds the bag
Reason for anointing	"she did it for my burial"	"she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying"		"against the day of my burying hath she kept this"
Result for anointer	Known into perpetuity	Known into perpetuity	"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven"	

Table 1: The Differences among the Anointings in the Gospels

HOW A WELL-INTENTIONED WOMAN GETS LABELLED AS A WHORE

These four anointing stories have reception histories that make for a surprisingly appropriate meta-parable. That is, in each version of an anointing event, Jesus cautions participants about checking their preconceived assumptions about a person or an action. Yet, in the time between the recording of those stories and today, interpreters have repeatedly repurposed the texts with similar unexamined judgemental processes to those that Jesus cautions against. For example, in the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great gave a sermon in which he conflated the sinner of Luke's account with the Mary of John's and with Mary Magdalene, essentially fabricating an anointer who would become part of an enduring composite type of the penitent whore,[5] a designation for Mary Magdalene which itself is a composite. While Mary Magdalene is one of the relatively few women mentioned by name in the canonical Gospels, her name is never explicitly (or implicitly) associated with prostitution. Way has simply led on to way here so that the judgement of the anointed woman is conflation upon conflation.

Of course, such a possible composite does not mean that the anointers were always conflated in subsequent retellings and commentaries, but there were common combinations. Mark's and Matthew's relatively similar stories were usually associated, but they weren't necessarily folded into a Johannine and Lucan composite woman. For example, after the advent of the printing press made texts more widely available, various conflations of the anointings appeared in the poems, sermons and commentaries of early modern England, with Jesus anointed three times, twice or once.[6] In *The Storie of Stories* (1632), for example, Johan Hiud integrates the events of Jesus' life from across the four Gospels and has three anointings, with the Lucan anointing early in Jesus' ministry, the Johannine anointing six days before the Passover and the Matthean/Marcan two days before the Passover. More commonly though, commentators and authors present two anointings—a Lucan anointing and a Matthean/Marcan/Johannine anointing, with the differences of those latter three reconciled to make the stories fit together. Hill's *The Consent of the Foure Evangelists* (1596) provides such an example:

> Then Jesus six days before the Passover coming to Bethania, supped in the house of Simon the leper, but Mary took a box of costly ointment of Spikenard, and broke it, and poured it upon his head, anointed his feet, and wiped his feet with her hair: at which cost, when as some of the disciples, especially Judas the traitor, disdained, Christ allowing of her fact, and promising it should be registered, tells, that she did it against the day of his burying.[7] (46-47)

Differing-but-easily-reconcilable details are conflated in sequence; for example, both Jesus' head and feet are anointed. More nuanced details are used to clarify less nuanced details to make a more 'complete' story: the nameless woman becomes Mary; the ointment is specifically Spikenard; and Judas is recognised as the disciple who disputes the anointing. Certain details are tacitly suppressed: six days is favoured over two days; the ointment is "costly" rather than "precious"; the company eats at Simon the Leper's house; and while Judas is noted as the main objector, the specific cause of his "disdain" (greed) goes unrecognised.

In such reception—as often in our own daily judgements—belief gave rise to conflation. In the two examples above, the Christian writers in a Christian nation believed the Bible to be divinely inspired, and they also believed that the Bible could not contradict itself: the stories must somehow be consonant, and commentators, exegetes, apologists and poets set out to show that consonance. They start with a conclusion and find ways to smooth the stories from the four Gospels into one. Yet, centuries later, such conflation continues in today's media.[8] A notable modern example is Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Everything's Alright" in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (a musical with one of the longest runs in the West End), where Mary Magdalene, a prostitute, sings her anointing of Jesus through a composite of the four Gospels (Gospel sources for the details in brackets):

Mary Magdalene:
Sleep and I shall soothe you, calm you and anoint you
Myrrh for your hot forehead [Matthew and Mark] and
Then you'll feel
Everything's alright, yes, everything's fine
And it's cool and the ointment's [all four] sweet
For the fire in your head [Matthew and Mark] and feet [Luke and John]

Judas [John]:
Woman, your fine ointment, brand new and expensive [Matthew, Mark, and John]
Could have been saved for the poor [Matthew, Mark, and John]
Why has it been wasted? We could have raised maybe
Three hundred silver pieces [Mark and John] or more
People who are hungry, people who are starving
Matter more than your feet [Luke and John] and hair [Matthew and Mark]

The four different anointings come together in a catchy ditty, where the anonymous woman of Matthew and Mark joins with the Mary of John and the Lukan woman who-is a-sinner-now-Mary-Magdalene. The anonymous, well-intentioned character becomes very recognisable—which, one might suppose, is the opposite effect of having an anonymous character in the first place.

