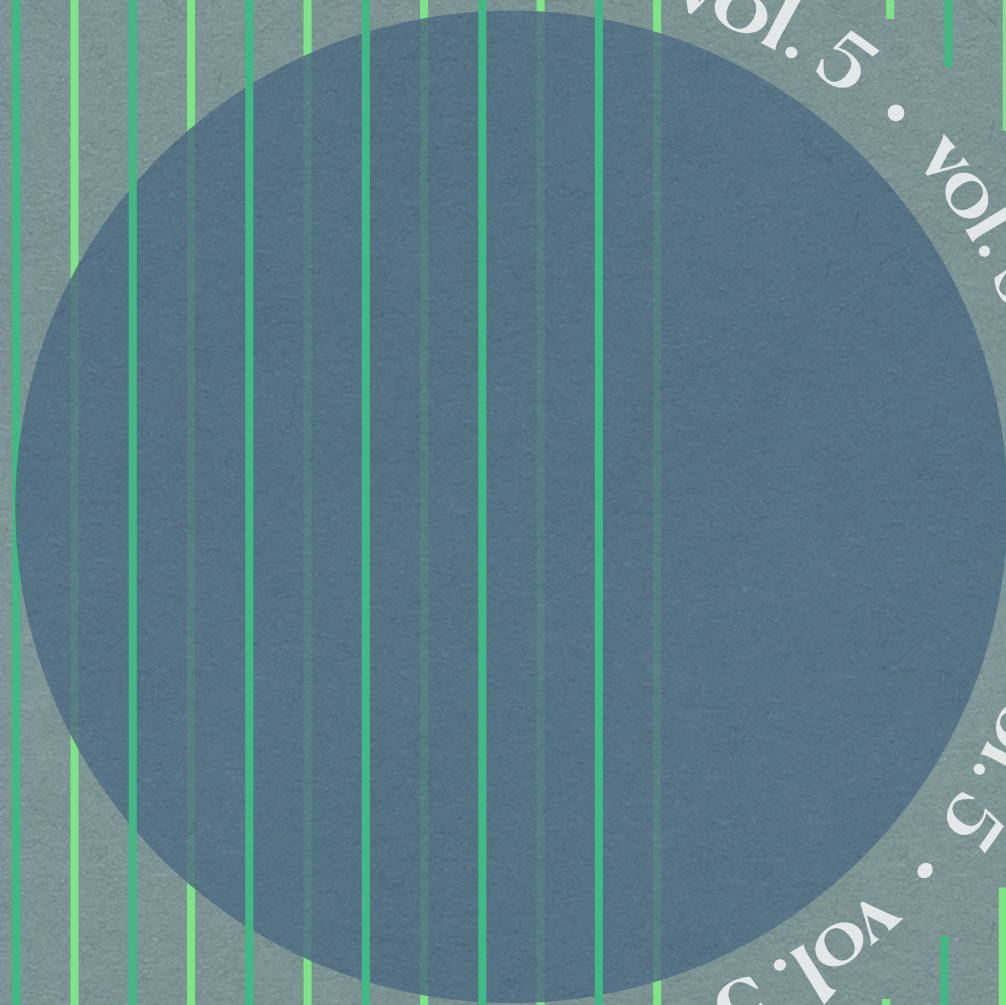


—UCLA



of JOURNAL
RELIGION

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

Contents



Editorial Masthead[ii]

Editors’ Note[iii]

“Luck as Contemporary Folkloric Magic: A Multidisciplinary Approach.”[1]
By Alexandre Duceppe-Lenoir

“Andean Messianism and the Resurgence of Earth-Based Religions.”[28]
By Arnold Arnez

“Who’s in Charge Here? How Traditional and Feminist Scholars Explain the Story of
 Jesus and the Canaanite/Syrophoenician Woman.”[62]
By Anne Katherine Edwards

“Wallada and Hafsa: Gender and Mobility through Medieval Andalusian Poetry.”[78]
By Kenley Borgerson

“Job and the Unknown Wife: Through the Lens of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.”.....[90]
By Hannah Hathaway

“Religious Dimensions of Kurdish Environmentalism.”[106]
By Hugh Schmidt

“Jesus, James, And Job: Christian Perspectives On Innocent Suffering.”[127]
By Naomi Brill

Future Submissions[154]

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

Board of Editors

‡

Joseph Abeles

Morgan Bensky

Whitney Hawthorne

Denise Tan

Faculty Advisor

‡

Ryan Gillespie

Mission: The University of California, Los Angeles Journal of Religion is a student-run undergraduate journal dedicated to publishing papers on diverse topics in religious studies. We aim to engage and familiarize students with the process of journal publication — a cornerstone of academic life — and provide an opportunity for them to display their research in this fascinating field. Our goal is to publish superior work regarding the academic study of religion.

We welcome submissions incorporating all methodological and theoretical approaches and highly encourage interdisciplinary papers.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

Editors' Note



Greetings,

With great pride, we would like to introduce the fifth volume of the *UCLA Journal of Religion*.

We are a student-run, undergraduate academic journal of the University of California, Los Angeles Center for the Study of Religion. Under the leadership of Dr. Ryan Gillespie — and with the support and encouragement of the Center and its Chair, Dr. Carol Bakhos — the journal continues to flourish. In the past five years since its relaunching, we have had the privilege to read many unique, engaging works of students from various universities and colleges across the United States. This year was no exception.

For volume five, we are pleased to present papers of various topics which draw from philosophy, feminism, ethnic studies, and much more which showcase the diversity of thought and perspective that make the study of religion so engaging. In the following pages, you will explore connections among topics such as ethics, epistemology, psychology, religious studies to analyze how luck fits in folklore; Indigenous values' influence on modern politics in the Andes; the role of gender in religious narratives and their interpretation e.g. the exorcism of the Syrophenician woman's daughter in the Gospels, medieval Andalusi poetry, and the Book of Job; religious undertones of Kurdish environmental movements; and finally, the influence of James and Jesus on Christian understandings of the Book of Job.

These topics, though broad in their scope, merely scratch the surface of the vast realm of the study of religion. If you, or someone you know, is interested in submitting a paper to be considered for next year's publication, please see the last page of this journal to see how your work could be featured. We are grateful to all of the budding scholars who submitted works for this year's journal; each piece we read showed us a distinctive and informative perspective on the academic study of religion. As social opportunities begin to reinstate with gradual recovery from the novel COVID-19 pandemic, we are proud to continue to join together in the advancement of knowledge for our scholars and all our readers.

Please enjoy,

Board of Editors

UCLA Journal of Religion, (2021).

————— CENTER FOR THE —————
STUDY OF RELIGION

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Luck as Contemporary Folkloric Magic: A Multidisciplinary Approach.”

Alexandre Duceppe-Lenoir
McGill University

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will examine the feasibility of a study of luck as contemporary folkloric magic. First, I will establish the concepts used in defining magic in academia, with a wider look at theories on rituals and folklore in religious studies in order to acknowledge peripheral concepts. Second, I will assess the available literature pertaining directly with the conceptualization of luck in philosophy, psychology, religious studies, ritual studies and folklore. In doing so, I hope to evaluate the necessity and place of a study of luck as magic within religious studies. In my concluding remarks, I will propose a methodology to pursue an actual study of luck using the elements discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Luck, Magic, Multidisciplinary, Folklore, Literature Review, Ritual.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

"Luck as Contemporary Folkloric Magic: A Multidisciplinary Approach."

Alexandre Duceppe-Lenoir¹
McGill University

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary Western world, one often hears the expression "Good luck!" Many expressions ("knock on wood"), actions (crossing one's fingers), and items (four-leaf clovers) are associated with this concept of luck. But what is luck? Luck, as I will demonstrate, can be considered as a metaphysical force analogous to magic, one that is traditionally regarded as part of a non-religious system of belief, which nonetheless contains religious-like elements and that can be (but is not necessarily) superposed upon a religious one when included within a category of belief such as superstition.

Of course, a conceptualization of luck as magic does not encompass the entirety of the concept, but interacts with a facet which lies on the periphery of everyday considerations. As John Cohen notes, "the idea of luck is ubiquitous but by no means simple, in the sense that it means precisely the same to everyone, everywhere. Expressions for 'luck' in different languages introduce nuances that are difficult, if not impossible, to capture in any particular tongue. And even those who speak the same language do not necessarily use the word for 'luck' in the same sense."² Usually, in the contemporary West, the terms luck and chance are conflated, where using one term implies the other and vice versa. Chance, in contrast with luck, contains no

¹ Alexandre Duceppe-Lenoir is a scholar of religious studies at McGill University, currently completing his Master's thesis on Wiccan magical ritual. His main scholarly foci are magic and divination, and contemporary Quebec society—specifically laicism and Bill 21.

² John Cohen, *Chance, Skill and Luck: The Psychology of Guessing and Gambling* (London: Pelican, 1960): 114.

metaphysical ramification in its definition, and pertains solely to probability; One who has chance (French *chanceu.se*), who is lucky, does not necessarily have luck. Expressions such as "take a chance," meaning "give it a shot," or simply "try," imply a probability of success rather than one's usage of a metaphysical element. Those phrases have different implications than expressions such as "good luck," meaning "I give you / I hope that you will have luck," which themselves introduce luck as a concept alien to probability. This usage of the term luck suggests that specific actions were undertaken to give luck to someone, or that luck passively interacts with specific objects or situations. In its passive sense, i.e. having good or bad luck (French *chance* and *malchance*, respectively) independently of one's action, that is without any ritualization consciously associated with one's action in a specific context, luck means chance. Thus, the linguistic usage of both luck and chance demonstrate two possible modes of thought: metaphysical and probability. Here, the question becomes: how does one define and account for luck when considering it as a belief?

Now, investigating contemporary folklore presents unique methodological challenges, some of which will be dealt with here. The belief system surrounding luck, as it is for some folkloric traditions, is never put in writing aside in practice of belief: one may write a novel in which "luck" is mentioned or practiced, or one may express their belief in an item such as a four-leaf clover, without any afterthoughts on the matter. This effectively puts the term and practice of luck in writing, but does little more than give an example of the belief (and, consequently, insight into the belief structure). Studying this concept, then, requires some amount of conceptualization.

Examining the feasibility of a study of luck as contemporary folkloric magic, I will first establish the concepts used in defining magic in academia, with a wider look at theories on

rituals and folklore in religious studies in order to acknowledge peripheral concepts. Second, I will assess the available literature pertaining directly with the conceptualization of luck in philosophy, psychology, religious studies, ritual studies and folklore. In doing so, I hope to evaluate the necessity and place of a study of luck as magic within religious studies. In my concluding remarks, I will propose a methodology to pursue an actual study of luck using the elements discussed in this paper.

MAGIC, RITUAL AND FOLKLORE: A WORKING TAXONOMY

In order to evaluate the necessity and place of a study of luck as magic within religious studies, one needs to assess the literature available in the academic study of religion. Prior to determining the validity of such a study, some concepts used above in my working theory need clarification for the reader to grasp the conceptualization of luck *qua* magic.

MAGIC AND RITUAL

Magic has been practiced in every period and culture of human history, in some to a greater extent. Scholars of religion typically conceive of it in terms of religious practices as a causal system based on persuasion and ritualization, and divided in categories of acts and intents. Historically, the concept of magic spawns from the ancient Greek *magoi*, a word referencing "practitioners of private cults,"³ specifically ancient Persian Zoroastrian priests. In the sense of the practice of Others, this conceptualization has been reused throughout the centuries and was later Christianized by writers such as Augustine of Hippo, who lists both magical arts and divination (in the form of haruspices and augurs) as "superstition" in *On Christian Doctrine*.⁴

³ Jan N. Bremmer, "The Birth of the Term 'Magic,'" in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, edited by Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra (Leuven: Peeters Publishing, 2002): 2.

⁴ See Augustine of Hippo, *On Christian Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library). See especially Book II, Chapter 20.30.

This Christianized conceptualization of magic informed early academic writings on magic; As Ahmet Ünal explains,

J. Grimm wrote in 1875: "miracles are divine, magic is infernal", and Simar formulated in 1894: "Soothsayers like magicians want to break their way forcibly into the sanctuary of divine omniscience and omnipotence, they stretch their impure hands once again toward the tree of knowledge in order to assume a likeness to God"... magic was categorized in early studies as valueless in comparison to [the Judeo-Christian] religions.⁵

Eventually, the academic study of magic transcended its Christian confines, leading to texts such as Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg's *Defining Magic: A Reader*,⁶ Stanley J. Tambiah's *Form and meaning of magical acts: A point of view*,⁷ and Daniel Miller's *Another Look at the Magical Ritual for a Suspected Adulteress in Numbers 5:11–31*.⁸ Granting that these texts, and many others in the study of magic, focus on cultures of the ancient Near East, they nonetheless express theoretical approaches to the study of magic as a larger field.

Outside of its Christian understanding, magic takes the form, to use Tambiah's conceptualization, of a conventional persuasive system predicated on cause and effect. A conventional persuasive system "consists in persuasively transferring the properties of the desired... relation to the [object] which is in an undesirable condition, or in attempting to convert a potential not-yet-achieved state into an actualized one."⁹ In turn, the cause and effect relationship of the system is based on categories of acts and intents; specific acts with specific intents have different effects from one another. Joris Frans Borghouts, in *Witchcraft, Magic, and*

⁵ Ahmet Ünal, "The Role of Magic in the Ancient Anatolian Religions According to the Cuneiform Texts from Boğazköy-Ḫattuša," in *Essays on Anatolian Studies in the Second Millennium B. C.*, edited by H. I. H. Prince Takahito Mikasa (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988), 56.

⁶ See Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg, *Defining Magic : A Reader*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2013.

⁷ See Stanley J. Tambiah, "Form and meaning of magical acts: A point of view," *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7, no. 3 (2017): 451-73.

⁸ See Daniel Miller, "Another Look at the Magical Ritual for a Suspected Adulteress in Numbers 5:11–31." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 5, no. 1 (2010): 1-16.

⁹ Tambiah, 461. He contrasts this system of knowledge assessment with scientific predictive, which "serves as a model in science generating hypotheses and comparisons which are then subject to verification inductively." (Ibid.)

Divination in Ancient Egypt,¹⁰ demonstrate the three non-exclusive and intersectional types of magical acts: magic by speech (incantation),¹¹ magic by rite (ritual),¹² and magic by inherent property (items).¹³ In her detailed account of Hittite magic, Gabriella Frantz-Szabó suggests that there were only two modes of magical intent in Hittite culture, either "white" (apotropaic) and "black" (harmful).¹⁴ While this was surely the case, it is difficult to introduce love or sexual spells, such as the Mesopotamian ŠÀ.ZI.GA ritual,¹⁵ within either category. In other words, intent is the purpose of the magical ritual, the objective of its expected effect.

Furthermore, the operational ritual logic—a terminology coined by Miller, used to describe the ways in which magic operates—of luck has similarities with the mechanical elements of magic.¹⁶ Magic is often understood in part as cosmic sympathy, the idea that "anything that happens in any part of the universe can affect something else in the universe, no matter how distant or unrelated it may seem."¹⁷ A specific action, consciously undertaken, is efficacious only because of its ritualization; It is true for both magic and luck that without the proper cultural references and the proper ritualization, the desired effect will not come to fruition. Undertaking a specific action causes a specific effect, determined by the intent of the action (or agent) and by the ritualization of the act itself.

¹⁰ Joris Frans Borghouts, "Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination in Ancient Egypt," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East 3*, ed. Jack M. Sasson et al. (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1995), 1775-1785.

¹¹ For more on incantations, see Daniel Miller, "Incantations in Ancient West Semitic Corpora and the Hebrew Bible: Continuity and Discontinuity." See esp. chap. 1, part 16 "A new classification system for incantations."

¹² For example, the Mesopotamian ŠÀ.ZI.GA ritual. See Walter Farber, "Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East 3*, ed. Jack M. Sasson et al. (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1995), 1895-909.

¹³ For example, the Ketef Hinnom amuletic scrolls. See Gabriel Barkay et al., "The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom," *Near Eastern Archeology* 66, no. 4 (2003): 162-71. A more comprehensive discussion of the interplay of magic by speech and magic by rite in conducting magic by inherent property goes beyond the scope of the current paper.

¹⁴ See Gabriella Frantz-Szabó, "Hittite Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East 3*, edited by Jack M. Sasson et al. (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1995), 2007-19.

¹⁵ See Farber.

¹⁶ See Miller, "Another Look at the Magical Ritual for a Suspected Adulteress in Numbers 5:11-31," 5.

¹⁷ Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi, Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds, A Collection of Ancient Texts* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985), 5.

Given that the term "ritual" is tremendously vague, and that theories on rituals tackle both its sacred and mundane modes, sometimes without proper distinction, scholars in ritual studies prefer to use the term "ritualization" when discussing the time, space, elements, and expected effects of a specific ritual. As Catherine Bell states,

Most attempts to define ritual proceed by formulating the universal qualities of an autonomous phenomenon. They maintain, however provisionally, that there is something we can generally call ritual and whenever or wherever it occurs it has certain distinctive features. Such definitions inevitably come to function as a set of criteria for judging whether some specific activities can be deemed ritual. As a result, these definitions of ritual are not complete when they set up a single universal construct; additional categories are needed to account for all the data that do not fit neatly into the domain of the original term.¹⁸

Scholars of ritual, such as Catherine Bell and Ronald Grimes,¹⁹ have been instrumental in developing theories in ritual studies.²⁰ Ronald Grimes, often co-identified as the parent of ritual studies with Catherine Bell, wrote abundantly on methods and application of ritual studies.²¹

Academics from a variety of scholarly disciplines have written on ritual, and people such as Claude Levi Strauss (anthropology),²² Émile Durkheim (sociology),²³ Victor Turner²⁴ and Gavin

¹⁸ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 69.

¹⁹ See Ronald L. Grimes, *Ritual, Media, and Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Ronald L. Grimes, *Rite Out of Place: Ritual, Media, and the Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), and Ronald L. Grimes, *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1990).

²⁰ See Catherine Bell, ed., *Teaching Ritual*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Catherine Bell and Reza Aslan, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²¹ See Ronald L. Grimes, *Research in Ritual Studies: A Programmatic Essay and Bibliography* (Chicago: American Theological Library Association, 1985). See also Ronald L. Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), and Ronald L. Grimes *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982).

²² See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963).

²³ See Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995).

²⁴ See Victor W. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982).

Brown (performance study),²⁵ and Ceri Houlbrook (folklore)²⁶ have brought insightful additions to the conversation on ritual, each with their specific focus, although few authors actually discuss luck rituals, focusing rather on larger problems such as framework (Steven Engler and Mark Q. Gardiner),²⁷ play theory (Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart),²⁸ efficacy (Johannes Quack and William S. Sax),²⁹ interrituality (Anne-Christine Hornborg),³⁰ and embodiment (Damon Lycourinos).³¹

Luck and its ritualization are composed of the same three main categorizations as magical practices: uttering "Good luck" is an incantation, crossing one's fingers is a ritual, and four-leaf clovers are magical items. Luck also has the two dichotomic modes of intent laid out by Frantz-Szabó; good luck is apotropaic and bad luck is harmful. Luck rituals may also have intent other than protective or destructive, as magic rituals do. Moreover, luck is ritualized in different ways depending on its setting, intent, and relation to other rituals (whether pertaining to luck or not).

In this way, then, luck contains a metaphysical element similar to magic when not considered in terms of probability: in proceeding with certain ritualisations, one affects a specific situation in a perceivably logical way by means of an operational ritual logic, and through a force akin to cosmic sympathy.

²⁵ See Gavin Brown, "Theorizing Ritual as Performance: Explorations of Ritual Indeterminacy," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17, no. 1 (2003): 3-18.