SO WHAT?

Why does this collective conflation matter? Well, in this instance, the initial retellings aren't so much the problem, but their subsequent receptions now attribute a potentially unfavourable identity marker (prostitute) to a character based on elision and loose association. An anonymous woman trying to do something kind is cast as a repentant whore, thereby reinforcing mores about sexuality and worthiness. Sure, one might respond, but these are literary characters, and the four stories have more in common than they don't. But think back to the hypothetical (yet more real to us) event with which this article started: getting cut off by a driver in another car. A mindlessly reactive stance may turn the driver of the other car into a caricature. The offending driver becomes a type of all such drivers (regardless of their particular circumstances at the time), and the 'type' of the bad or inconsiderate driver may fuel a certain kind of response: rapid and judgemental, with oneself as the wronged protagonist at the centre of the event.

When we judge something, we form an opinion or conclusion: right or wrong, tasteful or tasteless, ethical or unethical, appropriate or inappropriate, and those judgements are informed by our values, morals and ethics. The danger arises when the judgements become automatic; we become like the judgers in the anointing stories or like the writers who (perhaps unwittingly) perpetuated an unhelpful stereotype through a secondary character in the interest of telling a 'fuller' account of their preferred protagonist. However, when we train ourselves to stay with the uniqueness of each experience we have, we employ a metacognitive approach that can enable us to cut through the prevailing judgemental and preconceived conclusions upon which we frequently (and thoughtlessly) rely. Indeed, one of the earliest and most prolific scholars of mindfulness and psychology in the west, Ellen Langer, posits that mindfulness is "a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context. Being mindful leads us to greater sensitivity to context and perspective, and ultimately to greater control over our lives."[9] Unquestioned judgements issue from a mindset that neglects context and possibility. Therefore, 'reading' a situation with an attitude of open attention enables us to engage more fully with reality instead of lapsing into our assumptions. This approach is called mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a state of mind in which one focuses on experience in the present moment in a non-judgemental way.[10] For our purposes, in considering an alternative to hardening judgements, we are particularly interested in the central tenet of 'non-judging.' When people pay attention to the present moment non-judgementally, their minds take on a quality of cognitive flexibility with which they can "categorise familiar stimuli in novel ways" and think in "engaged and open rather than in automatic and unexamined ways."[11] As mindfulness has grown in popularity and application, scholars have studied the ways that mindfulness might play a role in myriad cognitive and behavioural situations, including how it can help to solve problems in fields as diverse as psychotherapy,[12] education,[13] medicine[14] and, most usefully for our purposes, making decisions and forming judgements.[15]

Though any of us can tend to jump to conclusions—like the men described in the anointing stories—we can cultivate greater awareness *of our awareness* to counteract the habitual reactions we have. Practitioners and researchers of mindfulness argue that a mindful approach is most effective as a practice (something one *do*es) that develops a quality of mind (something one *is*). In other words, mindfulness is not a static, consistent trait; the action of carefully attending improves focus over time,[16] which offers benefits for unlearning rote assumptions and snap judgements.

Those who seek to become more mindful take an open approach to what is happening around them through their five senses, and within them, through their thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations; those who wish to be more mindful selectively pay attention to that which is here and now. Taking a mindful approach requires people to discern what most deserves focus, which they then do by directing their attention to the present moment with a non-judgemental and observant stance, fostering acceptance and noticing but not giving into the allure of preconceived notions.[17] Indeed, a central tenet of Buddhist philosophy holds that "the judgemental mind arises from a lack of mindfulness."[18] In his essay exploring judgement in the context of Buddhist models of mind, Manfred Seegers describes where a lack of mindfulness might lead when someone criticises us:

> Instead of just staying with the facts and understanding the words as an opportunity to learn or even improve, we might take them personally, judge them as an insult to us, and react with a negative emotion towards the person … since the judgemental mind always follows the strongest habitual pattern, the solution would be to become more mindful of this process of cause and effect and use the space available to change habits.[19]

Learning, growing, correcting errors, and evolving require that one possesses some degree of mindfulness because without a reflexive and flexible ability to notice and stay open to what is happening, one's perspective hardens and calcifies, letting nothing new in.