²⁶ See Ceri Houlbrook, *The Magic of Coin-Trees from Religion to Recreation: The Roots of a Ritual* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

²⁷ See Steven Engler and Mark Q. Gardiner, "Re-Mapping Bateson's Frame," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 26, no. 2 (2012): 7-20.

²⁸ See Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart, "Comment: At Play in the Fields of Framing. Or, Why Framing? From Play to Work in Ritual Process," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 26, no. 2 (2012): 79-80.

²⁹ See Johannes Quack and William S. Sax, "Introduction: The Efficacy of Rituals," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 24, no. 1 (2010): 5-12.

³⁰ See Anne-Christine Hornborg, "Interrituality as a Means to Perform the Art of Building New Rituals," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 31, no. 2 (2017): 17-27.

³¹ See Damon Lycourinos, "Sexuality, Magic(k) and the Ritual Body: A Phenomenology of Embodiment and Participation in a Modern Magical Ritual," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 31, no. 2 (2017): 61-77.

FOLKLORE

While ultimately without precise definition, folklore is, in Martha Sims and Martine Stephens's words,

Informally learned, unofficial knowledge about the world, ourselves, our communities, our beliefs, our cultures, and our traditions that is expressed creatively through words, music, customs, actions, behaviors, and materials. It is also the interactive, dynamic process of creating, communicating, and performing as we share that knowledge with other people.³²

In other words, folklore is not taught as part of a formalized curriculum, and consists of knowledge and concepts that are not regularized by an authority. Luck *qua* magic is unofficial knowledge that is informally learned as it is not academically imparted, nor is its meaning pedagogically formalized. While luck is articulated through words and is interactive in its communication, as its linguistic functions confirm, it is also expressed through other means. For example, the representation of luck as a four-leaf clover, the custom of identifying black cats with luck (either good or bad, depending on cultures), or the behaviour or knocking on wood in order not to attract bad luck are all creative expressions of luck transmitted through performance and communication. Thus, it can be said that luck is a form of folkloric belief.

Given its linguistic usage, ritualization, operational ritual logic, and folkloric-resemblant structure, luck—in its Western iteration and aside from its definition as probability or chance—is a form of contemporary folkloric magic.

In schools of religious studies, neither magic, ritual nor folklore are given proper focus. Instead, those multidisciplinary subjects are repelled to the periphery of academic studies: Magic is usually mentioned in studies of ancient Near-Eastern religions and in psychology, ritual studies are conducted in sociology, psychology, anthropology and religion departments, while

³² Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens, *Living Folklore : An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions*, 2nd ed. (Logan: Utah State Univ Press, 2011), 8.

folklore is studied in language and literature departments in addition to religion and anthropology. This bounds theories of luck to those academic disciplines, while still ultimately letting it be free-formed by multidisciplinary approaches.

THEORIES OF LUCK

Luck has been the focus of some studies, mostly in philosophy and psychology. Unsurprisingly, it has mostly been considered in meanings of probability, with a few exceptions. In religious study, luck has been investigated both in terms of probability and as a religious phenomenon, while in ritual study and folklore the concept of luck is practically non-existent in the academic literature.

PHILOSOPHY

In Duncan Pritchard and Matthew Smith's words, "Of those that do attempt to offer a useful account of the notion of luck, one of the most standard approaches has been to define this concept in terms of the notion of an accident."³³ As they show, philosophers repeatedly install luck as conceptualized from chance, accident, odds, plausibility, probability, fortune, and overall lack of control over a situation, without considering its metaphysical facet. In this sense, philosophers define luck as either situation or agent dependent, where its functionality is, respectively, subject-relative or subject-involving. Joe Milburn, in *Subject-Involving Luck*, wrote that a subject-relative account of luck "[fills] in the right-hand side of the following biconditional: an event e is lucky for a subject S if and only if _____,"³⁴ while a subject-involving account "[fills] in the right-hand side of this biconditional: it is a matter of luck that S ϕ s iff _____."³⁵

³³ Duncan Pritchard and Matthew Smith, "The Psychology and Philosophy of Luck," *New Ideas in Psychology* 22, no. 1 (2004): 1-28.

³⁴ Joe Milburn, "Subject-Involving Luck," *Metaphilosophy* 45, no. 4-5 (2014): 578.

³⁵ Ibid. " ϕ " refers to a generic act, and "iff" means "if and only if."

Thomas Nagel, in *Moral Questions*, establishes luck in the following way: "Where a significant aspect of what someone does depends on factors beyond his control, yet we continue to treat him in that respect as an object of moral judgement, it can be called moral luck,"³⁶ while Mylan Engel's article *Is epistemic luck compatible with knowledge?* describes luck as "situations where a person has a true belief which is in some sense fortuitous or coincidental."³⁷ In most philosophical inquiries, the concept of luck falls within discussions of morality or epistemology, respectively answering the following questions: Should one's action be judged as moral or immoral if they are the result of luck (*qua* chance)?³⁸ Does one really acquire or have knowledge if this knowledge is contingent on accidental or coincidental elements?³⁹ Other influential philosophers also wrote about (or alluded to) their perspective on luck: for David Hume morality transcended luck,⁴⁰ Immanuel Kant proposed that "morality is immune from luck,"⁴¹ and René Descartes "mere happiness... is contentment of mind that is acquired through luck and fortune."⁴²

Interestingly, it is without considering luck as a metaphysical element that philosophers allude to it. In *The Machinations of Luck*, Nicholas Rescher exemplifies the three "doctrinal positions that deny the existence of luck" (*qua* chance): mechanistic determinism, metaphysical determinism and theological predestinationism. Respectively, those positions implies that "the

³⁶ Thomas Nagel, "Moral luck," in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 25

³⁷ Mylan Engel, "Is epistemic luck compatible with knowledge?" in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 (1992): 59.

³⁸ "For example, if we find out that a woman who has just stepped on your toes was simply pushed, then our temptation to blame her is likely to evaporate." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Moral Luck," last modified April 19, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-luck/>.

³⁹ "for example, an optimist's belief that it will not rain may luckily turn out to be correct, despite forecasts for heavy rain all day." Mylan Engel, "Epistemic Luck," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

⁴⁰ See *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Hume on Free Will," last modified May 27, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-freewill/#LuckAndMorSys>.

⁴¹ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Moral Luck," last modified April 19, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-luck/>.

⁴² See *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "René Descartes: Ethics."

world is one vast machine of sorts, all of whose operations are unavailingly predetermined by nature's inexorable laws,"⁴³ that "the world's eventuations are one and all predetermined for the very interest of time by principles of lawful order that necessitates all of its occurrences,"⁴⁴ and that "the world's treaty [is] the temporal unfolding of a vast and all-determinative program through which God sets into action an all-determinative plan."⁴⁵ Indeed, these positions exclude luck *qua* chance from their machinations, but what of the cases in which one believes (consciously or not) in luck as an efficacious force which can be controlled while simultaneously endorsing one of those worldviews? Is luck *qua* magic really inconceivable in those settings? Considering luck as one of the mechanics of a mechanistic world or as one of the principles of a metaphysical world ultimately permits a recognition of luck *qua* magic without disrupting those perspectives.

PSYCHOLOGY

Studies of luck in psychology range from attribution theory, in theorizing luck as chance, to gambling psychology, in which luck is conceptualized both in terms of chance and of an unknown force. While few scholars of psychology go as far as to say that luck is magic (or magic-like), some actually introduced such a theory, considering what scholars of magic call the operational ritual logic of luck rituals. In their article, *The Psychology and Philosophy of Luck*, Pritchard and Smith notice the same amalgamation of meanings found in psychological investigations as in the philosophical conceptualization of luck, with some additions, although they themselves are quick to dismiss the idea of luck as magic.

⁴³ Nicholas Rescher, "The Machinations of Luck," in *The Philosophy of Luck*, ed. Duncan Pritchard (Wiley-Blackwell: Malden, MA, 2015), 174.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Fritz Heider's theory of attribution comes close to recognizing the metaphysical element of luck, but falls short: "when the success is attributed to luck... two things are implied: First, that environmental conditions, rather than the person, are primarily responsible for the outcome, and second, that these environmental conditions are the product of chance."⁴⁶ Using Heider's terms, one could say that the effects of luck *qua* magic are the products of personal attributions in manipulating environmental conditions. Without plainly presenting luck as magic, Gideon Keren and Willem Albert Wagenaar, in their study of blackjack and gambling, found that "there was consensus among those interviewed that luck was a concept that refers to a person, whilst chance refers to an event or outcome—some people may be luckier than others, whereas chance is the same for everyone."⁴⁷ This implies, maybe unintentionally, that luck can be considered as a substance, that one may have (or even obtain, and thus lose) more luck than another. Similarly, David M. Hayano "found that poker players perceived luck to be some kind of 'agent' that explained why cards would fall in detectable patterns. Players believed they could control their luck by employing a variety of strategies such as talking to the cards, moving seats or playing at a different table."⁴⁸ One may observe the implications of different acts, utterances, and rites for the believer (and practitioner of) luck as described by Hayano—although the agents here do not identify the perceived effectiveness of those rituals as efficacious by operational logic, or at least not in those terms. Analogously, Peter R. Darke and Jonathan L. Freedman mention that some

⁴⁶ Heider, Fritz, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, (New York: Wiley, 1958), 91.

⁴⁷ Pritchard and Smith. See Gideon Keren and Willem Albert Wagenaar, "On the psychology of playing blackjack: Normative and descriptive considerations with implications for decision theory," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 114 (1985):133-158.

⁴⁸ Pritchard and Smith. See David M. Hayano, "Strategies for the management of luck and action in an urban Poker Parlour," *Urban Life* 6 (1978): 475-488.

people hold beliefs about luck, in its metaphysical sense, as a "somewhat stable force that tends to influence events in their own favour."⁴⁹

Surprisingly, and maybe somewhat bluntly for a scholar of psychology, James M. Henslin categorized gambling rituals to control luck as magical, given that "driver-player do believe in and practice magic"⁵⁰ in their use of luck. In this way, luck is an "inexplicable and hidden skill"⁵¹ that seems to require "some degree of skill which enables the agents to manipulate outcomes, particularly (or perhaps only) where there is some significant degree of chance in play," the result of which is nonetheless not restricted solely by chance or skill.⁵²

The interesting point brought by studies of luck in psychology is the fact that "luck was not clearly identified by subjects as being either external or internal and that luck was not clearly identified by subjects as being uncontrollable." This implies, in addition to the observations above, that luck was identified as being controllable by some people. When cast in terms of controllability, the metaphysical aspect of luck becomes either fate (uncontrollable luck) or magic (controllable luck).

RELIGION

Studies about luck in religious studies are divided into two camps: those who adopt the philosophical approach of luck *qua* chance, and those who consider luck in terms of implicit religion, that is "anything present in [peoples] lives that was comparable to religion, in any of its various dimensions and manifestations,"⁵³ which is unspoken and has a character of its own.

⁴⁹ Peter R. Darke and Jonathan L. Freedman, "The belief in good luck scale," *Journal of Research in Personality* 31 (1997): 486

⁵⁰ Henslin, James M. "Craps and Magic." *American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 3 (1967): 318.

⁵¹ Pritchard and Smith.

⁵² Pritchard and Smith.

⁵³ Edward Bailey, "Implicit Religion," *Religion* 40, no. 4 (2010): 271.

Inspired by the philosophical debates on luck, Guy Axtell's *The New Problem of Religious Luck* addresses the core elements of the mainstream discussion of luck in religion and philosophy. While still considering luck *qua* probability, he explains that the "efficacy of factors of nature and nurture [are] explainable teleologically in terms of divine will, ultimate plan, and gifts to the faithful,"⁵⁴ and that luck is asymmetrically attributed to the development of religiosity and of religious movements, as well as to agents of religion. Religious luck deals with problems of chance and probability in theological discourses, without so much considering it as a religious element in and of itself, although Axtell does mention something in regards to considering luck as non-religious from a religious person's perspective. In various ways, he defines some of his categorizations of luck as interacting with religious exclusivism, which shines light on the major problem of considering luck as magic. Magic, as defined above, is historically a religious concept, while luck is not. Interpreting luck as magic could be considered the equivalent of implying that luck stands, in relation to religion, where magic stood (and still stands) in some cultures: as thoroughly defined by its religious circumstances. In such a case, there would have to be a larger belief structure which would include luck as an external force, and in which other metaphysical elements are found.⁵⁵ Other scholars of religion and theology adopt the same approach as Axtell in defining luck, such as Jordan Wessling,⁵⁶ although few actually discuss this problem.

On the other side of the debate, data seem to show that there is a significant belief in the efficacy of luck *qua* magic. Leslie Francis, Mandy Robbins and Emyr Williams conducted a

⁵⁴ Guy Axtell, "The New Problem of Religious Luck," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Psychology of Luck*, eds. Ian M. Church and Robert J. Hartman (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019): 436.

⁵⁵ A study of the interaction of luck and fate (as well as other elements of interrelated implicit religions), in unexamined popular beliefs, in comparison to magic and religion might address this problem. Unfortunately, such a discussion goes beyond the scope of this paper.

⁵⁶ See Jordan Wessling, "Theology and Luck," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Psychology of Luck*, 451-63, eds. Ian M. Church and Robert J. Hartman (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019).

study on the implicit religion of teenage girls in Wales, finding that between 94% and 95% of them crossed their fingers for luck or to protect themselves from harm.⁵⁷ "In order to protect themselves from bad luck many [Welsh Anglican] churchgoers have thrown spilt salt over their left shoulder (73%). In order to promote good luck many churchgoers have crossed their fingers (80%) or touched wood (79%)."⁵⁸ Furthermore, "14% [of those who attended church weekly in 1991 Britain] believed that good luck charms sometimes do bring good luck."⁵⁹ Francis, Robbins and Williams's study demonstrates the existence of implicit religion, although not recognized as such by the practitioners, in the Western world.

Edward Bailey, in his 2010 article *Implicit Religion*, defines his title-concept as "[Involving] no assumption about the number of commitments that may be found. The unifying thread is the fact of being committed"⁶⁰ to the belief in itself. Additionally, an implicit religion is integrated in agents' lives, with "intensive concerns [and] extensive effects."⁶¹ In this way, luck *qua* magic is identified as an implicit religion: belief in luck engages no commitment, both in terms of quantity or quality of belief, and is thoroughly incorporated in everyday conscious and subconscious actions and beliefs, as shown by Francis, Robbins and Williams. Other religious phenomena, such as unchurched spirituality and some new religious movements, are included in this concept.⁶² Discussing luck as an implicit religion, rather than as magic, does incorporate an

⁵⁷ Leslie Francis, Mandy Robbins, and Emyr Williams, "Believing and Implicit Religion Beyond the Churches: Religion, Superstition, Luck and Fear among 13-15 Year-Old Girls in Wales," *Implicit Religion* 9, no. 1 (2006): 82. See also *Id.*, 85.

⁵⁸ *Id.*, 77.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* See also Robin Gill, *Churchgoing and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁶⁰ Edward Bailey, "Implicit Religion," *Religion* 40, no. 4 (2010): 272.

⁶¹ *Id.*, 273. For more on implicit religion, see Peter Clarke, *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2011). See esp. chap. 8, "Religious Change: New Religions and New Spiritualities, Esotericism and Implicit Religion."

⁶² As another note to determine an implicit religion from a "regular" religion, one may look at institutionalization and its nuances. Unfortunately, this goes beyond the scope of the current paper.

acknowledgement of the metaphysical facet of luck but does not properly assess the ritualization and operational ritual logic of luck.

FOLKLORE AND RITUAL STUDIES

The usage of luck in a folkloric framework necessarily brings a discussion of superstition. Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Proud, in the *Dictionary of English Folklore*, stipulate that "[modern superstitions] aim to 'accentuate the positive/eliminate the negative': do this for good luck, avoid that to prevent bad luck. Luck can be influenced, but not completely controlled."⁶³ Superstitions include ritual actions and prohibitions, such as "wild flowers or open umbrellas (outdoor items) should not be indoors"⁶⁴ and the belief that "certain things, words, or actions have powerfully negative effects, and must be avoided or counteracted,"⁶⁵ amongst other beliefs. Discussing luck in light of superstitious belief does insert it as an implicit religion, and does take into account ritualization and operational ritual logic. As Simpson and Proud note, "it is clear that the hold of superstition on people's minds has weakened over the centuries, and that it is increasingly consigned to trivial areas of everyday life." This claim reinforces the idea of luck as an implicit religion.

In academic works on folklore, luck is usually cast in terms of belief. In *Risk and Ritual: An Interpretation of Fishermen's Folklore in a New England Community*, John J. Poggie and Carl Gersuny explain that turning one's hatch cover upside down would bring bad luck to the fishermen and that knocking on wood would bring them good luck.⁶⁶ While that knowledge of an action's implications, of a ritualization and consequent operational ritual logic, seems restricted

⁶³ Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Proud, *Dictionary of English Folklore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), s.v. "superstitions."

⁶⁴ Id.

⁶⁵ Id.

⁶⁶ See John J. Poggie and Carl Gersuny, "Risk and Ritual: An Interpretation of Fishermen's Folklore in a New England Community," *The Journal of American Folklore* 85, no. 335 (1972): 66-72.

to fishermen (outsiders would not know not to turn a hatch cover upside down), its ritualization—or lack thereof—entails a belief in luck and in the efficacy of specific actions to control it. In another part of the world, Jürgen Wasim Frembgen discerned that “between Iran and Rajasthan, there is the widespread folk belief that, if a bat lives somewhere in the house or sits on the roof, this would mean bad luck for the owner. . . . This is reflected in southwest Asia by the common belief that it would carry bad luck to kill a bat.”⁶⁷ Here, again, luck is illustrated as a belief, and that specific ritual actions (or in this case, prohibitions) are based on this belief. In the *Dictionary of English Folklore*, it is noted that,

Whether good or bad, ‘luck’ is an idea basic to folk belief, ancient, and widespread. . . . Unlike mere chance or accident, it is thought to work through regular cause-and-effect. . . . Yet, unlike fate, luck can change; sometimes it ‘turns’ spontaneously, sometimes it can be manipulated (you can attract good luck by carrying a mascot, cancel an unlucky action by turning round three times, etc.). Unlike providence and judgements, it has no connection with benevolence, wisdom, or justice, no purposeful plan; there is no meaning behind it.⁶⁸

I would disagree with the final remark (“there is no meaning behind it”) simply based on the specificity of ritualization depending on circumstances; Whether meaning lies behind luck or is ascribed to luck is another matter altogether. These observations demonstrate the parallel link of luck with magic by demonstrating luck as a belief situated within a larger belief structure, which can be called an implicit religion, while also associating luck rituals with their appropriate ritualization in light of their operational ritual logic.

In ritual studies, luck is rarely assessed properly. In early anthropological works on rituals, scholars mention luck as magic, without defining either concept aside from the practice in question, while later anthropological works refer to luck in terms of ritual. In 1941, George C.

⁶⁷ Jürgen Wasim Frembgen, "Embodying Evil and Bad Luck: Stray Notes on the Folklore of Bats in Southwest Asia," *Asian Folklore Studies* 65, no. 2 (2006): 245-6.

⁶⁸ Simpson and Proud, s.v. “luck.”

Homans wrote that "the primitives feel a sentiment which we call anxiety and they perform magical rites which they say will insure good luck."⁶⁹ In 2012, 70 years later, Inge Daniels talked about luck more refinedly, in terms of "a powerful spiritual entity (or energy) that connects people, spirits, objects, and places in producing and sustaining an all-encompassing relational ontology."⁷⁰ For their part, Cristine H. Legare and André L. Souza explained luck akinly to magic, saying that "Simpatias are ritualistic remedial procedures, and are not confined to any particular Brazilian religious group, although some of them do include religious information. They are used to solve a variety of everyday problems (e.g., sinusitis, asthma, depression, anxiety, lack of luck, and infidelity)."⁷¹ In the psychological approach to ritual studies, luck is defined simultaneously in probability and metaphysically: Dennis W. Rook notes that "many individuals invest in lucky numbers (lotteries, racetrack betting), favor good luck garments (lucky sports clothes, the "power suit"), and invoke luck-encouraging procedures (craps-table incantations). Such arbitrary beliefs are often enacted in ritual performances."⁷²

These assertions harmoniously correspond to an approach of luck *qua* magic, probably due to the multidisciplinary nature of the academic field in which those studies were undertaken. As observed, theories of luck found in multidisciplinary fields such as folklore and ritual studies are inclusive of the meaning and definitions of luck found in other academic areas while still bringing insightful nuances to the debate.

⁶⁹ George C. Homans, "Anxiety and Ritual: The Theories of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown," *American Anthropologist, New Series* 43, no. 2 (1941): 164.

⁷⁰ Inge Daniels, "Beneficial bonds: luck and the lived experience of relatedness in contemporary Japan," *Social Analysis* 56, no. 1 (2012): 148.

⁷¹ Cristine H. Legare and André L. Souza, "Evaluating ritual efficacy: Evidence from the supernatural," *Cognition* 124, no. 1 (2012): 3.

⁷² Dennis W. Rook, "The Ritual Dimension of Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research* 12, no. 3 (1985): 255.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Going back to the original definition of luck *qua* magic above, and reworking it with terms found in the current academic discussion, one could say that luck—aside from its definition as chance or probability—is part of (or simply *is*) an implicit religion when considered as a belief, and has similar ritualization and operational ritual logic as magic. Logically, one may affirm that luck is a contemporary form of magic.⁷³

From the lack of acknowledgement of luck as a religious entity proper to itself to its assessment as a metaphysical force analogous to magic, theories of luck either consider luck in terms of probability or as a superstition. Philosophers conceive of luck solely in terms of probability, while scholars of psychology and of religion use it in either or both of its definitions, i.e., chance and belief. Multidisciplinary approaches, such as folklore or ritual studies, mainly consider luck as an unexamined belief.

Thus, an actual study of contemporary luck—of its ritualization and operational ritual logic, and of the perceived effectiveness of those acts—may bring insight into the nature of implicit religions, and also enlighten peripheral discussions on superstition and rituals. In order to collect data, one could conduct a series of stratified-random⁷⁴ or, preferably, of systematic-random⁷⁵ semi-structured interviews⁷⁶. Focusing on qualitative aspects (what actions do you do to attract good luck or to protect from bad luck?), while still integrating quantitative elements

⁷³ I must acknowledge that this text does not include content from Steven D. Hales *The Myth of Luck: Philosophy, Fate, and Fortune*. His book would have been a wonderful addition for contextualizing luck within academic culture; unfortunately, his book is unavailable online, and due to the current health crisis I could not gain access to this material.

⁷⁴ Group A (and B, C, D, etc.) is divided in X number of subgroups, and responses are observed from a given amount of people, randomly selected, in each subgroup.

⁷⁵ All members of a given population are put in a given order, and every Xth person is selected for response (X being a number randomly selected).

⁷⁶ Semi-structured interviews are completed using a set of pre-decided questions, and leaves some room to discuss peripheral topics within the interview.

(how many of those do you consider effective or do you practice?), one could build a decent database for analysis of the contemporary belief in luck. As part of such an analysis, one could then discuss the prevalent forms of luck beliefs and rituals, as well as their expected effects. Finally, one could include an analysis of operational ritual logic with examples from those dominant representations and uses of luck in contemporary common belief. A multidisciplinary study of luck as contemporary folkloric magic would be feasible. I believe such a study is necessary in order to better assess the impact of implicit religions on belief formation and worldviews.

Bibliography

- Augustine of Hippo. *On Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://ccel.org/ccel/a/augustine/doctrine/cache/doctrine.pdf>.
- Axtell, Guy. "The New Problem of Religious Luck." In *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Psychology of Luck*, 436-50. Edited by Ian M. Church and Robert J. Hartman. New York, NY: Routledge, 2019. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/books/e/9781351258760>.
- Bailey, Edward. "Implicit Religion." *Religion* 40, no. 4 (2010): 271–78. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.religion.2010.07.002>.
- Barkay, Gabriel et al. "The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom." *Near Eastern Archeology* 66, no. 4 (2003): 162-71. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3557916>.
- Bell, Catherine M. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- , and Reza Aslan. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=472204>.
- , editor. *Teaching Ritual*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195176452.001.0001/acprof-9780195176452>.
- Borghouts, Joris Frans. "Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination in Ancient Egypt." In *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East 3*. Ed. Jack M. Sasson et al., 1775-85. New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1995. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106013032567&view=1up&seq=10>.
- Brown, Gavin. "Theorizing Ritual as Performance: Explorations of Ritual Indeterminacy." *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17, no. 1 (2003): 3-18. Accessed November 9, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44368641>.
- Clarke, Peter. *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2011. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-oxfordhandbooks-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588961.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199588961>.
- Cohen, John. *Chance, Skill and Luck: The Psychology of Guessing and Gambling*. London: Pelican, 1960.

- Daniels, Inge. "Beneficial bonds: luck and the lived experience of relatedness in contemporary Japan." *Social Analysis* 56, no. 1 (2012): 148-164. Accessed on December 10, 2020. DOI:10.3167/sa.2012.560110.
- Darke, Peter R., and Jonathan L. Freedman, "The Belief in Good Luck Scale." *Journal of Research in Personality* 31 (1997), pp. 486-511. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jrpe.1997.2197>.
- Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E Fields. New York: Free Press, 1995.
- Engel, Mylan. "Epistemic Luck." In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://iep.utm.edu/epi-luck/>.
- . "Is epistemic luck compatible with knowledge?" *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30 (1992), pp. 59-75. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-proquest-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/docview/1307507616/fulltextPDF/C5FDAA3F94C94318PQ/1?accountid=12339>.
- Engler, Steven, and Mark Q. Gardiner. "Re-Mapping Bateson's Frame." *Journal of Ritual Studies* 26, no. 2 (2012): 7-20. Accessed December 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44368853>.
- Farber, Walter. "Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination in Ancient Mesopotamia." In *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* 3. Ed. Jack M. Sasson et al., 1895-909. New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1995. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106013032567&view=1up&seq=10>.
- Francis, Leslie, Mandy Robbins, and Emyr Williams. "Believing and Implicit Religion Beyond the Churches: Religion, Superstition, Luck and Fear among 13-15 Year-Old Girls in Wales." *Implicit Religion* 9, no. 1 (2006): 74-89. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=6a9441a5-0086-41dd-ac6c-7287033153cd%40pdc-v-sessmgr06>.
- Frantz-Szabó, Gabriella. "Hittite Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination." In *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* 3. Ed. Jack M. Sasson et al., 2007-19. New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1995. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106013032567&view=1up&seq=10>.
- Frembgen, Jürgen Wasim. "Embodying Evil and Bad Luck: Stray Notes on the Folklore of Bats in Southwest Asia." *Asian Folklore Studies* 65, no. 2 (2006): 241-47. Accessed December 10, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030400>.

- Gill, Robin. *Churchgoing and Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=142378>.
- Grimes, Ronald L. *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x000352399&view=1up&seq=5>.
- . *Research in Ritual Studies: A Programmatic Essay and Bibliography*. Chicago: American Theological Library Association, 1985. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.39000005551127&view=1up&seq=9>.
- . *Rite Out of Place: Ritual, Media, and the Arts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195301441.001.0001/acprof-9780195301441>.
- . *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1990. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x001825145&view=1up&seq=7>.
- . *Ritual, Media, and Conflict*. Oxford Ritual Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199735235.001.0001/acprof-9780199735235>.
- . *The Craft of Ritual Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195301427.001.0001/acprof-9780195301427>.
- Hales, Steven D. *The Myth of Luck: Philosophy, Fate, and Fortune*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020.
- Hayano, David M. "Strategies for the management of luck and action in an urban Poker Parlour." *Urban Life* 6 (1978), pp. 475-488. Accessed on December 11, 2020.
- Heider, Fritz. *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: Wiley, 1958. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951000814517u&view=1up&seq=3>.
- Henslin, James M. "Craps and Magic." *American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 3 (1967): 316-30. Accessed December 5, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776031>.

- Hornborg, Anne-Christine. "Interrituality as a Means to Perform the Art of Building New Rituals." *Journal of Ritual Studies* 31, no. 2 (2017): 17-27. Accessed December 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44988495>.
- Homans, George C. "Anxiety and Ritual: The Theories of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown." *American Anthropologist, New Series* 43, no. 2 (1941): 164-72. Accessed December 10, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/662949>.
- Houlbrook, Ceri. *The Magic of Coin-Trees from Religion to Recreation: The Roots of a Ritual*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://link-springer-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-75517-5>.
- "Hume on Free Will." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Last modified May 27, 2020. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-freewill/#LuckAndMorSys>.
- Keren, Gideon, and Willem Albert Wagenaar. "On the psychology of playing blackjack: Normative and descriptive considerations with implications for decision theory." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 114 (1985), pp. 133-158. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://psycnet-apa-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/record/1986-08209-001>.
- Legare, Cristine H., and André L. Souza. "Evaluating ritual efficacy: Evidence from the supernatural." *Cognition* 124, no. 1 (2012): 1-15. Accessed on December 10, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2012.03.004>.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural Anthropology*. Translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, 1963. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015001458564&view=1up&seq=7>.
- Luck, Georg. *Arcana Mundi, Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds, A Collection of Ancient Texts*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=3318331>.
- Milburn, Joe. "Subject-Involving Luck." *Metaphilosophy* 45, no. 4-5 (2014): 578-93. Accessed on December 9, 2020. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/meta.12108>.
- Miller, Daniel. "Another Look at the Magical Ritual for a Suspected Adulteress in Numbers 5:11-31." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 5, no. 1 (2010): 1-16. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/article/380755>.
- . "Incantations in Ancient West Semitic Corpora and the Hebrew Bible: Continuity and Discontinuity." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2006.

- "Moral Luck." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Last modified April 19, 2019. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-luck/>.
- Nagel, Thomas. "Moral luck." In *Mortal Questions*, 24-38. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-cambridge-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/core/books/mortal-questions/F0D076D52E53EB398DFBEF8E68FF15D1>.
- Otto, Bernd-Christian, and Michael Stausberg. *Defining Magic : A Reader*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2013. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-cambridge-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/core/books/defining-magic/6168BF99AE4A52F1A49A7E698DCC1F16>.
- Parvizian, Sarah. "René Descartes: Ethics." In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed on December 9, 2020. <https://iep.utm.edu/desc-eth/>.
- Poggie, John J., and Carl Gersuny. "Risk and Ritual: An Interpretation of Fishermen's Folklore in a New England Community." *The Journal of American Folklore* 85, no. 335 (1972): 66-72. Accessed December 10, 2020. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/539130>.
- Pritchard, Duncan, and Matthew Smith. "The psychology and philosophy of luck." *New Ideas in Psychology* 22, no. 1 (2004): 1-28. Accessed on December 5, 2020. <https://www-sciencedirect-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/science/article/pii/S0732118X04000029#aep-abstract-id4>.
- Quack, Johannes, and William S. Sax. "Introduction: The Efficacy of Rituals." *Journal of Ritual Studies* 24, no. 1 (2010): 5-12. Accessed December 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44368817>.
- Rescher, Nicholas. "The Machinations of Luck." In *The Philosophy of Luck*, 169-75. Edited by Duncan Pritchard. Wiley-Blackwell: Malden, MA, 2015. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/meta.12101>.
- Ritner, Robert K. "The Religious, Social, and Legal Parameters of Traditional Egyptian Magic." In *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*. Ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, 43-60. Boston: Brill, 2001.
- Rook, Dennis W. "The Ritual Dimension of Consumer Behavior." *Journal of Consumer Research* 12, no. 3 (1985): 251-64. Accessed December 10, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/254372>.
- Simpson, Jacqueline, and Steve Proud. *Dictionary of English Folklore*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780198607663.001.0001/acref-9780198607663>.

- Sims, Martha C, and Martine Stephens. *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions*, 2nd ed. Logan: Utah State Univ Press, 2011. Accessed on December 10, 2020. <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/book/10576>.
- Strathern, Andrew, and Pamela J. Stewart. "Comment: At Play in the Fields of Framing. Or, Why Framing? From Play to Work in Ritual Process." *Journal of Ritual Studies* 26, no. 2 (2012): 79-80. Accessed December 8, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44368857>.
- Tambiah, Stanley J. "Form and meaning of magical acts: A point of view." *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7, no. 3 (2017): 451-73. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-proquest-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/docview/2031513420?accountid=12339>.
- Turner, Victor W. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.49015001107995&view=1up&seq=5>.
- Ünal, Ahmet. "The Role of Magic in the Ancient Anatolian Religions According to the Cuneiform Texts from Boğazköy-Ḫattuša." In *Essays on Anatolian Studies in the Second Millennium B. C.* Ed. H. I. H. Prince Takahito Mikasa, 52-85. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/6888/1/6888.pdf>.
- Wessling, Jordan. "Theology and Luck." In *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Psychology of Luck*, 451-63. Edited by Ian M. Church and Robert J. Hartman. New York, NY: Routledge, 2019. Accessed on December 11, 2020. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/books/e/9781351258760>.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Andean Messianism and the Resurgence of Earth-Based Religions.”

Arnold Arnez
Hunter College

ABSTRACT

The arrival of Indigenous movements to government in the Andes is not purely a political process. Figures like Evo Morales in Bolivia reignited the symbols of the Inca and other Andean messiah figures whose mission is the end of colonial governance as well as the harkening of Indigenous sovereignty over their own lands. A principle of this sovereignty is the return to traditional Indigenous religions and conception of the land and nature not only as collective resources but as political actors in Andean history. By studying the history of Andean messianism as metaphysics-turned-politics since the conquest of the Inca Empire by the Spaniards in the 15th century to Evo Morales’s rise to the presidency in the 21st century, this paper shows the extent to which Andean politics cannot be separated from post-Incan Indigenous world views.

Keywords: Evo Morales, Pachakuti, Buen Vivir, Messianism, Andes, Inca, Fausto Reinaga.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Andean Messianism and the Resurgence of Earth-Based Religions.”

Arnold Arnez
Hunter College

INTRODUCTION

This essay will investigate the prophetic themes within Andean Messianism and how they are founded on the religio-historical concept of *pachakuti*, or space-time reversal, and the return of Earth-based religions in the Andes as well as the Americas. It will analyze temporality and history in the Andean worldview and how this worldview is driven by myth. One of the main drivers is the concept of *pachakuti*, a contraction of the words *Pacha* {space-time, world, cosmos}¹ and *Kuti* {turn, reversal, (re)volution}. This circular metaphor for Andean history shows time as cyclical by which *pachakuti* is the process of the death and rebirth into a new cycle where the natural order is said to return. Though the word *pachakuti* has many different translations, it is presently used as a call for the return Earth-Based religions that care for *Pachamama*, the earth/cosmic mother goddess of the Andean pantheon, and decolonization of traditionally indigenous² lands.

This paper will analyze multiple myths of either the rise of an indigenous messiah or the will of the Andean gods and how these myths reveal vital historical moments that could have constituted a (re)turn in Andean space-time, or *pachakuti*. The three examples of Andean

¹ Items in {} will denote the author’s translations of Quechua and Spanish terminology and sources.

² The words “Indigenous”, “Indians”, and “Natives” are used interchangeably in this essay to reference the Indigenous peoples of North and South America. Regarding the term “Indian” (Spanish: “Indio”), it is still used by the Indianistas, Native activists in Bolivia, who deem Indigenous to be the colonial term rather than Indian. For the purposes of the essay, each term is to be considered equivalent. For the Indianista perspective, see Reinaga 2014, specifically *La Revolución India*.

messianism will be (1) the *Inkarrí* myth, the myth of the return of the Inka king who will reinstate cosmic order, (2) the *Taki Onqoy* revolt, where the mountain gods called for the expulsion of the Spaniards, and (3) the Eagle and Condor Prophecy, the contemporary prophecy that sees the return of Earth-based religions in the Americas occurring now in the 21st century.

Finally, the last section will concern itself with the specific vision of the world following the *pachakuti*. These include the return of Earth-based philosophies, such as the *Buen Vivir* ideology, where humanity is defined as living with nature and technology to live well and not to indefinitely accumulate material wealth to live better, and *Pachamamismo*, the re-enchantment with the Earth as mother-goddess.

PACHAKUTI AS A WORLD-HISTORICAL PROCESS

In December 2005, Bolivia elected its first Indian president, Evo Morales Ayma. As an Aymara peasant and syndicate leader, he ran on a platform of nationalizing natural resources, consolidating national sovereignty, creating a socialist economy, and recognizing indigenous rights and political autonomy.³ In his inaugural address, he paid his respects to “our [Bolivian] ancestors” ranging from the 16th century Inka emperor Manco Inca to the 20th century Bolivian socialist leader Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, putting himself as part of a long tradition of indigenous and anti-colonial struggle.⁴ In 2009, the nation supported Evo’s referendum to write a new national constitution, inaugurating Bolivia as a pluri-national state⁵ and grounding the nation-state on the indigenous principles of cultural pluralism, ecological care, and political autonomy.⁶ In a nation with a majority indigenous population the election of a radical Indian

³ Benjamin Dangl, *The Price of Fire* (Los Angeles: AK Press, 2007).

⁴ Evo Morales Ayma, *Discurso Inaugural del Presidente Evo Morales Ayma* (La Paz: Publicaciones Cancillería, 2006).

⁵ For more on Plurinationalism and the history of colonial nation-state formation in Latin America, see Macas Ambuludí (2011) and Natividad Chong (2012). ,

⁶ Waskar Ari, *Earth Politics: Religion, Decolonization, and Bolivia’s Indigenous Intellectuals* (Durham: Duke University press, 2014).

president marked a change in what had been a 500 year national history of colonialism and racism whereby national policy and identity are now to be grounded in its indigenous worldviews. For the Quechuas and Aymaras of Bolivia the election of Evo marked a *pachakuti*,⁷ or “revolution” as it is used in contemporary Andean political discourse.⁸ This political usage, however, is only a working definition and does not go into its full complexity within the religious Andean conceptions of time, which will be explained in a later section. What this definition does show is that Evo’s election is not one merely founded on simple reforms to the state, but a transformation of the state itself with its source of legitimacy now founded on indigenous epistemologies in direct opposition to colonial values: a state working towards decolonization.

This process of *pachakuti* is not isolated to the context of the Andes, but has expanded and become a central driver for decolonization in pan-Indian movements across the American hemisphere. In the manifesto released by the “Third Continental Summit of Indigenous Nations and Pueblos of Abya Yala”⁹ in Guatemala, a group of indigenous peoples from across the continent convened to declare the new resurgence of indigenous movements and their values of “complementarity, reciprocity, and duality, as well as the struggle for our territories in order to preserve our Mother Nature and the autonomy and self-determination of our Indigenous Peoples.”¹⁰ Of these demands, the Indigenous congregation claimed they would be met because they aligned with traditional forms of time saying “[w]e announce the continental resurgence of

⁷ *Pachakuti* – The spelling of *Pachakuti* differs in writing as Quechua is predominantly oral and its written form has changed since its introduction in the colonial period in the 16th century to the 21st century. For the accepted contemporary spelling and the history of writing in Quechua see Laime Ajacopa (2007) and Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua (2005).