If one wants to counteract the human tendency to react on instinct (mindlessly judge), what approaches are open for developing that metacognitive skill? *Shoshin* or 'beginner's mind' is a quality of mindfulness that supports this practice of remaining open to the new, uncertain and not-yet-categorised.[20] Beginner's mind entails looking at a thing as though seeing it for the first time: with curiosity, wonder and openness. Taking up a habit of beginner's mind requires that one, as much as possible, drop pre-conceptions and take the situation as an opportunity to remain interested and inquisitive. Langer's concept of mindfulness is brought into experience by simply asking, what can I notice that's new here? Mindfulness is essentially the process of drawing novel distinctions,[21] an activity that takes the mind out of the default node network and engages the individual in the present. Rather than relying on distinctions and categories drawn from the past. A person seeking out new distinctions can develop "(1) a greater sensitivity to one's environment, (2) more openness to new information, (3) the creation of new categories for structuring perception, and (4) enhanced awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving."[22]

Think back to the hypothetical near-miss due to another driver cutting you off. You might first notice the emotional charge of fear and anger coming up within your body (if indeed you have any reaction). Where do those emotions manifest physiologically: tight, fast breaths; sped-up heart rate; tunnel vision; tight shoulders? Then, you could start to regulate your emotions (staying with the actual sensations and your response, rather than diving into judgement and narrative rumination) by slowing and deepening the breath, which almost immediately activates the parasympathetic nervous system state. Rather than telling yourself stories about the other driver and why they did what they did, you can stay with your bodily sensations, name the feelings you're experiencing and allow them to pass. When you effectively regulate an emotional reaction to an upsetting situation, you can observe and more thoughtfully respond, rather than retaliate or get caught up in what you *think* the event means. Langer's research suggests that simply posing the question, 'what can I notice that's new here?' can engage your beginner's mind and prevent the typical slide into dysregulation and judgement. Is it raining? Is there sun glare? Is the vehicle that cut you off a family vehicle? Get curious; give the brain an assignment that keeps interpretations open rather than shut down.

To consider the ways in which beginner's mind may (or may not!) work in deeper analysis and when performing a close reading, let's consider a less hypothetical situation: your potential reaction to our use of the Gospel anointing stories as examples for exploring mindfulness. We chose this example precisely because we thought that it may induce two very different reactions. Secular readers might have felt an aversion to those stories,

perhaps thinking that the authors of this essay would take a religious or dogmatic tone. Christian readers may have already begun to analyse the examples with implications for their faith in mind. But a reader—secular, religious or otherwise—operating from a position of beginner's mind would not begin with the assumption that the stories are meant to be devotional, exculpatory or eschatological, or that the stories can be easily harmonised for narrative neatness. Instead, they would be open and curious about what those stories might signify here in a special edition about judgement.

Mindfulness in reading, then, models mindfulness in life. When we step away from automatic responses—whether in how we read a text placed before us or how we interpret the driver who cuts us off—we allow for nuance. We resist the pull toward flattening others into caricatures, and we stay longer with what we might not yet understand. To mistake one anointing woman for another, to see one instance of anointing as identical to another, or to see a car cutting us off as just another instance of inconsiderate drivers is to fall into a trap of mental efficiency at the cost of insight. That trap is analogous to the ways we collapse people and experiences in our own lives into predictable patterns. Practicing mindfulness can help all of us slow down enough to ask: What am I really seeing here? What might I be missing? What assumptions am I bringing into this moment?

In answering those questions, all of us can explore our own assumptions and values. In a study of the effects of mindfulness on ethical decision making, Nicole Ruedy and Maurice Schweitzer found that judgements that are "self-serving" are frequently "effortless and almost immediate, in contrast to the effortful and time-consuming perspective-taking required to develop an unbiased opinion."[23] In other words, when we jump to an easy judgement about a situation, like the fictional men observing the woman anointing Jesus, we take the quickest and easiest route to certainty and confirmation of the biases we already hold. By bringing an attitude of mindfulness to our thought process in how we read texts and events, we can better see and interrogate our beliefs—without the help of an external Messianic protagonist.