⁸ Raquel Gutierrez Aguilar, *Rhythms of the Pachakuti*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

⁹ Third Continental Summit of Indigenous Nations and Pueblos of Abya Yala, “Back to Iximché” (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 541.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

the Pachacutic (the return) along with the closure of Oxlajuj Baq'tun (long count of 5,200 years) and as we approach the door of the new Baq'tun, we journey together to make of Abya Yala¹¹ a 'land full of life.'¹²

The context that *pachakuti* as a concept is used, among other American-Indian concepts, shows it not only to be relevant within Bolivia, or the Andes in general. Rather, it has world historical significance as it sees indigenous control over their lands and the decolonization from Canada to Argentina as an inevitable act of cosmic realignment. In the end of the manifesto, they include this line meant to reverse the Western conception of anthropocentric-guided time and history: "we have dreamt our past and we remember our future."¹³

The driving force of world history put forth by these Native American activists puts the linear-future conception of history on its head by putting forth a model of history that is cyclical and past-oriented. This conception of *pachakuti* cannot follow the Hegelian conception of revolution where humans must progressively move forwards towards a utopia, driven solely by reason.¹⁴ The Third Continental Summit's manifesto and Evo Morales's presidency are centered, rather, on millenarian history which has precedence in Andean forms of logic and history that have driven Indigenous movements since before the Spanish conquest.

However, before we can look at the myths proper within Andean history, it is important to have an overview of the framework of Andean temporality as experienced through the languages of Indigenous Andeans: Quechua and Aymara.

¹¹ *Abya Yala* means "land in its full maturity" in the Kuna language of Panama. Indigenous Latin Americans commonly refer to the Western Hemisphere as "Abya Yala" as an alternative to "América" from Spanish.

¹² Third Continental Summit of Indigenous Nations and Pueblos of Abya Yala, "Back to Iximché", 541-2.

¹³ *Ibid*, 544.

¹⁴ Fausto Reinaga, *La Razon y El Indio* (La Paz: Partido Indio de Bolivia, 1977).

DEFINITIONS IN ANDEAN TIME

The imperative of going through a conceptual breakdown of Andean categories prevents a “partial connection” between two historically and philosophically distinct cultures. Indigenous worldviews are deeply tied to the land they inhabit, where Indian peoples encounter and ground their concepts and, for their languages, the medium through which they collectively experience and pass down these meanings.¹⁵ According to Marisol de la Cadena, learning, understanding, and translating Quechua and Aymara must be understood not solely as an objective linguistic process, but a critical anthropological process aware of one’s Western mode of thought in relation to a separate Indian worldview at hand.¹⁶ The Andean conception, and experience, of temporality differs greatly from that of the Western conception of a linear, progressive time, and so must be understood through its worldview before it is critically examined in its religious and political uses.

One of the terms denoting the past in Quechua is the term “*ñawpaq*” meaning both “past” and “forward” (In Aymara, the phrase “*nayra pacha*,” or “*nayra tiempo*,” also holds both meanings simultaneously). *Ñawpaq* can be separated into two forms of the past: the relatively recent past and the relatively distant and mythical past.¹⁷ The word *ñawpaqta* refers to the relative recent past and the word “first,” indicating an immediate and material relationship with the past. The word *ñawpaqpi* translates to “in the past” and is used in narratives that relate to the mythical past such as about the first Inka emperor, Manco Capac, or the dealings with the gods; Andean or Christian.

¹⁵ Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017).

¹⁶ Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

¹⁷ Odi Gonzales, *Practica de Quechua II* (New York: New York University Press, 2019).

These categories have real value to the experiences of time for Andeans. In both Quechua and Aymara, the past is represented with the eye, whereby the Quechua "ñawpaq" is rooted in the word "ñawi" which is eye¹⁸ and the Aymara "nayra" directly translates to eye. Andeans experience the world through their immediate reference with the past, which is always what is immediately in front of them and orientates what their experience of the present is.¹⁹ In contrast, Western time is expressed as temporally, future-oriented, and spatially, forward-oriented, whereby one can actively create their future in the world in front of oneself or visually imagine it and then create it.

Future-oriented temporality is secondary to the experience of time for Andean peoples, since it places importance on human action imposed onto the world without understanding how that action is shaped by the past and by assistance from the gods. The Andean worldview is diametrically opposed to Gore Vidal's view of Americans' lack of collective memory concerning the fall of Western empires and the US imperial history saying "[...] we are permanently the United States of Amnesia. We learn nothing because we remember nothing."²⁰ Andean epistemology is always aware of the way the past affects the present and how this relationship is developed through a cyclical recurrence of the past.

The foundation of this past-oriented temporality is that it is cyclical in nature. The Inka chronicler Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala describes the existence of four ages throughout the Inka conception of history: (1) Uariuiracocha Runa²¹, (2) Uari Runa, (3) Purun Runa, and (4) Auca Runa.²² In each of these ages, there was a series of humans who were born, built their

¹⁸ Ibid, 129.

¹⁹ Odi Gonzales, "Earth Beings. El Protocolo de los Desencuentros" (Lima, 2016).

²⁰ Gore Vidal, *Imperial America: Reflections on the United States of Amnesia*, (New York: Nation Books, 2004).

²¹ *Runa* translates to person or people in Quechua.

²² Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva Coronica Y Buen Gobierno* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1980).

civilizations, and then ending, by which the next civilization is born. The development of each age shows the particular conception of cyclical nature, that it is both cyclical and accumulative.²³

The Quechua-Aymara intellectual Ramiro Reynaga²⁴ describes as such:

{ One turn of the spiral is a circle. And every cycle remembers the previous cycle. But, without copying it. There are no two equal Winters or Summers. If the repetition were mechanical, the spiral would cease to be and would become closed. Every cycle reflects the previous one in a posterior orbit, like the coils of a snail, a tornado, each cycle being amplified. }

Reynaga's explanation of these cycles does not deny that there is an understanding of the future, but rather, that the future is a repetition of processes that occur in the previous cycle in new contexts. Because the Andean tradition is tied to their predominantly agricultural lifestyle, these cycles are tied to the birth-death-rebirth seen throughout the cycles of the seasons and the celestial bodies. The word "*paqarin*" in Quechua, meaning "tomorrow", does not refer to a new day, but rather, to a renewed day, as it is derived from the verb "*paqariy*" which means "to appear," "to create [itself]," and "to originate [itself]" with the implications of giving birth as well.²⁵ Each day is itself a rebirth of the sun in the metaphorical sense of the previous day being gone but the new day follows the same processes of the previous day (sunrise, giving light, moving from east to west, giving way to night) as any other day would.

However, when these laws that form Andean cosmology are put into question or even fail to occur, it is a source of extreme anxiety as it is an indication of the world turned on its head; what is known in the Andes as a *Pachakuti*.

²³ Ramiro Reynaga, *Tawa Inti Suyu* (Peru: Hijosdesol.tk), 330; Atuq Eusebio Manga Qespi, "Pacha: un concepto andino de espacio y tiempo" (Madrid: Revista Española de Antropología Americana, 1994), 183.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua, *DICCIONARIO QUECHUA - ESPAÑOL - QUECHUA* (Cusco: Gobierno Regional Cusco, 2005), 384.

DEFINING PACHAKUTI

Pachakuti is a composite term between *pacha* and *kuti* that, when translated literally, becomes “world-turn” or “time-volution,” indicating the end to one cycle time and the beginning of another. However, the metaphorical meaning expressed in the composition of both words translates to “cataclysm” or “earthquake.”²⁶ El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega explains that this connection made between *pachakuti* and its negative connotation as “cataclysm” comes from the Andean experience of history where change is typically “change for the worse” or instability: “it is rarely used when they change for the better, for they say that things more often go from good too bad than from bad to good.”²⁷ Though it is typically seen as negative, *pachakuti* still has the possibility of having a positive influence in Andean history: from bad to good.

In this sense, *pachakuti* parallels the word “revolution” which expresses the end (death) and subsequent reconstruction (rebirth) of civilizations with the word containing “-volution” as a suffix that points towards the completion of an epoch in history. For Amado, a young *Paqo*²⁸, all *pachakutis* are painful, as they require an awakening (which as hard as waking up in the morning) to a new perception of space-time,²⁹ as in the prophecy of the eagle and condor that will be discussed later. This includes the cataclysmic violence that typically goes with both a revolution and *pachakuti*. An example of a *pachakuti* as revolution can be seen with the recounting of the war between the Inka and the Chanka kingdom.

²⁶ Teofilo Laime Ajacopa, *Diccionario Bilingüe: Iskay Simipi yuyak'ancha: Quechua-Castellano, Castellano-Quechua* (La Paz: Bolivia, 2007), 75.

²⁷ El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas And General History of Peru: Part One and Two* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 304.

²⁸ *Paqo* is the Quechua word for an Andean medicine man or shaman. This title is used primarily in Peru, while in Aymara and Quechua communities in Bolivia, a *pano* is referred to as *Yatiri*.

²⁹ Hillary S. Webb, *Yanantin and Masintin in the Andean World: Complementary Dualism in Modern Peru* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 55.

In the Inka-Chanka war (c. 1438), the militarily advanced Chanka Kingdom of southwestern Peru, in what is now Apurímac, laid siege to the capital city the Inkas, Cuzco.³⁰ The Inkas held only a local kingdom within the Cuzco valley, and so, had neither the soldiers nor resources of its imperial days. In the ensuing chaos within and without Cuzco, the eighth Inka, Inca Viracocha, decided to abandon the capital for the Urubamba valley with his chosen heir. In the now kingless city, another of Inca Viracocha's sons, Inca Cusi Yupanqui, remained and took control of the city and rallied a "small but heroic contingent" of Inka soldiers to defend the city and come out miraculously victorious over the Chankas.³¹ What results from this victory that the Inkas had was (1) the survival of the Inkas from certain cataclysm, (2) hegemony over the Andes as the *de facto* dominant power, and (3) the replacement of Inca Viracocha for Inca Cusi Yupanqui. The new ninth Inka, Yupanqui, would change his name to Pachacútec³², meaning "one who turns, or overturns, or changes the world."³³

Pachacútec's change in name was no mere self-aggrandizement, but had metaphysical significance in the Andes. As Garcilaso de la Vega explains, "the flight of his [the Inka's] father" had disrupted the cosmic order of the Andean worldview from "good to bad" as the Inka had abandoned Cuzco.³⁴ This abandonment of what was considered the center of the Inka cosmos³⁵ was a cataclysm itself as it opened up Cusco to dysfunction in its political order and disharmony in the world which, thus, threatened the possibility of providing life in the Inka realm. Jorge Flores Ochoa describes that in modern pastoral communities in Peru, there is the use of the word *Enqa* {sometimes translated as *Inqa*} which is the "generative power that brings fortune and

³⁰ McEwan, *The Incas: New Perspectives*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

³² *Pachacútec* in modern Quechua orthography is "*Pachakuteq*."

³³ Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 304.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva Coronica Y Buen Gobierno*; Jorge A. Flores Ochoa, *El Centro del Universo Andino* (Cusco: Municipalidad de Cusco, 2005).

wellbeing which alpacas and llamas have.”³⁶ However, it is used as an abstraction of the divine role of the Inka king³⁷ who “is the same” as his divinity is as someone who “brings fortune and happiness to the people, a god on earth.”³⁸ To call himself Pachacútec is meant to show that when his father abandoned the city to the oncoming Chanka army, he brought *Tawantinsuyu*³⁹ back into its role of organizing communities, which requires interaction and harmony with the non-human worlds of the forest, the water, the animals, the *apus*,⁴⁰ the dead ancestors, etc., to provide the fortune for good harvests on the land which brings well-being for the kingdom.

For this reason, the term “revolution” is metaphysically inadequate to express the power, and terror, invoked by *pachakuti*. The Western concept of “revolution” only sees change occurring on the level of history, society, and the political, whereby the only point of agency resides in an individual or collective subject that is always human. Michael Allen Gillespie describes that in the transition from Medieval Christian to secular history in Modernity, “the truth in the revelation of an eternal and transcendent God” was now replaced with “truth in man himself as a conscious and self-conscious being” which only “arises through consciousness, either through observation or introspection. Consciousness thus becomes the standard of truth for modernity.”⁴¹ By denying the agency and divine essence of the non-human world in the translation from Andean myth to European Modernity, the reciprocity between the Inka and the natural world as that frames the messianic worldview begins to lose coherence when studying

³⁶ Ministerio de Cultura Cusco “JORGE FLORES OCHOA, estudios e investigaciones”, 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDGJSTDK2ZI>.

³⁷ Jorge Flores Ochoa (2016) points to the similarity in pronunciation between “Inka” and “Enqa,” as the latter is closer to typical Quechua pronunciation and the former is a corruption of it. In essence, “Enqa” precedes the title “Inka” as it is the force that gives authority to the political and religious Inka king.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Tawantinsuyu*: The name of the Inka Empire in Quechua. It translates to “the four united territories.”

⁴⁰ *Apu* Refers to the spirits that reside within the different mountains in the Andes. They are venerated as gods that protect and guide Andean peoples.

⁴¹ Michael Allen Gillespie, *Hegel, Heidegger, and the Ground of History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 8-9.

Andean history. This results in the obscuring of the reality that the *pachakuti* points to of human and non-human animals as essential actors in history.

Marxism⁴² is an important example of a worldview that is driven by a messianic telos of communism that is engendered by European Modernity. Marxism's historical progression towards communism presumes a world where the laboring class takes control of the means of production (factories, machinery) so as to equally partition what is produced by the working class, for the working class.⁴³ First, the focus is on the industrial machinery that would produce goods based on human needs alone. Marxism's goal is to correct working conditions to be in harmony with human nature. Marxism corrects the problem of alienation, whereby goods are produced for the capitalist boss and workers are in competition with each other, by making the worker a social being again who takes personal pride in creating goods for oneself and one's community; now with the productivity of factory machinery in direct worker control.⁴⁴ Second, the commodities used to produce goods like food, clothes, tools, etc., involve the natural world insofar as humans put their labor into nature, using nature to extract commodities to make goods.⁴⁵ Even the eco-socialist model only corrects the overproduction of industrial production that destroys lakes, forests, and other ecosystems in the pursuit of human needs,⁴⁶ but does not perceive nature as a living agent or active in history.

Apart from the Inka as a divine, not fully human being, Andean history is also driven by the non-human world as active agents in the movement of history. In different myths concerning

⁴² I use Marxism as an example because it is the most influential revolutionary ideology in contemporary Latin American and Andean politics even amongst Indigenous peoples and pro-Indigenous sympathizers. To read more on this, see Löwy 1980, *Marxism in Latin America from 1909 to the Present: An Anthology*, and Rupperacht 2015, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin*, p.129-190.

⁴³ Karl Marx; Fredrich Engels, *The Marx and Engels Reader* (1978).

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 84.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 72.

⁴⁶ Michael Löwy, "From Marx to Ecosocialism" *Portside*, February 21, 2019, Accessed May 1, 2019, <https://portside.org/2019-02-21/marx-ecosocialism>.

the *pachakuti*, there is the act of the animals showing the cataclysm that is to befall humans if they do not follow the animals. In the myth "What Happened to the Indians in the Olden Days When the Sea Overflowed,"⁴⁷ a great flood is recounted where much of the earth, except for the mountains, are flooded. In it, a llama knew that the world would soon come to an end, so he did not eat, even while lying on the best grass in the field. His owner mistreats him for not eating, saying "[e]at, dog! [...] You rest over the best grass!"⁴⁸ The llama then responds to him "speaking like a man ... 'Pay attention and remember what I am going to tell you. Five days from now, the sea will overflow and the whole world will come to an end.'"⁴⁹ To which the "owner became frightened; he believed him"⁵⁰ and took the llama and his family to Mount Huillcacoto to survive the flood.⁵¹

Acting as a story of both humility and prophecy, it shows the Andean world as permeated by a world of living and sentient beings who communicate with humanity and vice versa. It is by humbling himself to the warning given by the llama, which was also expressed in the llama's active reluctance to eat the grass, that the Andean man and his family survive the flood. The anthropocentric narrative of animals as automatons as described by Descartes is subverted as Andeans see a natural rationality that is attached to matter and the material world of animals, minerals, water, etc., which is known to the Q'ero people as "*Kausay Pacha*" or "the world of living energies." This can be seen occurring when an Indigenous Andean man will no longer walk along his path if he sees a fox walking away from the general direction they were heading in because it symbolizes a bad omen or danger.⁵² Demythologized, the fox has a reason to not

⁴⁷ Margarita B. Marín-Dale, *Decoding Andean Mythology* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 111.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Rodolfo Kusch, *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in America*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

want to be in the place where the Andean farmer is heading, be it because of desolation or danger. Under this logic, the Andean farmer heeds the example of the fox and goes back or takes another route. The flood is also of divine and animate origin, as the description of the flood itself is caused by Mother Sea ("*Mama Qocha*" in Quechua) who "had wished (and decided) to overflow and pour down in torrents."⁵³

Juan M. Ossio⁵⁴ argues that Andean history as we know it begins from the moment of this great flood, which Guaman Poma de Ayala recounts with the first age of the Andes: "*Estas gentes no supieron de dónde salieron ni cómo ni de qué manera [...] y no se acordaron que vinieron de la descendencia de Noé del diluvio, aunque tienen noticia del diluvio porque ellos le llaman uno yaco Pachacuti, fue castigo de Dios.*"⁵⁵ These peoples did not know from where they came from, nor how, nor in what way ... and they did not remember that they descended from Noah of the flood, even though they have accounts of the flood, which they call "*uno yaco Pachacuti*"⁵⁶—{Sacred Water Cataclysm}—a punishment from God.

However, the last major *pachacuti* that had occurred was in 1532, which occurred with the Spanish conquest of *Tawantinsuyu*, marking an end to the hegemony of the Andean worldview and the introduction of what he dubbed the *Pachacuti runa* or the "people of the overturned world."⁵⁷ In this age, Christianity and European culture take hold and are used to suppress the Indigenous peoples of the Andes. The name *Pachacuti runa*, itself, shows that the world was constituted by cataclysm, and that this 500 year catastrophe can only be rectified by the next *pachacuti*. Alongside this cyclical conception of time are the myths of the return of the

⁵³ Marín-Dale, *Decoding Andean Mythology*, 111.

⁵⁴ Juan M. Ossio, "Introducción: Ideología Mesianica del Mundo Andino" (Lima:Edición de Ignacio Prado Pastor 1973).

⁵⁵ Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva Coronica Y Buen Gobierno*, 40 [50-1].

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Ossio, *Ideología Mesianica del Mundo Andino*, 182.

Inka king, that the world will come to rectify itself, as it did in the previous ages, and that this can only occur by looking to the past when Andean peoples lived with control over their lands.

THE *INKARRÍ* MYTH

The myth of *Inkarri* comes after the Spanish conquest of the Inkas in 1532, describing both the integral place of the Inka as sovereign of the land and his return beginning the punishment of those not living within the Andean principles and ethics. Not a single myth but, rather, a set of myths spoken by different Quechua-speaking Andean peoples, they are all held together by the common theme of the messianic return of the Inka king to bring back cosmic order. The word *Inkarri* is itself a composite of the words "Inka" and a Quechuanized pronunciation of the Spanish word *rey* or "king" in English.⁵⁸

Much of Andean Messianism harkens back to two turning points in Andean history: 1532-1572 and 1780-1783. The first period begins following the assassination of the Inka king, Atahualpa, by the Spaniards and conquest of Tawantinsuyu by the Spanish conquistador, Francisco Pizarro. The 40 years preceding the conquest are the rebellions and messianic movements that would be sparked by exiled rebels from the Inka noble class who would escape to an Inka fortress in the Amazon at Vilcabamba.⁵⁹ This period would end with the final official Inka king, Tupac Amaru I, being killed in a battle to take back control of Tawantinsuyu.

The second period begins with multiple rebellions led by the Quechua and Aymara natives, across what is now Peru and Bolivia, against Spanish rule following the implementation of the Bourbon reforms of 1759. This increased taxes on the colonies, reinforced the peonage of Indigenous peoples, and decreased control over communal lands and cultural autonomy for the

⁵⁸ Jose María Arguedas, "Mitos Quechuas post-Hispanicos," in *Ideologia Mesianica del Mundo Andino* (Lima: Edición de Ignacio Prado Pastor 1973), 379.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Indigenous peasantry.⁶⁰ Two major leaders arose at this time that would become figureheads in messianic narratives common in left-nationalist narratives of the nation-state in the Andes: Tupac Amaru II in Peru and Tupac Katari in Bolivia.

There are two overarching themes amongst the *Inkarrí* myths that reveal the nature of Andean messianism: (1) the dismemberment of the Inka king and (2) the reconstitution of that body, bringing about the return of the Inka and the final judgment on the Spaniards.

The dismemberment of the *Inkarrí* comes from the memory of the first Messianic period of 1533-1572, when the Spaniards executed Atahualpa Inka. Following his capture by the Spaniards, Atahualpa offered to give the conquistadors a room filled with gold, silver, and precious jewels which is believed to be either a ransom for his life or his freedom.⁶¹ While the Inkas followed through and gave this room of gold, the Spaniards fulfilled neither option to Atahualpa whom they, instead, decided to execute to secure their position as conquerors. Following his conversion to Catholicism, Atahualpa was executed by decapitation.

In regards to the *Inkarrí* myth, Jose María Arguedas explains that the death of Atahualpa is not eternal since "the head of the god was taken to Cuzco"⁶² and "the head of *Inkarrí* is still alive and the body of this god is reconstituting itself from below."⁶³ When the body of *Inkarrí* is complete, he will return. And that day he will make his final judgment. The *pachakuti* expressed here is one of a deep longing and hope for retributive justice against the Spaniards and their descendants; those who have social power from their ancestry and those whose actions colonial domination against the Indigenous Quechuas and Aymaras. But, this justice does not have a

⁶⁰ Charles F. Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁶¹ John Hemming, *The conquest of the Incas* (New York: Mariner Books, 1993), 39-40.

⁶² José María Arguedas, "La Posesión de la Tierra, Los Mitos Pos-Hispánicos y la Visión del Universo en la Población Monolingüe Quechua" (Lima: Edición de Ignacio Prado Pastor 1973), 228.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

specific time in which it will occur, as it is fundamentally a longing for the end of colonial rule. This manifestation of Indigenous memory and hope for a cosmic order constituted under Andean principles mirrors the idea of *enqa*; an abstraction of the Inka's divine power. The principle of Andean messianism and its goal for decolonization is not tied to a single figure or moment in history, but to the symbol of the Inka as continually reconstituting itself, manifested in the emergence of the Indigenous liberation movements in the Andes. This harkening back to the Inka's body being reconstituted occurs in the second major period of Andean messianism in 1780-1783 with Tupac Amaru II and Tupac Katari.

Tupac Amaru II, christened José Gabriel Condorcanqui Noguera, was a *kuraka*⁶⁴ who led a rebellion against the abuses of Spanish authorities in the colonies. His influence would spread from the northwest of Cuzco to Lima, Peru to the west and La Paz, Bolivia, to the east near Lake Titicaca. As a descendent of the old Inka nobility all the way to Hauyna Capac,⁶⁵ father of Atahualpa Inka. Amaru embodied the line of the Inka nobilities and could collect them together under their collective memory of the Inka with his seizure of power. However, José Antonio Areche, the Spanish magistrate who oversaw the execution of Tupac Amaru II, saw the danger of the memory of the Inka writing "it is prohibited that the Indians wear heathen clothes, especially those that belong to the nobility, since it only serves to symbolize those worn by their Inca ancestors" and "magistrates should ensure that in no town of their respective provinces be performed plays or other public functions [...] to commemorate their formers Incas."⁶⁶

Antonio Areche was correct in the symbolic value of Tupac Amaru II as an Inka because his image would be used to reconstitute new movements for anti-colonial resistance. In Peru, the

⁶⁴ *Kuraka* is the traditional head of an *Ayllu* or local Indigenous community.

⁶⁵ Maria Rostworowski, "Introducción" and "La diarquía de los inkas" in *Estructuras Andinas del Poder* (Lima: IEP, 1983), 9-17 and 130-179.

⁶⁶ Orin Starn et al. *The Peru Reader* (Durham: Duke University press, 1995), 158-159.

Quechua syndicate leader, Saturnino Huillca Quispe would lead the land reform movement that directly led to the abolishment of Indian serfdom in 1969 using the memory of Tupac Amaru II as a guide. In Huillca's mind, there is a national dichotomy between two Perus, White and Native. On one hand, the Indigenous Peru keeps the rebellion of Tupac Amaru II as memory which guides dreams and movements for Peru to be Indigenous-led once again. On the other hand, the White Peru is exemplified by the *Misti*⁶⁷, the inauthentic figure that abandons and exploits the living source and embodiment of the Peruvian nation-state, the Quechua and Aymara who are descendants of the Inkas. This dichotomy is the national reality whose violence goes beyond the economic to a necessarily racial conception of what constitutes national identity in the Andes. To explain this dichotomy, Huillca says of the *Mistis*, "they enrich themselves, they become large owners of land [...] the *mistis* stripped away the existence of our grandparents, our ancestors, becoming powerful from what they had [...] they are not true Peruvians. In Peru, we, the Indigenous peasants, are the authentic Peruvians [...] the *Mistis* is the child of the Spaniard."⁶⁸

In the conception of the Indigenous Peru, Quechua and Aymara, follow practices that are deeply connected to their lands, which they had little control over. The historian Hugo Neira describes the 1969 land reform movement as "[Huillca's] rebellion" which ushered in the "modern Peru."⁶⁹ However, Huillca does not see himself as individually important, but sees the land reform as a legacy of Tupac Amaru, saying reverently "[y]es Tupac Amaru. Yes, him. He is a true father [of the Peruvian nation]. It was him, he created this path."⁷⁰ The symbolic value of

⁶⁷ *Misti* is a disparaging term for non-Indians in Peru. Usually meant for those who discriminate against Indigenous peoples.

⁶⁸ Hugo Neira, *Huillca: Habla un campesino peruano* (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1975), 124-5.

⁶⁹ Hugo Neira, *Cuzco: Tierra y Muerte* (2011), 20.

⁷⁰ Neira, *Huillca: Habla un campesino peruano*, 114.

the Inka itself spurs messianic fervor and gives greater credence to those who could then claim to be a descendant of the Inka, regardless of whether it is true or not.

For the Aymara people of Bolivia, Tupac Katari is the heroic figure through which Andean revolution is possible. Christened as Julian Apaza, Tupac Katari took up his name as homage to the insurrection by Tupac Amaru in Peru.⁷¹ The last name "Katari" is the Aymaran translation for Amaru, which is the Quechua for "serpent" (specifically in a mythical or totemic sense.)⁷²

The messianic spirit Tupac Katari left behind rests in his final words before his execution: "*A mí solo me matarán, [...] pero mañana volveré y seré millones,*"⁷³ {they will kill only I, [...] but tomorrow, I will return and be millions}. Contemporary Indigenous movements in Bolivia such as the *Indianista-Kataristas*, {Indianist-Katarists}, speak of their movement as the symbolic reconstitution of Tupac Katari's body, as they see it "*no como un cuerpo muerto, sino como un cuerpo vivo y activo. Él es imaginado y activado como cuerpo revivido y que camina sobre su propio territorio [...] bajo el manto de las fuerzas de sus 'hijos e hijas'*,"⁷⁴ {not like a dead body, but rather as a living and active body. He is imagined and animated like a revived body and that he walks over his own territory [...] under the banner of the forces of his 'sons and daughters'}. By walking on their own land and still understanding themselves as Aymara, these activists see themselves as living because he is the father that defended their Indigenous land. In living on the land he died on, they are symbolically walking his footsteps and

⁷¹ Walker, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, xxxii.

⁷² Academia Mayor de la Lengua, Quechua, *Diccionario Quechua-Castellano-Quechua*, 11.

⁷³ Pablo Mamani Ramirez et al., *Reconstitución de Tupaj Katari y Bartolina Sisa* (El Alto: Textos Rebeldes, 2010), 61.

⁷⁴ Ramirez, 61.

protecting the same land he did under their banner of Aymara nationalism, which prophesies the control over their land as his inevitable return.

These rebellions showed the desire to re-establish Tawantinsuyu by reestablishing the body of the Inka, both by genealogy and the spirit of the *Inkarrí*. In the case of the *Taki Onqoy*, there is a vision of messianism of when there was still a living Inka in the waning days of the Inka Empire.

THE TAKI ONQOY

The *Taki Onqoy* {Dance of Sickness} was a messianic movement that began following the conquest of the Inka capital, Cuzco, in 1533, and the self-exile of many of the Inka nobility into the rebel Inca state at Vilcabamba. Alongside the myth of *Inkarrí*, the *Taki Onqoy* sought to bring back the cosmic order within the Andes by overthrowing Spanish Catholicism and returning the Andean worldview with the Inka in the center. However, unlike the *Inkarrí* myth, the *Taki Onqoy's* political and religious influences mainly remain in the 16th century as the death of Tupac Amaru I (the final Inka emperor) and conquest of Neo-Inca state at Vilcabamba in 1572 marked the end to the political and religious hegemony of the Inka in the Andes.

The *Taki Onqoy* is characterized as messianic for many reasons: the scale, the presence of prophets, and the belief in the resurrection of the Andean gods and their overcoming of the Christian God. The *Taki Onqoy* began in 1564 and lasted until 1572, ending in a final attack against the Spaniards and the conquest death of Tupac Amaru I. It was amongst the largest rebellions of the colonial Americas and led entirely by the Indigenous Quechuas and Aymaras who saw the loss of their land, autonomy, and the constant abuses by the Spaniards as a result of the Inka gods no longer being officially venerated.

The religious experience of the *Taki Onqoy* was characterized by the ecstasy displayed in its dance.⁷⁵ First, the participants would dance to the point of exhaustion whereby they would go into trance, culminating in trembles and spasms whereby they would venerate the Andean *huacas*⁷⁶ and renounce Catholicism.⁷⁷ From then on, they would preach the return of the Inka and Andean *huacas*, and purify themselves through Inka rites and rituals.

A comparison made in studies of the *Taki Onqoy* is with the Ghost-Dance Religion, an Indigenous messianic movement in the late 19th century United States. The similarities abound between the two in their religious and political goals.⁷⁸ Both sought to bring their followers into a trance whereby they would let their Indigenous deities speak through them. The prophet of the Ghost Dance religion, Wovoka, unified various Indigenous peoples of the Western US with the return of an indigenized Jesus Christ who would bring judgment on the White settlers.⁷⁹ In similar fashion, the Indigenous prophets of the *Taki Onqoy*, Juan Chocne, "Santa Maria," and "Maria Magdalena," spoke of the unification of the varied local Andean cults into two central holy sites: the city of Pachacamac in Coastal Peru and around Lake Titicaca in Andean mountain Peru-Bolivia.⁸⁰

Mircea Eliade points out the difference between the shamanic religions and the secret brotherhoods (e.g. Ghost Dance, *Taki Onqoy*) in that the latter is open to all who are willing to

⁷⁵ According to historian Luis Millones, the modern dance of *Danza de las Tijeras* [Scissors Dance], from Ayacucho, Peru, was inspired by the *Taki Onqoy* movement. The *Danza de las Tijeras* is recognized for its acrobatics, its endurance, and how it pushes the human body to its limits. Moves that show this ecstasy include jumping on the tips of ones' toes, jumping while laid on one's back, and landing on one's chest after summersaults. Read: "Danza de Tijeras, baile de Resistencia" Antonio Muñoz Monge 2016; watch: "Peru Bboys VS Danzantes de Tijera / Bc one Peru Lat. 2015 / RonalDread Films" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pTBayvtlYw>.

⁷⁶ *Huacas* are figures that are worshipped as gods. Usually they are worshipped in temple shrines.

⁷⁷ Luis Millones "Un Movimiento Nativista del Siglo XVI: El Taki Ongoy" in *Ideología Mesiánica del Mundo Andino*, ed. Juan M. Ossio (Lima:Edicion de Ignacio Prado Pastor 1973), 87-88.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 85.

⁷⁹ James Mooney "The Doctrine of the Ghost Dance" in *Teachings from the American Earth* ed. Dennis Tedlock, ed. Barbara Tedlock (New York, Liveright Publishing Co., 1975), 75-96.

⁸⁰ Nathaniel Watchel "Rebeliones y Milenarismo" in *Ideología Mesiánica del Mundo Andino*, ed. Juan M. Ossio (Lima: Edición de Ignacio Prado Pastor 1973), 121.

follow the teachings and thus, inadvertently shamanizes what would be considered lay followers.⁸¹ However, whereby shamanic power was decentralized from the Medicine-man to the Ghost-Dance followers, the *Taki Onqoy* was being led by the Inka, Titu Cusi Yupanqui, and his high priest in the neo-Inka state at Vilcabamba.⁸²

As the Inka was a central holy and political figure in the Andean worldview, his backroom involvement in it does not devalue the *Taki Onqoy's* decentralized character in the Andean peasantry. Rather, it legitimizes it since his power is that of creating order in the empire and between the human and non-human worlds, which had been disrupted with the Spaniards and the Church. The *Taki Onqoy's* significance rests on the messianic and anti-colonial spirit within the Andes that sought to bring back order into the Andean world. One such contemporary myth exists that rests on the prophetic hope of anti-colonialism and *pachakuti* more so than the return of the Inka, the prophecy of the Eagle and the Condor.

EAGLE AND CONDOR PROPHECY

The messianic hope of the Quechua and Aymara peoples is itself centered within the localized teachings and experiences in the Andes. However, with the presidency and international diplomacy of Evo Morales, the concept of *pachakuti* as bringing Indigenous knowledge to the attention of the global community shows it to be permeable to its historical context as well as useful in understanding world affairs. This is especially true for other Indigenous peoples who see their liberation linked to the fate of the Andean peoples as with the myth of the Eagle and the Condor.

Held by both the Quechua peoples of the Andes as well as the Achuar people of the Ecuadorian-Peruvian Amazon, this myth speaks of the coming of a world *pachakuti*, where the

⁸¹ Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, (London: Routledge and Keetan Paul Ltd, 1964), 315.

⁸² Watchel, "Rebeliones y Milenarismo," 119.

human race will have to choose between the destruction of humanity or a salvation through unity. This salvation can only come when the Eagle of the North and Condor of the South fly together again. The Eagle is typically depicted as representing North America (US, Canada, Mexico) and the Condor representing South America from Colombia southwards to Argentina. The *pachakuti* that is experienced today is climate change, where the Capitalist model of industrial development has placed Indigenous nations and humanity as a whole in danger. In this case, the prophecy of the Eagle and the Condor has become pertinent to American Indian peoples all across the Americas.

The prophecy of the Eagle and the Condor is not a homogenizing narrative that seeks to impose the Andean worldview over other peoples, a Native-to-Native assimilation. Rather, it is voluntarily being taken up by other Native peoples as a way to describe their own prophecies and aspirations for the future. Anishinaabe elder Dave Courchene hosted the continental Indigenous summit *Onjisay Aki*⁸³ in the Sagkeen First Nation, Canada, to address the threat of climate change on a global indigenous level.⁸⁴ In a 2017 video promotion for the event, He and a Quechua *amauta*⁸⁵ from Peru, Antaurko, spoke of how Indigenous peoples from both Anglo North America (US and Canada) and Latin America must help each other out and how this summit "is already a manifestation of this prophecy" of the Eagle and the Condor.

Another is Chief Phil Lane Jr. (Ihanktonwan Dakota and Chickasaw Nations) in the documentary "The Shift of the Ages," where he recounts the Eagle and Condor myth as significant because it provides a framework to understand the prophecies of multiple Indigenous peoples across the Americas. He describes how pre-Columbian prophecies across Anglo North

⁸³ *Onjisay Aki* translates to "The Changing of the Earth" in Anishinaabe

⁸⁴ "The Prophecy of the Eagle and Condor," *Onjisay Aki*, accessed May 5, 2019, <http://onjisay-aki.org/prophecy-eagle-and-condor>.

⁸⁵ *Amauta* translates to Philosopher or wise one in Quechua and Aymara.

America and Latin America “foretold that a great spiritual wintertime was coming”, which then corresponded to European colonization in 1492 onwards. But, there is also hope. It was also “prophesied and promised [...] that a great, great spiritual springtime would emerge,”⁸⁶ from “the prophecies of Kukulcan, to the prophecy of Inkas, of Viracocha, Quetzacoatl, the eighth council fire, return of the white buffalo, the sacred prophecy of the Hopi.”⁸⁷ The prophecy of the eagle and the condor allows for a radical form of Indigenous hope, as these prophecies see colonization and ecological degradation as temporary deviations from our natural relationship to the Earth. Gods like Viracocha⁸⁸ and Quetzacoatl⁸⁹ are seen as enlightened teachers who came and taught civilization to humans and are said to return. Taken symbolically, these are not just holy individuals who come down from another realm to instruct humanity, but the forces of myth, reason, and memory that Indigenous peoples live through and use when seeking to return to their ancestral teachings.

As with the Onjisay Aki summit and the correlations of Indigenous prophecies across North Anglo and Latin America, the myth of the Eagle and Condor give credence to Indigenous worldviews. It allows them to be seen as true and as valuable as any other world religions, rather than an infantile way of life by “noble savages” who have yet to intellectually evolve.

This ability for the prophecy of the Eagle and Condor to ground other Indigenous worldviews is seen in the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline (#NoDAPL) at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. The #NoDAPL protests (2016-2017) was significant because it was the single largest gathering of different Native American nations in history, with many of the protesters saying that the myth of the Eagle and Condor inspired them to go to Standing

⁸⁶ *Shift of the Ages*. Directed by Stephen Michael Copeland, United States, 2012.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ McEwan, *The Incas*, 145.

⁸⁹ Jack D. Forbes, *Aztec del Norte: The Chicanos of Aztlán* (Greenwich: Fawcett Publicacions), 49-50.

Rock.⁹⁰ Peoples from Latin America gathered on Sioux territory from the Quechua, to the Aymara, to the Nahuatl, to the Chicanos, to the Mapuche, to the Maya, etc., to aid in fighting against the pipeline as they saw the struggles against extractivism in Standing Rock as the same one they fight in their home countries. Consequently, they see Indigenous unity as a key goal for decolonization.

But there were also non-Native peoples present at Standing Rock who expressed the same interest in reversing climate change, fighting for Indigenous sovereignty, and seeing a united future which challenges ethnic boundaries. This shows the permeability of Andean mythology and how *pachakuti* is a world-historical process that is changing peoples from thinking through an individualist, Capitalist, and industrial worldview to a communal and Earth-based one. However, what does this humanity look like in the Andean worldview? This question must be resolved in depth to see the potential of *pachakuti* as a process that will unite humanity rather than fall further into climate change.

PACHAMAMISMO AND 21ST CENTURY EARTH-BASED THINKING

Climate change, as the new *pachakuti*, is comparable to the deluge of the *Uno Yaku Pachakuti* described by Guaman Poma de Ayala where the Native peoples of the Andes lost any form of social organization that make have existed prior: "*Estas gentes no supieron de dónde salieron ni cómo ni de qué manera,*"⁹¹ {These peoples did not know from where they came, nor how, nor from what way}. An event of cataclysmic proportions that erases or begins history from that point onwards is the essence of a *pachakuti*. From ecological predictions to historical

⁹⁰ Antonia Cerejido "At Standing Rock, Indigenous Nations of the World Unite," *LatinoUSA*, October 21, 2016. Accessed April 22, 2019.