Clearly, we must sometimes make discerning choices; the act of judging is not intrinsically something to avoid. Yet when we take a slower, more attentive and more mindful approach to the matter at hand, we often reach improved outcomes and more flexible interpretations. In an essay about the relationship between mindfulness and justice, law theorist Clark Freshman describes the qualities of mindfulness that strengthen the work of lawyers and judges, which include counteracting implicit biases, interpreting clues and information more flexibly and modulating emotional responses to stimuli.[24] The combination of those qualities can help us all, not just members of the justice system, to focus on collecting information with curiosity and not jumping to reactive and emotion-driven conclusions.

It is in the space between our habitual reaction and our assessment or next action that we can intervene with an attitude of mindful awareness. Within that space, we can learn how to better avoid the rote judgements we tend to fall into again and again, like the men who disapproved in the gospels, only to become enduring exemplars of limited perspectives. The very act of slowing down and bringing the mind into a more curious and open state is what enables us to make a different choice than we might usually make. When we adopt a mindful attitude, we create a wedge between something

that is happening and the way that we make sense of and categorise it. Doing so provides the situation and the people within it a bit of space to breathe, allows us to regulate any emotional reaction we are having and offers the opportunity to choose curiosity, openness, interest and friendliness. While in this essay we have taken up passages for close reading and a hypothetical incident of frustration on the motorway, we hope it is apparent that both the harm of unquestioned judgement and the offers of inhabiting beginner's mind have widespread and significant implications for the complex problems we face. These span from within our own psyches to interpersonal relationships with family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, out to organisational and governmental networks, the nation and the globe. The work of cultivating beginner's mind, of simply noticing what's new and different in this very present moment instead of thoughtlessly issuing a reactive judgement about a person or a situation, occurs within the only arena in which we have both agency and power to make a change. The changes we create within our inner habits and perspectives can materially improve our capacity and creativity in comprehension, problem solving, diplomacy and compassion, which then can inform how we behave and move in the world.

When we cultivate a beginner's mind, open awareness of our own inner lives and a curiosity about what is really happening, instead of what we assume is happening, we do not necessarily free ourselves from the judgements we must make on a regular basis. Yet, we become better equipped to discover if, for example, all women offering an act of kindness must be repentant in some way, if all drivers who cut us off are really the same or if *we*—as the constant in each situation—can manage more effectively how and why we react.

Dr Michael Cop is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Otago, New Zealand, where he teaches written composition and early modern English literature. He researches biblical narratives through the lens of narrative theory. He also uses corpus linguistics to work on adaptations of Shakespeare, presently researching how Shakespearean graphic novel adaptations represent Shakespearean characters and approximate Shakespeare language.

Dr Janel C. Atlas (MA and PhD, Department of English, University of Delaware) is an independent researcher and a mindfulness facilitator with New Zealand's evidence-based mindfulness in schools programme, Pause Breathe Smile. Her PhD thesis, "Toward a Material Account of Babyloss Narratives: Authorship, Identifiability, and Embeddedness in Collective Storytelling," analysed a corpus of women's stories about pregnancy loss and explored the rhetorical moves the writers made to narrate their experiences and perform grief, illustrating techniques for mutual aid and resilience. Her other publications include *They Were Still Born: Personal Stories about Stillbirth* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010) and more than 450 articles and essays that have appeared in regional and national publications in the United States.

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4. Joan Taylor (2024) provides a succinct summary of these episodes and a plausible explanation for why the anointer could easily be associated with Mary Magdalene even though the texts do not suggest that she is, in "Defining the Real Mary Magdalene," in *The Oxford Handbook of Mary Magdalene*, edited by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (Oxford University Press, 2024).
5. Philip C. Almond, *Mary Magdalene: A Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 2023); Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor* (Harper Collins, 1993).
6. As Matthew's and Mark's anointings are so similar, the possibility of four different anointings is not entertained by any early modern exegetical or interpretative material that I have encountered.
7. I have modernized the spelling and punctuation. For similar conflations, also see John Calvin, *A Harmonie upon the Three Euangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, with the Commentarie of M. Iohn Calvine: Faithfullie Translated out of Latine into English by E. P.* (1584), 366–370 and 677–678; Samuel Clark, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: With Annotations and Parallel Scriptures. To Which Is Annex'd the Harmony of the Gospels* (1690), Chapters 35 and 87; Samuel Craddock, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists, and Their Text Methodiz'd, According to the Order and Series of Times, in Which the Several Things by Them Mentioned, Were Transacted. Wherein the Entire History of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Is Methodically Set Forth* (1668), Chap. IV, Sect. XI and Chap. V, Sect. LXII; John Diodati, *Piovs*

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