⁹¹ Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva Coronica Y Buen Gobierno*, 40 [50]

analyses, the possibility of extinction for many species on the planet and the uprooting of organized human civilization itself are threats that climate change poses.⁹²

One of the most prominent sectors of the Indigenous Bolivian intelligentsia who responded to these concerns came from the government itself with the then foreign minister, now Vice President, David Choquehuanca. He was described as both a "spiritual guide" to Evo Morales and the "symbol of the *indigenista*" or "*Pachamamista*"⁹³ sector of the MAS government during his tenure as Bolivia's Foreign Minister.⁹⁴ *Pachamamismo* centers itself on the Indigenous Andean worldview based on living with nature, spirits, natural forces, and humanity who plays a non-central part within and in relation to this whole system. This *Pachamamista* stream of the government contrasted with a "political pragmatist" stream led by more Marxist influenced politicians such as the Bolivian Vice President Alvaro Linera Garcia and the Minister of Economy and Public Finance, now President, Luis Arce who adhered to an economic-centered conception of 21st century Socialism.

One of the most significant philosophical expressions of *Pachamamismo* has been the concept of *buen vivir* or "Living Well" which has emphasized the relationship that humans have to community, to *Pachamama*, and to the land itself as a political and spiritual space for this to occur. In an interview with the *La Razón*, Choquehuanca lays out twenty five postulates for "Living Well" as an authentic expression of the philosophy of Indigenous Andean worldviews in the context and needs of governance in the 21st century. At the center of *Buen Vivir* is the

⁹² Mike Ludwig, "UN Report Says Indigenous Sovereignty Could Save the Planet," *Truthout*, May 7, 2019, accessed May 7, 2019, <https://truthout.org/articles/un-report-says-indigenous-sovereignty-could-save-the-planet/>

⁹³ The *Pachamamista* faction of Evo's government sought to align state policy with both old and new Indigenous principles, such as the communal *ayllu* and the *Buen Vivir* ideology, respectively. This is contrasted to the *pragmatistas* {pragmatists} who prioritize state policy for economic development and electoral campaigning.

⁹⁴ Marcelo Tedesqui V., "Sale del gabinete David Choquehuanca, posible 'presidenciable,'" *El Deber*, January 24, 2017, accessed May 1, 2019, <http://www.eldeber.com.bo/bolivia/Sale-del-gabinete-David-Choquehuanca-posible-presidenciable-20170123-0063.html>.

rejection of anthropocentrism whereby what is most important are the rivers, the air, the mountains to the ants, the butterflies, and Man is in last place, for us, what matters most is life.⁹⁵ It is contrasted with our current model of development based on "Living Better", the process of continual accumulation to preserve one's individual desires.

But what makes this distinct is how this system has been implemented as a part of state ideology and policy in the epoch of Bolivian history where Indigenous peoples believe themselves to be consolidating Indigenous hegemony after 500 years of colonial oppression. This Andean messianism held for and within the Evo Morales's government, such as with Choquehuanca once claiming to reporter that he was possibly the descendant of the Inka royal lineage,⁹⁶ is seen by Claudio Lomnitz as a "rectification of history: the return to an origin, a second chance at achieving some previously derailed project."⁹⁷ This rectification of colonial "specters of the past" that Lomnitz analyzes is a confrontation of the past that has built the present and what can possibly be an irreversible future.

The key principle in the *buen vivir* ideology is its principle of "*Retomar el abya yala*," {Return to Abya Yala}, which is to "*promover que los pueblos se unan en una gran familia*," {all peoples are united as one great family}, and includes a reciprocal relationship with the Earth and all the living beings on it. However, a reciprocal relationship between the Earth and humanity requires a definition of humanity that defines it away from its anthropocentric belief in human uniqueness. In essence, it is important to define through memory, of remembering what is humanity's place in life, of what does it mean to think as human beings born from the Earth?

⁹⁵ La Razón, "Canciller de Bolivia señala los 25 postulados para 'Vivir Bien'", *La Razón*, February 8, 2010. Accessed May 30, 2010.

⁹⁶ "Choquehuanca: 'Yo soy el último inca, investiguen'" Página Siete December 23rd, 2014, <https://www.paginasiete.bo/nacional/2014/12/23/choquehuanca-yo-ultimo-inca-investiguen-42097.html>.

⁹⁷ Claudio Lomnitz, "Foundations of the Latin American Left" (*Public Culture*, 2007) 19 (1): 23-27, <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2006-022>.

RE-EDITING HUMANITY THROUGH INDIAN EYES

A redefinition of humanity in the Andean religio-philosophical worldview can be found with the Quechua-Aymara intellectual Fausto Reinaga and his redefinition of humanity: “*El hombre es tierra que piensa*,”⁹⁸ {Man is earth that thinks}. Reinaga’s philosophical work centers around a critique of European thought as incompatible with the many principles found within Indigenous American thought, including the Andean worldview. One such view is his critique of the definition of humanity in the European tradition, which he critiques as centering humanity on a mind that is itself separate from the body and material world which he describes as cosmos. In subverting the Socratic ideal of “know thyself,” Reinaga first claims that “man is cosmos, and cosmos is man” and thus, for man to know himself, he must know himself outwards and know himself inwards; outwards: the world of galaxies; and inwards: a conglomerate of cells that make up the body.⁹⁹

Reinaga critiques Western reasoning for bringing about the nuclear bomb and its successive innovations that strengthens its destructive power and further guarantees the extinction of “man and life on Planet Earth.”¹⁰⁰ The form of the verb “to think” that Reinaga uses for humans as earth that is animated and rational is distinct from the Western model. In Quechua, a possible translation of “man is earth that thinks” would be “*runaqa yuyayniyoj jallp’a*,” {literally “a person is earth with reason”}.

In Quechua, most terms are used in very concrete ways and do not work in rhetorical uses that abstract, and deviate from, the specific contexts in which an action is done.¹⁰¹ The verb

⁹⁸ Fausto Reinaga, *Obras Completas*, (La Paz: Publicaciones de Vicepresidencia, 2014), 355.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰¹ Odi Gonzales, Christine Mladic Janney, Emily Fjaellen Thompson, *Quechua-Spanish-English Dictionary*, (New York: Hippocrene Books, 2018), 14.

“yuyay” translates to multiple mental faculties that would relate with our conception of “thought.” *Yuyay*, at first may seem to have separate meanings as it translates to different actions of “to think” and “to remember.” However, its main function is “to remember” or “concerning memory” because that is where thought itself originates in the Andes. Memory, as a function of the past, is useful in a mythological context, where the present is both always caused by past events as well as has happened once before as seen in different mythical stories (ex. the deluge myth and our experience with climate change and sea level rise).

In bilingual Quechua-Spanish speaking communities, “yuyay” is differentiated from the Spanish loan word “*pensay*,” — *pensar* in Spanish — which translates to “to think” of ideas, opinions, or thoughts in English.¹⁰² In this regard, one’s memories are the truth of an experience and of reality. This is parallel to the distinction made in conversations in English where one may claim a memory “I remember I walked your dog” and then the first person would be contradicted by another saying “you think so but, the truth is ...” and then the second person would recount what truly happened.

Yuyay, in its noun form, translates to “memory, reason, thought, sense”¹⁰³ or “memory, knowledge.”¹⁰⁴ In both these definitions, compiled by native Quechua speakers, “memory” is prioritized in translation over the more abstract concepts of “reason” and “knowledge.” What is expressed then in Reinaga’s axiom “*Runaqa yuyayniyoj jallp’a*” is “man is earth that remembers”; an expression of remembering humanity as cosmos and cosmic order that organizes its existence. In his work *Tierra y Libertad*, {*Land and Freedom*}, Reinaga describes the axiom within Indigenous Andean life in the following way:

¹⁰² Gary Parker, *English-Quechua Dictionary – Cuzco, Ayacucho, Cochabamba* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1964).

¹⁰³ Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua, *Diccionario Quechua-Castellano-Quechua*, (my translation), 711.

¹⁰⁴ Jesus Lara, *Diccionario Qheswa-Castellano, Castellano-Qheswa* (La Paz: Los Amigos del Libro, 1997), 285.

El hombre es hijo de la Tierra [...] Evidente, el hombre desde que es hombre, nace de su generosa entraña se nutre por su paso de este mundo con sus frutos (animales, vegetales, o minerales), y después de exhalar el último aliento de vida, retorna a su seno. El hombre en esencia es tierra [...] Pachamama es la madre del hombre [...] ¿Qué razón, qué derecho puede imponer el hijo a renunciar a su madre?¹⁰⁵

{Man hombre es hijo de la Tierra [...] Evidente, el hombre desde que es hombre, nace de su generosa entraña se nutre por su paso de este mundo con sus frutos (animales, vegetales, o minerales), y después de exhalar el último aliento de vida, retorna a su seno. El hombre en esencia es tierra [...] Pachamama es la madre del hombre [...] ¿Qué razón, qué derecho puede imponer el hijo a renunciar a su madre?¹⁰⁶

Reinaga's humanity embodies the messianic spirit that spurs one to remember their ethical relation with the Earth which is done, ultimately, not through rational argument, but through the visceral heartfelt care for one's mother like a child would.

To connect Reinaga with the Native traditions of North America, there is the Haudenosaunee prayer of "Thanksgiving Address". This prayer of thanks is given to "enlightened Teachers" who have continuously "come to help throughout the ages" when people "forget how to live in harmony" and these teachers "remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people."¹⁰⁷ The gratitude given for the enlightened teachers shows a cyclical conception of history based on memory. The focus is not on the individuals, but on their lessons, which mirror those expressed in the myths of Indigenous cultures. In this case, the memory that is the center of thought for humans ought to be *Pachamama* in the Andean worldview. Like a mother-child relationship, one is fully dependent on what she can provide.

¹⁰⁵ Reinaga, *Obras Completas*, 123.

¹⁰⁶ Reinaga, *Obras Completas*, 123.

¹⁰⁷ John Stokes; Kanawahienton, Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World (Onchiota: Six Nations Indian Museum, 1993).

CONCLUSION

The mistake of believing Indigenous cultures as having nothing to teach the world or, worse yet, believing them to be a collection of irrational stories that is best in some obsolete and dead past fails to see the process of cultural growth experienced in the Indigenous Andes. It has taken a center stage in Bolivian politics as well as sought to bring the world community, through international Indigenous communication, to show that alternative futures are possible. As the term *pachakuti* and its messianic spirit have been taken by Indigenous peoples across the continent, it shows not only the possibility of Andean metaphysics to explain our present moment in history, but how we have the cultural memory to remember that humanity is never independent nor can it go beyond the natural world and its mythological understanding. To be able to understand this new dialogue between the Indigenous Andes and the global community, an understanding of the Inka as an archetype, the cyclical history of Andean metaphysics, and the care for the Earth as the Mother, will be necessary.

Bibliography

- Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua. *Diccionario Quechua-Español-Quechua: Qheswa-Español-Qheswa Simi Taque*. Gobierno Regional Cusco: Cusco. 2005.
- Aguilar, Raquel G, and Stacey A. D. Skar. Rhythms of the Pachakuti: Indigenous Uprising and State Power in Bolivia, 2015. Internet resource.
- Albó, Xavier. The Indian face of God in Latin America. Ed. Manuel M. Marzal. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1996. Print.
- Ari, Chachaki W. Earth Politics: Religion, Decolonization, and Bolivia's Indigenous Intellectuals. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014. Print.
- Cerejido, Antonia. "At Standing Rock, Indigenous Nations of the World Unite". *LatinoUSA*, October 21, 2016. Accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.latinousa.org/2016/10/21/standing-rock-indigenous-nations-world-unite/>
- Dangl, Benjamin. The Price of Fire: Resource Wars and Social Movements in Bolivia. Edinburgh: AK Press, 2007. Internet resource.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. London: Routledge and Keetan Paul Ltd. 1964. Print.
- Estermann, Josef. *Filosofía Andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo*. ISEAT: La Paz. 2009.
- McEwan, Gordon F. The Incas: New Perspectives. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. Print.
- Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch*. Autonomedia: New York. 2014. Print.
- Flores Ochoa, Jorge A. "Enqa, Enqaychu illa y Khuya Rumi: aspectos mágico-religiosos entre pastores". In: *Journal de la Société des Américanistes*. Tome 63, 1974. pp. 245-262.
- Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca. *Royal Commentaries of the Incas And General History of Peru: Part One and Two*. University of Texas Press: Austin. 1966
- Gillespie, Michael A. Hegel, Heidegger, and the Ground of History. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. Print.
- Gonzales, Odi, Christine M. Janney, and Emily F. Thompson. *Quechua-spanish-english Dictionary: A Trilingual Reference*, 2018. Print.
- Guamán, Poma A. F, and Franklin Pease. Nueva Cronica Y Buen Gobierno. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1980. Print.

- Hemming, John. *The Conquest of the Incas*. Boston: Mariner Books, 2012. Print.
- Kusch, Rodolfo, Maria Lugones, Walter D. Mignolo, Walter Mignolo, and Joshua M. Price. *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. Print.
- Lara, Jesús. *Diccionario Qhëshwa-Castellano Castellano-Qhëshwa*. La Paz: Los amigos del libro, 1997. Print.
- Löwy, Michael. *Marxism in Latin America from 1909 to the Present: An Anthology*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2006. Print.
- Mamani Ramirez, Pablo. Et al. *Reconstitución de Tupaj Kataru y Bartolina Sisa*. El Alto: Textos Rebeldes, 2010.
- Marín-Dale, Margarita B. *Decoding Andean Mythology*. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press 2016. Internet resource.
- Michael Copeland, Stephen. *Shift of the Ages*. United States. 2012
- Morales Ayma, Evo. *Discurso Inaugural del Presidente Evo Morales Ayma*; La Paz: Publicaciones Cancillería, 2006. Print
- Neira, Hugo. *Huillca: Habla Un Campesino Peruano*. Havana: Cuba: Casa de las America, 1974. Print.
- Niera, Hugo. *Cuzco: Tierra Y Muerte [invasiones: hace 44 años desaparecen las haciendas]*. Lima, Perú: Cauces Editoriales, 2011. Ebook
- Ossio, A J. M. *Ideología Mesiánica Del Mundo Andino*. Lima: Ignacio Prado Pastor, 1973. Print.
- Parker, Gary J. *English-quechua Dictionary: Cuzco, Ayacucho, Cochabamba: Quechua Language Material Project; [tri-Dialectal Dictionary]*. Ithaca, N. Y: Cornell Univ, 1964. Print.
- Reinaga, Fausto. *Obras Completas*. La Paz: Vicepresidencia del Estado Presidencia de la Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional Bolivia, 2014. Print.
- Rupprecht, Tobias. *Soviet Internationalism After Stalin: Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America During the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Print.
- Starn, Orin, Carlos I. Degregori, and Robin Kirk. *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009. Internet resource.

Tedlock, Dennis. *Teachings from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy*. New York, N.Y: Liveright, 1992. Print.

Third Continental Summit of Indigenous Nations and Pueblos of Abya Yala, "Back to Iximché" Ed. Grandin, Greg, Ed. Deborah Levenson-Estrada, and Elizabeth Oglesby. *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011. Internet resource.

Tucker, Robert C. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton, 1978. Print.

Vidal, Gore. *Imperial America: Reflections on the United States of Amnesia*. New York: Nation Books, 2009. Internet resource.

Walker, Charles F. *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2016. Print.

Webb, Hillary S. *Yanantin and Masintin in the Andean World: Complementary Dualism in Modern Peru*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012. Print.

Williams, J E. *The Andean Codex: Adventures and Initiations Among the Peruvian Shamans*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Pub. Co, 2005. Internet resource.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Who’s in Charge Here? How Traditional and Feminist Scholars Explain the Story of Jesus and the Canaanite/Syrophoenician Woman.”

Anne Katherine Edwards
Meredith College

ABSTRACT

In New Testament times, a woman’s sphere of influence was restricted to her home and family. In accordance with the status quo, stories involving Jesus healing a woman typically cast the female in a silent and passive role. However, the story of the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman disrupts this pattern of submission and silence. Rather than waiting for Jesus to heal her daughter or asking politely, she demands Jesus to take action. Her initiative has led to a number of interpretations of the passage in the Gospels, which have differed greatly in traditional and feminist scholarship. Through reviewing the literature on these interpretations, I argue that the differences in interpretations are due to traditional scholars focusing on Jesus’s actions and messianic identity, while feminist scholars fixate on the women’s bold actions and motivations.

Keywords: Feminist Criticism, Traditional Criticism, Canaanite Woman, Syrophoenician Woman, Women in the Bible, Gospel Criticism and Interpretation.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Who’s in Charge Here? How Traditional and Feminist Scholars Explain the Story of Jesus and the Canaanite/Syrophoenician Woman.”

Anne Katherine Edwards¹
Meredith College

INTRODUCTION

When the Bible was written, a woman’s sphere of influence was restricted to her home and family.² To go even further, Susan Asikainen explains, “[i]t was shameful for a person to be out of place: a woman who had too public a role was unsuitably masculine.”³ Thus, to emphasize their femininity, women were expected to be modest, shy, and quiet.⁴ Tertullian (1st-2nd c. CE) wrote that “a female would rather see than be seen,” illustrating the submissive role women were expected to take.⁵ Furthermore, Jose ben Johanan of Jerusalem, who lived around 150 BCE, stated, “[h]e that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the law.”⁶ Philo of Alexandria (1st c. CE) viewed women as inferior and subordinate because their minds were passive, while men's minds were active.⁷ Thus, the idea that women should be seen and not heard was prevalent before and during Jesus’s ministry.

¹ Anne ‘Katherine’ Edwards is an undergraduate student at Meredith College double majoring in Religious and Ethical Studies and Psychology and minoring in History. She enjoys researching women in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. She plans to graduate from Meredith College in 2023 and pursue graduate studies. Inspired and encouraged by her wonderful professors, her ultimate career goal is to become a professor of religion.

² Ben Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 2.

³ Susanna Asikainen, “Women Out of Place: The Women Who Challenged Jesus,” *Neotestamentica* 52, no. 1 (2018): 181.

⁴ Wendy Cotter, “Mark’s Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles: The Healing of the Woman with the Hemorrhage and the Raising of Jairus’s Daughter (Mark 5.21-43),” in *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, ed Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004), 58.

⁵ Cotter, 58-59.

⁶ Evelyn Stagg and Frank Stagg, *Woman in the World of Jesus*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 52.

⁷ Stagg and Stagg, 41.

Stories involving Jesus healing women typically cast the females in silent and passive roles because this was the status quo. However, the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew disrupts these patterns of submission and silence. Not only is she one of the only women in the Gospels who addresses Jesus, she also takes initiative and insists that Jesus heal her daughter.⁸ Antoinette Wire calls stories like this in the Bible "demand stories" because someone other than Jesus takes initiative while Jesus takes a more passive role.⁹ The story of the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman is a demand story, thus the interpretations of her passage in the Gospels have differed greatly in traditional and feminist scholarship. I argue that this is because traditional scholarship focuses on Jesus's actions and Messianic identity, while feminist scholarship fixates on the woman's bold actions and motivations.

In the story, the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman comes to Jesus and begs him to cast a demon out of her daughter, but he refuses and insults her.¹⁰ However, she uses his insult to convince him to heal her daughter—which he does.¹¹ This story is strange for many reasons; it is the only record of Jesus healing a female Gentile pagan,¹² being bested in an argument,¹³ not physically confronting a demon,¹⁴ and refusing to heal someone.¹⁵ John Meier notes, "[n]owhere else in the Gospel tradition does Jesus address a sincere petitioner with such harsh insulting language."¹⁶ The Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman story shows the reader a side of Jesus that

⁸ Frances Taylor Gench, *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 45.

⁹ Gench, 50.

¹⁰ Matthew 15:22-26, Mark 7:25-27.

¹¹ Matthew 15:27-28, Mark 7:28-30.

¹² Dorothy A. Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21-28): Narrative, Theology, Ministry 1," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 13, no. 1 (2015): 23.

¹³ Stagg and Stagg, *Woman in the World of Jesus*, 114.

¹⁴ Sharon H. Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story, Revisited: Rereading Mark 7.24-31a," in *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, ed Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004), 87.

¹⁵ Ringe, 88.

¹⁶ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 9.

does not necessarily fit with his other portrayals, which has prompted many scholars to explain this abnormal behavior in different ways.

Before discussing the story and interpretations of Jesus and the Canaanite/Syrophenician woman, it is important to examine the terms used to describe her. In the Gospel of Mark, she is depicted as Greek and born in Syrian Phoenicia.¹⁷ Thus, the descriptor "Syrophenician" is appropriate; it explains the woman's hometown and lack of Jewish heritage. In contrast, Matthew describes the woman as Canaanite,¹⁸ indicating a dramatic shift in mood. Here, characterization of the woman accentuates her differences from the Israelites on a racial and spiritual basis.¹⁹ In the Old Testament, the Canaanites are "worthy of extermination."²⁰ Furthermore, the term "Canaanite" was so archaic that this is the only instance in the New Testament where it is used.²¹ Some scholars have argued the term acts as a means to evoke memories of other Canaanite unconventionally successful women, like Rahab, Herodias, and Tamar.²² Each of these women act courageously and boldly to achieve their goals.²³ In particular, Rahab's story appears similar to the account of the Canaanite woman.²⁴ Rahab, a prostitute at the walls of the city of Jericho, hides spies from Israel and asks for their help in escaping when they destroy the city.²⁵ She trusts the spies' promise to come back for her and declares that Israel's

¹⁷ Mark 7:26.

¹⁸ Matthew 15:22.

¹⁹ Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman," 15.

²⁰ Stephenson Humphries-Brooks, "The Canaanite Women in Matthew," in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2001), 142.

²¹ O'Day, "Surprised by Faith: Jesus and the Canaanite Woman," in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2001), 115.

²² Humphries-Brooks, "The Canaanite Women in Matthew," 155, and Richard Bauckham, "The Gentile Foremothers of the Messiah: The Canaanite Women" in *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 43.

²³ Bauckham, "The Gentile Foremothers of the Messiah," 43.

²⁴ Humphries-Brooks, "The Canaanite Women in Matthew," 155.

²⁵ Bauckham, "The Gentile Foremothers of the Messiah," 45.

God is the true God, which points to her exceptional faith as well.²⁶ Although the connection is tentative, it alludes to a possible reason for Matthew's use of such the unusual term.

This is the only example of Jesus refusing to heal someone in the gospels, so it is important to look at how and why he denies her daughter healing. In Matthew, Jesus denies the woman three times through silence, theology, and a mix of theology and insult.²⁷ After the woman encounters Jesus and calls for help, he ignores her.²⁸ Even his disciples want Jesus to send the woman away, but he answers them that he was sent only to Israel.²⁹ In saying this, he actively ignores the woman, but also does not force her to leave.³⁰ After this refusal, the woman still pleads with Jesus to help her.³¹ Jesus challenges her by replying, "[i]t is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."³² By calling her a dog, he labels her with the term used to describe people who were hostile to God's people and laws.³³ It was a very harsh term that compared people to dogs who were "contemptible scavengers who lick human blood."³⁴ However, the woman identifies with this term³⁵ and seemingly changes Jesus's mind.³⁶ Feminist scholars are more willing to hold that Jesus's mind is changed because they focus on his behavior throughout this story, while traditional scholars are more hesitant to express this change because they believe that Jesus's deity would imply that he is omniscient and therefore cannot change his mind.³⁷ Immediately after her final plea, Jesus's demeanor changes: he addresses her

²⁶ Humphries-Brooks, "The Canaanite Women in Matthew," 144.

²⁷ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 4.

²⁸ Matthew 15:23.

²⁹ Matthew 15:23-24.

³⁰ Stuart L. Love, "Jesus, Healer of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter in Matthew's Gospel: A Social-Scientific Inquiry." *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 32, no. 1 (2002): 16.

³¹ Matthew 15:25.

³² Matthew 15:26.

³³ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 9.

³⁴ Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story, Revisited," 89.

³⁵ Ringe, 91.

³⁶ Richard Bauckham, "The Gentile Foremothers of the Messiah," 43.

³⁷ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 21. Gench offers an explanation about how Jesus was able to change his mind due to his humanity.

directly to commend her faith³⁸ and uses the vocative "O Woman,"³⁹ indicating that he is deeply moved by her faith.⁴⁰ Frances Taylor Gench writes, "Jesus thus honors the woman and her faith, her unshakeable confidence in him, and her insight into the inclusive power, presence, and mercy of God,"⁴¹ Jesus's change in countenance at the woman's persistence and boldness is unique to the story of the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman.

The Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman's persistence and faith despite social constraints are so extraordinary that Jesus seemingly changes his mind after refusing her three times. Joanna Dewey explains the woman's outlandish actions well: "[t]his is the only instance in the extant tradition of Jesus being taught by someone, and that someone is a woman who should not properly be speaking to him at all."⁴² It was extremely inappropriate for a woman to speak in public, especially with a man who was not her husband.⁴³ Her daughter needs his help. As a result, she breaks gender norms by pursuing Jesus and screaming at him in public.⁴⁴ Gail O'Day summarizes her unseemly behavior by writing that, "[t]he woman impinges on Jesus from all sides and does not hesitate to make her presence felt and demand known."⁴⁵ Her refusal to leave after three denials also speaks to her faith that Jesus can and will heal her daughter if she persists.⁴⁶ Although her behavior is entirely inappropriate, it is ultimately rewarded.

³⁸ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 10.

³⁹ Matthew 15:28.

⁴⁰ Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman," 18.

⁴¹ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 10.

⁴² Gench, 10.

⁴³ Ranjini Wickramaratne Rebera, "The Syrophoenician Woman: A South Asian Feminist Perspective," in *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004), 104.

⁴⁴ Gench, 6.

⁴⁵ Gail O'Day, "Surprised by Faith: Jesus and the Canaanite Woman," in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2001), 118.

⁴⁶ Gench, 8.

Her quick reply to Jesus prompts him to praise her faith⁴⁷ and word⁴⁸ has also produced conflicting interpretations about whether it was done in humility or because of her intelligence. Stuart Love argues that the woman's response was not a smart retort, but a plea for mercy.⁴⁹ In her response the woman acknowledges that she is not who Jesus came for, but she shows that the dogs (Gentiles) can be fed with the by-product from the Lord's table.⁵⁰ His point illustrates how traditional scholarship seeks to emphasize Jesus's mercy and the woman's submissiveness. On the other side, Sharon Ringe argues, "[h]er retort wins the day. Her point of view prevails in the story and is eventually adopted by Jesus (7:29). Hers is the defining wisdom of the story."⁵¹ The irony and logic she used to recast Jesus's insult shows the woman's brilliant grasp of theology.⁵² Even in Ringe's quote she highlights the initiative in the woman's actions. Each sentence of her argument starts with the woman's actions; Jesus is merely the passive receiver of her actions. The contrast between these two scholars shows the tension and shift in focus of this story within Biblical scholarship. One view highlights the woman's boldness in taking initiative and demanding healing, while the other casts her in a position of submissiveness and desperation.

The most prevalent theory explains that Jesus was testing the woman's faith and his disciples' character via his silent behavior and theological responses.⁵³ This theory finds its basis in focusing on what Jesus does not do, rather than what he does. Throughout Matthew and Mark, Jesus never directly sends the woman away. In Matthew, he remains silent to her cries until the disciples tell him to send her away.⁵⁴ He has the power to dismiss her, but Jesus instead allows

⁴⁷ Matthew 15:27-28.

⁴⁸ Mark 7:28-29.

⁴⁹ Love, "Jesus, Healer of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter in Matthew's Gospel," 17.

⁵⁰ Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, 65.

⁵¹ Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story, Revisited," 90.

⁵² Gench, *Back to the Well*, 9.

⁵³ Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, 64.

⁵⁴ Matthew 15:23.

the woman to remain in his presence to question him. Her persistence also further glorifies Jesus by accentuating his all-knowing power and kindness towards children later in the Gospels.⁵⁵

Dorothy Lee argues that Jesus's actions strengthen the woman's faith rather than discouraging it, which may explain why she is the only person in Matthew who is described as having great faith.⁵⁶ Additionally, Gench argues that the woman's great faith is contrasted with the disciples' lack of faith because of the location of the story in Matthew.⁵⁷ In the preceding chapter, Jesus remarks on Peter's "little faith" because he sank after walking on water.⁵⁸ In the chapter following the story of the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman, Jesus is frustrated by the disciples' "little faith" because they do not understand his teaching.⁵⁹ This interpretation is rooted in tradition because it explains Jesus's harsh language as the Son of God. Jesus is seen as omniscient because he tests the woman's faith to teach the disciples. Therefore, it could be argued that she is little more than a prop in the overall story.

Another prominent interpretation of Jesus's actions is explained in the "ethnic exclusivism" theory.⁶⁰ This theory focuses on Jesus's response that "[he] was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."⁶¹ Love observes that, "Jesus's behavior and words including his healing activity and that of the twelve belong primarily to the public, political, Israelite, social domain."⁶² Jewish nationalism was prevalent in this area because God had given them this

⁵⁵ Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17.

⁵⁶ Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman," 18.

⁵⁷ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 10. Although Gench is not necessarily in agreement with the theory about the testing of the woman's faith, she does allude to the theme of faith in the chapters surrounding the woman's story in the Gospels. The following two examples are taken from Gench's chapter.

⁵⁸ Matthew 14:29-31. See further, Gench 10.

⁵⁹ Matthew 16:5-8. See further Gench, 10.

⁶⁰ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 7.

⁶¹ Matthew 15:24.

⁶² Love, "Jesus, Healer of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter in Matthew's Gospel," 13.

land, but the Gentiles occupied it.⁶³ There are two explanations of why Jesus took this mindset. One argues that Jesus was taking the typical Jewish mindset toward Gentiles in order to show its unfairness to his disciples.⁶⁴ However, other scholars argue that this story conveys Jesus's humanity and realization that his former mindset was wrong.⁶⁵ This branch considers that Jesus possibly faced deep inner turmoil over his identity as the Messiah because he was expected to overthrow and wipe out the Gentiles, but he was torn in this instance over the woman's plea.⁶⁶ Because the woman uses what Lee calls "covenant language" and acknowledges that Israel is Jesus's first concern, Jesus heals her daughter and extends his mission.⁶⁷ Ringe views her reshaping of Jesus's insult as a gift to Jesus because she opened his eyes and ministry to the Gentiles.⁶⁸ This theory is prominent among feminist scholars because it elevates the woman's role in Jesus's ministry. She is viewed as the enlightened protagonist in this story who teaches the teacher. Rather than Jesus using her to prove a point, she uses him to gain healing for her daughter. Her bold, demanding demeanor is seen as a gift rather than inappropriate because the focus is on how the woman changes Jesus's mind.

In contrast with how the "ethnic exclusivism"⁶⁹ theory casts the Canaanite/Syrophenician woman as the protagonist, the socioeconomic theory portrays her as the villain. This theory rationalizes Jesus's behavior by proposing that the woman was, as Gench phrases it, "an oppressor rather than one of the oppressed."⁷⁰ In other words, the woman was

⁶³ Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz. *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 177.

⁶⁴ Stagg and Stagg, *Woman in the World of Jesus*, 114.

⁶⁵ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 21.

⁶⁶ Stagg and Stagg, *Woman in the World of Jesus*, 115.

⁶⁷ Lee, "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman," 20.

⁶⁸ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 23.

⁶⁹ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 7.

⁷⁰ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 20.

wealthy and belonged to a high social class that did not look out for the poor, so Jesus was challenging her privilege rather than attacking her race.⁷¹

The theory is grounded in geographical locations referenced in both Mark and Matthew: Tyre and Sidon.⁷² Residents of Tyre consisted of Jews and Gentiles, but there were economic, ethnic, religious, and cultural tensions between the two groups.⁷³ In addition, Gentile residents of Tyre and Sidon were considered the most dangerous enemies of the Jews.⁷⁴ The land they occupied was something that God had given the Jews, and the Gentiles continuously threatened to take it again.⁷⁵ The Gentiles of Tyre were rich landowners who would exploit the Jews as well; they would rightly be called dogs.⁷⁶ Especially when food was scarce, the landowners would abuse the Jewish workers who depended on them.⁷⁷ Theissen summarizes it well: "[t]he economically stronger Tyrians probably often took bread out of the mouths of the Jewish rural population, when they used their superior financial means to buy up the grain supply in the countryside."⁷⁸ Besides the evidence of the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman living in this area, Mark notes that the woman's child was healed in her bed.⁷⁹ "Bed" in this context could also be translated as "couch"⁸⁰; signifying the woman could hold an upper class position. Thus, her geographical location and furniture allude to a particular social class.

Considering the socioeconomic tensions between the Tyrians and the Jews, it is possible that this story is about physical bread rather than spiritual bread.⁸¹ This woman's lifestyle may

⁷¹ Gench, 20.

⁷² Matthew 15:21, Mark 7:24.

⁷³ Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story, Revisited," 84.

⁷⁴ O'Day, "Surprised by Faith," 115.

⁷⁵ Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 177.

⁷⁶ Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story, Revisited," 89.

⁷⁷ Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 172.

⁷⁸ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 19.

⁷⁹ Mark 7:30.

⁸⁰ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 19.

⁸¹ Gench, 19.

have been a source of suffering and starvation for her poor Jewish neighbors.⁸² Theissen again writes about the economically poor Jewish residents of Tyre, “[c]ertainly the message ‘Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.’ found ready ears—those of people who were indeed poor and longed for a revolution in their situation.”⁸³ In other words, the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman may have been a target for Jesus’s preaching about the blessedness of the poor.⁸⁴ Thus, the woman’s request for bread/healing may have been entirely inappropriate considering that she may not have shared when others asked for her bread.⁸⁵ However, she is faithful that Jesus is, as Gench phrases it, “rich in mercy, [and] supplies bread aplenty for all.”⁸⁶ She understands the plight of the poor and throws herself upon Jesus’s mercy, which prompts Jesus to finally heal her daughter. Resultantly, the language in the story shifts from frugality to abundance.⁸⁷

Finally, one must consider the possibility that her story could be a parallel about enjoying one’s wealth on earth like the interaction between the rich man and Lazarus—which only Luke includes, possibly in place of the story of the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman.⁸⁸ In this interpretation, the focus shifts from Jesus’s rude behavior to the woman’s tainted past. She is not the hero; she is the repentant villain. This story supports the traditional portrayal of Jesus’s grace and mercy because it exemplifies the woman’s progression from a villain to a child of God. However, her persistence is still portrayed in a positive light because it shows her true repentance from her past behavior.

⁸² Ringe, “A Gentile Woman’s Story, Revisited,” 86.

⁸³ Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 173.

⁸⁴ Ringe, “A Gentile Woman’s Story, Revisited,” 86.

⁸⁵ Ringe, 90.

⁸⁶ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 10.

⁸⁷ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 9.

⁸⁸ Luke 16:19-31.

Although it has little support, some scholars have proposed that the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman was a prostitute, which may have been why Jesus refused to heal her daughter.⁸⁹ Ringe points to the lack of a husband mentioned in the woman's story as potential support for her being a prostitute because a male relative would have been responsible for coming to another man to ask for healing.⁹⁰ Therefore, the woman may have been disowned by her family in a desperate state.⁹¹ Although this theory is possible, it does not fully explain Jesus's treatment of the woman. In Luke 7:36-50, Jesus encounters a sinful woman who anoints his feet, but he does not shame her or deny her gift. Although some early manuscripts do not include John 8:1-11, in this passage Jesus refuses to shame or condemn a woman caught in adultery and instead uses the instance to teach a crowd about condemnation. Because Jesus did not normally treat sinners rudely, it is improbable that he was rude to the woman—no matter her possible prostitution. However, this theory attempts to synthesize traditional scholarship with an emphasis on the woman's background. Though it fails on many different accounts, it was a start to scholarship focused on the background of a woman in the Gospels.

A unifying interpretation proposes that the woman was speaking in the form of a lament psalm. This understanding is promising because it combines a feminist approach to the story while also emphasizing Jesus's Messianic identity.⁹² O'Day explains that "[i]n Israel's lament psalms, Israel demands that God should be as God has promised to be. God made promises of life, not death; hope, not despair; wholeness, not brokenness."⁹³ In other words, lament psalms

⁸⁹ Love, "Jesus, Healer of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter in Matthew's Gospel," 17. Sharon Ringe once supported this theory in "A Gentile Woman's Story" found in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* edited by Letty M Russell. However, Ringe later apologizes for this interpretation and notes that she longer supports it in "A Gentile Woman's Story, Revised: Rereading Mark 7.24-31a" in *A Feminist Companion to Mark* edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff.

⁹⁰ Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," 70.

⁹¹ Love, "Jesus, Healer of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter in Matthew's Gospel," 17.

⁹² O'Day, "Surprised by Faith," 119.

⁹³ O'Day, 123.

provided a way for the Israelites to demand that God heal them, which resulted in healing and praise.⁹⁴ According to O'Day, the woman's words parallel the model of this type of psalm.⁹⁵ In particular, the woman's plea for mercy and use of Jesus's title are of similar form.⁹⁶ Gench remarks, "[t]he Biblical presentation of this tradition of prayer suggests that God welcomes this dialogue, and that to argue with God in this manner is in fact an act of faith."⁹⁷ Although she is not an Israelite, the woman acknowledges Jesus's Messianic identity, which prompts him to heal her daughter and laud her faith. She trusts that Jesus will heal her daughter, so she perseveres and reminds him of his power. This understanding provides a synthesis between traditional and feminist scholars because it acknowledges Jesus's deity and praises the woman.

These theories have different rationale for Jesus and the woman's actions, but they all agree that this story is distinctive; it is the only instance where Jesus refuses to heal someone and praises a person for their great faith. Given her gender, the woman's actions are even more remarkable. She risks public shame and a tarnished reputation in her efforts. However, Jesus in the end shows his respect for her faith and persistence. Depending one's interpretation, the woman's actions are either covered up or praised. Traditional scholars typically focus on Jesus's behavior since he is the protagonist of the gospels; whereas feminist scholars center on the woman for her perseverance and great faith serve as an example to everyone. Regardless of whom scholars focus on, the story represents a turning point in Jesus's ministry. After his interaction with the Canaanite/Syrophenician woman, Jesus began preaching, healing, and feeding Gentiles.⁹⁸ Though scholars do not know exactly what caused Jesus's uncharacteristic

⁹⁴ O'Day, 120.

⁹⁵ O'Day, 119.

⁹⁶ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 6. O'Day further breaks the woman's speech down on page 122 of her chapter in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*. O'Day indicates further parallels in Psalm 86:16 and 109:26.

⁹⁷ Gench, *Back to the Well*, 24

⁹⁸ Gench, 12.

actions or the woman's great faith, the positive results of this interaction have had a profound impact on modern Christianity.

Bibliography

- Asikainen, Susanna. "Women Out of Place: The Women Who Challenged Jesus." *Neotestamentica* 52, no. 1 (2018): 179–93.
- Bauckham, Richard. "The Gentile Foremothers of the Messiah: The Canaanite Women." *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels*, 41-46. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002.
- Cotter, Wendy. "Mark's Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles: The Healing of the Woman with the Hemorrhage and the Raising of Jairus's Daughter (Mark 5:21-43)." *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, 54-78. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004.
- Gench, Frances Taylor. *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Humphries-Brooks, Stephenson. "The Canaanite Women in Matthew." *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine, 138-156. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2001. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Lee, Dorothy. "The Faith of the Canaanite Woman (Mt. 15.21-28): Narrative, Theology, Ministry1." *Journal of Anglican Studies* 13, no. 1 (2015): 12-29.
- Love, Stuart. "Jesus, Healer of the Canaanite Woman's Daughter in Matthew's Gospel: A Social-Scientific Inquiry." *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 32, no. 1 (2002): 11–20.
- O'Day, Gail. "Surprised by Faith: Jesus and the Canaanite Woman." *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine, 114-125. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2001. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Rebera, Ranjini Wickramaratne. "The Syrophoenician Woman: A South Asian Feminist Perspective." *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, 101-110. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004.
- Ringe, Sharon. "A Gentile Woman's Story." *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, edited by Letty M Russell, 65-72. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985.
- Ringe, Sharon. "A Gentile Woman's Story, Revisited: Rereading Mark 7.24-31a." *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, 79-100. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004.
- Stagg, Evelyn and Frank Stagg. *Woman in the World of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, no. 1, 1978.

Theissen, Gerd and Annette Merz. *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

Witherington, Ben. *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*. Monograph Series/Society for New Testament Studies, 51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Wallada and Hafsa: Gender and Mobility through Medieval Andalusian Poetry.”

Kenley Borgerson
University of Puget Sound

ABSTRACT

Through close readings of the poetry of Wallada bint al-Mustakfi and Hafsa bint al-Hajj al-Rukuniyya this paper investigates the ways in which gender and mobility were conceptualized among the wealthy women of medieval al-Andalus through a historical lense. Wallada was born between 994 CE and 1001 CE as the only child of a caliph. She was noted for holding salons as a mutazarifa, and being a mentor to other female artists of her time. Hafsa was born in 1135 CE to a wealthy, but otherwise unknown, parentage. She was a well-known poetess during her lifetime and, similar to Wallada, later became a teacher. While their work has been dismissed as exceptional, this paper contends that the continuity and similarity in their poetry speaks not to singular experience, but a shared culture that lasted at least a century. Additionally, their light-hearted treatment of gender roles is enlightening for the modern reader.

Keywords: Medieval al-Andalus, Islamic Poetry, Feminist Analysis, Iberian Peninsula, Women Poets, Gender Roles.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Wallada and Hafsa: Gender and Mobility through Medieval Andalusian Poetry.”

Kenley Borgerson¹
University of Puget Sound

INTRODUCTION

*I am, by Allah, fit for high positions And am going my way, with pride!*²

The above line was written and worn by the poet and Umayyad Princess Wallada bint al-Mustakfi as part of gold inscriptions upon her robe.³ She was born in the early 11th century to one of the last Córdoba caliphs.⁴ She was a predecessor to the Grandadan poet and noblewoman Hafsa bint al-Hajj al-Rukuniyya who was born in the next century.⁵ Both were upper class and highly regarded women poets of the high middle ages who recorded their thoughts and emotions, often inspired by their lovers, in poetic verse. Their lifestyles required them to understand the politics of their time so they could successfully balance conformity and subversion in the private and public spheres of life, and most importantly, in their art where boundaries were blurred.

Through close readings of the poetry of Wallada and Hafsa this paper investigates the ways in

¹ Kenley Borgerson, University of Puget Sound Class of 2022, is double majoring in Religion, Spirituality & Society and Environmental Policy & Decision Making with a minor in Science, Technology & Society. She is interested in exploring the different approaches to the environment that her studies lend her.

² Marla Segol, "Representing the Body in Poems by Medieval Muslim Women," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 45, no. 1 (2009), <https://ir.uiowa.edu/mff/vol45/iss1/12/>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Arie Schippers, "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling," in *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Representation of Woman in Arabic Literature*, ed. Frederick de Jong (Utrecht: M. Th. Houtsma Stichting, 1993), pp. 139-152.

⁵ Pierre Joris and Habib Tengour, eds., "Hafsa Bint Al-Hajj Arrakuniyya," in *Poems for the Millennium*, Volume Four, 1st ed., vol. 4 (University of California Press, 2012), pp. 97-99.

which gender and mobility were conceptualized among the wealthy women of medieval al-Andalus through a historical lens.

WALLADA AND HAFSA

Al-Andalus refers to the regions of the Iberian peninsula that were controlled by Islamic regimes by the early 8th century. After the arrival of Umayyad prince 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiya in the late 8th century, it was an emirate of the larger Umayyad dynasty until the fall in 1031 CE.⁶ After the Spanish Umayyad caliphate collapsed, al-Andalus was fragmented into independent principalities called *ta'ifa*, some of which lasted until 1492 CE. Al-Andalus is known and, to some extent, inaccurately idolized for the theory of La Convivencia: the coexistence and relative peace among the Muslims, Jews, and Christians of medieval Spain during a time which is otherwise known for the religious conflict taking place in Northern Europe.⁷

Wallada bint al-Mustakfi was born between 994 CE and 1001 CE as the only child of caliph Muhammad III al-Mustakfi.⁸ Muhammad III of Córdoba came to power in 1024 CE after the assassination of the previous caliph Abd al-Rahman V.⁹ Muhammad III ruled for 17 months before the people of Córdoba revolted against him and he was forced to leave the city. He was later murdered at age fifty. Subsequent attempts to seize power eventually plunged the caliphate into civil war.¹⁰ After long negotiations, Muhammad III was succeeded by Hisham III who would be the last Umayyad ruler in al-Andalus and the last caliph of Córdoba.

⁶ Josef W Meri, ed., *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

⁷ Jana Kurtz, ed., *La Convivencia: Christian, Islamic and Jewish Cultures in Medieval Iberia* (Yale University Library, February 2020), <https://guides.library.yale.edu/convivencia>.

⁸ Schippers, "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling,"

⁹ Schippers, "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling,"

¹⁰ Pierre Joris and Habib Tengour, eds., "Wallada Bint Al-Mustakfi," in *Poems for the Millennium*, 1st ed., vol. 4 (University of California Press, 2012), pp. 70-71.

As her father's only Wallada, she received a substantial inheritance, which included his properties. Utilizing this, she opened a palace and literary hall in the city where she hosted popular salons. Additionally, she was an instructor to women artists. Seventeenth century North African historian al-Marqari described Wallada as "unique in her time, endowed with gracious speech, lavishly praised and the cynosure of attention".¹¹ She was an archetype *mutazarifat*, a refined courtly woman or female practitioner of *zarf*.¹² *Zarf* was a cultural practice that Professor Sahar Amer explains as the embodiment of "an overarching sophistication in clothing, food, language, and home decoration as well as an intellectual atmosphere in which participants engaged in debates related to love, recited poetry, sang, danced, and told stories".¹³ An important source for understanding *zarf* comes from the 10th century *Kitab al-zarfwa al-zurafa, The Book of Refinement and Refined People*. In which the author, Abu Tayyib al-Washsha describes how both *mutazarifat* and *zurafas*, refined courtly men, adorned their homes and their clothing with poetic verses, often embroidered with gold thread and precious stones.¹⁴ As a *mutazarifa*, Wallada inscribed the following poem on each side of her robes:

Right side:

I am, by Allah, fit for high positions
And am going my way, with pride!

Left side:

Forsooth I allow my lover to kiss my cheek
And bestow my kisses on him who craves it.¹⁵

¹¹ Asma Afsaruddin, "Literature, Scholarship, and Piety: Negotiating Gender and Authority in the Medieval Muslim World," *Religion & Literature* 42 (2010): pp. 111-131, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23049472>.

¹² Sahar Amer, "Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18 (May 2009): pp. 215-236, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40663351>.

¹³ Amer, "Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women,"

¹⁴ Klein, Yaron. "Abu Tayyib al-Washsha and the Poetics of Inscribed Objects." *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 138, no. 1 (2018): 1+. Gale Academic OneFile (accessed June 17, 2021). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A545145559/AONE?u=oregon_oweb&sid=googleScholarFullText&xid=0ea64f02.

¹⁵ Segol, "Representing the Body in Poems by Medieval Muslim Women,"

While Wallada was a stylish and courtly *mutazarifa*, she was also bold. However she was cushioned from the disapproval of others by her status and wealth and was thus able to live quite freely. Though credit is deserved for the fact she maneuvered to sustain her status during a time of political instability that could have easily accounted for a more uncertain future, and her success is evidence that she carefully chose her challenges. While scholars believe that all of her students were women, her salons were open to both men and women, something uncommon in the predominantly homosocial society. Moreover, Wallada chose not to veil, however there is no consensus among scholars regarding whether her hair was uncovered along with her face.¹⁶ Additionally, while she openly took lovers, she never married. She has also been called the "the Sappho of Spain" and is said to have had at least one female lover, a poetry student named Muhja who would write kind satire of Wallada.¹⁷ This title, "Sappho of Spain," may have been inspired by the fact that the label *mutazarifat* has a connotation with lesbianism, or courtly female lovers. She would not be unique in this since relationships between women are well recorded in medieval Arabic literature. For example, *al-Fihrist* (The Catalogue) is an index of every book written in Arabic by 988 CE. In it the author, Ibn al-Nadim, includes twelve books dedicated to named lesbians couples.¹⁸ However, Wallada's most well-known relationship was with the male poet Ibn Zaydūn who is the subject of many of her remaining poems.

Wallada died in 1091 CE, the same year the Almoravid ruler Yūsuf ibn Tāshufīn invaded the southern Iberian Peninsula and largely dissolved the *ta'ifas*, successfully extending the

¹⁶ Emily Kittell-Queller, "Wallada Bint Al-Mustakfi," Emily Kittell-Queller (Weebly, September 22, 2014), <http://emilykq.weebly.com/blog/wallada-bint-al-mustakfi>.

¹⁷ Amer, "Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women," note: for unknown reasons, this source used the spelling "mohja"

Stephen O Murray, "Woman-Woman Love in Islamic Societies," in *Islamic Homosexualities* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 1997), pp. 97-104, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/j.ctt9qfmm4.7>.

¹⁸ Amer, "Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women,"

Almoravid empire.¹⁹ However, this success only lasted about two decades before turmoil began as Castilian led onslaughts increased from the north and insecurity in the Maghreb weakened the empire.²⁰ Eventually, by 1130 CE, the Almohad dynasty overtook the Almoravids in Northern Africa and began their conquest into Spain.²¹

The Almohads were originally inspired by the comparatively strict religious and moral teachings of Ibn Tūmart, though this precedent was slowly lost on the peninsula as expensive architecture, rich artwork and mystical philosophies flourished through the 12th century.²² Under such transitioning politics, Hafsa bint al-Hajj al-Rukuniyya was born in Granada in 1135 CE to a rich Berber father, but little else is known of her childhood and adolescence.²³ She is presumed to have been well-educated, and became well-known during her lifetime as a poet and later as a teacher. While refined and wealthy like Wallada, she does not seem to be remembered for the same courtly behavior which indicates that *zarf* may not have been as relevant to the 12th century upper class as it was in Wallada's lifetime. Al-Marqari describes Hafsa as "the most celebrated poetess of Granada. Her poetry flowed smoothly and, like her prose, was of refined composition."²⁴ More of her work remains than that of almost any Andalusian female poet. A common subject of her work is her lover Abu Ja'far, a fellow poet, who she began a relationship with around 1154 CE, the same time the Almohads came to power in al-Andalus.²⁵ This is noteworthy because the Almohad prince Abu Sa'id 'Uthman would rival Ja'far for Hafsa's

¹⁹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Almoravids," Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., April 17, 2014), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Almoravids>.

²⁰ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Almoravids"

²¹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Almohads," Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., April 17, 2014), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Almohads>.

²² The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Almohads,"

²³ Meri, *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*

²⁴ Afsaruddin, "Literature, Scholarship, and Piety: Negotiating Gender and Authority in the Medieval Muslim World,"

²⁵ Meri, *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*

affection. Ja'far was later imprisoned due to his involvement in a revolt, but it is largely believed 'Uthman's jealousy led to his execution in 1165 CE.²⁶ Towards the end of her life Hafsa stopped writing poetry and became a teacher for the children of caliph Ya'qub al-Mansur in Marrakesh where she later died in 1190 CE.

Wallada died approximately forty-four years prior to Hafsa's birth, but the similarities among them can help us paint a clearer picture of their shared experience as wealthy women of al-Andalus. Below are two poems that provide insight into the norms and conventions they navigated:

Hafsa:

Shall I visit you or shall you visit me? For my heart always bows to what you long for; My mouth is a source of clear sweet water, and the hair of my head is a leafy shade. I hoped you were thirsty and struck by the sun, when the noon hour would bring me to you; Give me answer quickly: it is not nice, o Jamil, that you keep Buthayna waiting!²⁷

Wallada:

When the evening descends, await then my visit, because I see the night is the one who keeps secrets best [is the best keeper of secrets].

I feel a love for you, which - if the sun would have felt a similar love, she would not rise; and the moon, he would not appear; and the stars, they would not undertake their nightly travel.²⁸

Hafsa begins with a question regarding who shall play the lover and beloved. However, the lines that follow illustrate her initiative as the lover. She describes herself in terms of a garden, a place to visit, but the assumed passivity and immobility of the garden is upturned with her desire to "bring me to you", particularly where 'bring you to me' could have fit equally well. Someone

²⁶ Schippers, "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling,"

²⁷ Schippers, "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling,"

²⁸ Schippers, "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling,"

who requires rest seeks out restoration, the Eden is not brought to them. Marla Segol, author of *Representing the Body in Poems by Medieval Muslim Women*, claims that Hafsa saw an absurdity in the classic association of women with this semi-domestic space, "Gardens don't mind being kept waiting, but people do, and the analogy breaks down".²⁹ This is addressed in Ja'far's poetic response, "It is usually not the garden which visits someone, but it is the gentle breeze which visits the garden."³⁰ This reply makes it explicit that her initiative, Hafsa taking the role of lover rather than beloved, is abnormal. However, in utilizing a nature metaphor she illustrates this desire, this movement, as natural. The end of the poem marks a return to the accepted heteropatriarchal norm in her request for his assent, and the allusion to Jamil and Buthayna, a classic story of a 7th century male poet and his beloved.³¹

Wallada begins her poem with an instruction for her beloved, setting up a dynamic in which she assumes the accustomed male role. Though she does not inform the recipient of where to meet, Segol suggests "in the garden, the traditional trysting-place".³² The reader is additionally unsure of who the subject is. We may speculate that this poem was not to Ibn Zaydūn. For, why would a notably public relationship be kept to the shadows? Although the English translation of Wallada's poem lacks gendered pronouns, their presence in the original Arabic may be irrelevant. In Amar's analysis of Wallada's robe inscription she posits:

Although Wallada uses here nouns and pronouns that are grammatically masculine...I would like to propose that the use of the masculine may simply be part of the literary conventions of the time and that her verses therefore need not be read exclusively as heterosexual ones. After all, addressing the female beloved as male was part and parcel of the Arabic literary tradition.

²⁹ Segol, "Representing the Body in Poems by Medieval Muslim Women,"

³⁰ Schippers, "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling,"

³¹ Raymond Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry* (Syracuse University Press, 2011), https://books.google.com/books?id=HGvfHZ9eW2gC&dq=jamil+and+Buthayna+story&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

³² Segol, "Representing the Body in Poems by Medieval Muslim Women,"

In the second stanza of her poem Wallada makes use of heavenly imagery. The paths taken by the surrounding planets are constant and their movement is intrinsic, and in using a "she" sun and "he" moon, she portrays her feelings as non-corporeal and transcendent of gender, closer to God than humans. In the same way the planet's innate mobility is disturbed by her love, her normative immobility is overcome.

Both of these poems in questioning the lover and beloved binary, also challenge masculine and feminine gender norms and assert that mobility is not an exclusively male trait. This playful attitude towards gender can be reflected in a later scholar of al-Andalus, Ibn Arabi. In Sa'diyya Shaikh's "Allah, Hidden Treasures, and the Divine Feminine" she utilizes an analysis of Ibn Arabi's depiction of God to undermine normative male divine language as he repeatedly employs imagery that challenges traditional patriarchal conceptions.³³ Perhaps this is partly inspired by the contributions of Andalusian female poets such as Wallada and Hafsa. This wouldn't be unexpected. As Asma Afsaruddin explains, in *Literature, Scholarship and Piety: Negotiating Gender and Authority in the Medieval Muslim World*, al-Marqari's appreciation of these poets illustrates that even in the 17th century it was understood, "that a full appreciation of the vitality of the cultural and intellectual life in Muslim Spain in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century could be achieved only through additional consideration of women's contributions in this sphere and of their considerable interaction with their male peers."³⁴

CONCLUSION

As Segol puts it, female poets exercise control over their bodies, sexualities and mobility through their writing. Despite this, she claims that scholars overlook poetry like Wallada's and

³³ Sa'diyya Shaikh, "Allah, Hidden Treasures, and the Divine Feminine," *The Immanent Frame* (Social Science Research Council, March 27, 2019), <http://tif.ssrc.org/2019/05/27/allah-hidden-treasures-and-the-divine-feminine/>.

³⁴ Afsaruddin, "Literature, Scholarship, and Piety: Negotiating Gender and Authority in the Medieval Muslim World,"

Hafsa's due to what is seen as an exceptional nature and thus a lack of applicability to the imagined female majority.³⁵ However the continuity and similarity in their poetry speaks not to singular experience, but a shared culture that lasted at least a century. While the experience of the wealthy women of medieval al-Andalus may be a minority in more ways than one, it should not be regarded as dispensable information for their contributions to history are remarkable and go far past the geographical borders of the Iberian peninsula. Additionally, they often interacted with women of other classes in their poetry; Muhja was the daughter of a fig merchant.³⁶

Wallada's and Hafsa's light-hearted treatment of gender roles can be enlightening for the modern reader by illustrating that gender and sexuality's complicated relationship and their transitory and liminal nature existed as much in the medieval age as it does today. Their poems successfully undermine absolute narratives of history and in doing so, they effectively move us from modern constructions into a past that is no longer distant, but one that is familiar in its messiness.

Through analyzing the poetry of Wallada bint al-Mustakfi and Hafsa bint al-Hajj al-Rukuniyya we have come to an understanding of not only the conceptions of gender and mobility among the wealthy women of medieval al-Andalus, but their relevance today.

³⁵ Segol, "Representing the Body in Poems by Medieval Muslim Women,"

³⁶ Mahmud, Sobh. "Wallada Bent Al-Mustakfi. Muhya Bent Al-Tayyani." Essay. In *Historia De La Literatura Árabe Clásica*, 952–57. Madrid, 2002.

Bibliography

- Afsaruddin, Asma. "Literature, Scholarship, and Piety: Negotiating Gender and Authority in the Medieval Muslim World." *Religion & Literature* 42 (2010): 111–31. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23049472>.
- al-Udhari, Abdullah. "Hafsa Bint Al-Hajj Arrakuniyya." Essay. In *Poems for the Millennium*, edited by Pierre Joris and Habib Tengour, 1st ed., 4:97–99. University of California Press, 2012.
- al-Udhari, Abdullah. "Wallada Bint Al-Mustakfi." Essay. In *Poems for the Millennium*, edited by Pierre Joris and Habib Tengour, 1st ed., 4:70–71. University of California Press, 2012.
- Amer, Sahar. "Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18 (May 2009): 215–36. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40663351>.
- Farrin, Raymond. *Abundance from the Desert: Classical Arabic Poetry*. Google Books. Syracuse University Press, 2011. https://books.google.com/books?id=HGvfHZ9eW2gC&dq=jamil+and+Buthayna+story&source=gbs_navlinks_s
- Kittell-Queller, Emily. "Wallada Bint Al-Mustakfi." Emily Kittell-Queller. Weebly, September 22, 2014. <http://emilykq.weebly.com/blog/wallada-bint-al-mustakfi>.
- Kurtz, Jana, ed. *La Convivencia: Christian, Islamic and Jewish Cultures in Medieval Iberia*. Yale University Library, February 2020. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/convivencia>.
- Mahmud, Sobh. "Wallada Bent Al-Mustakfi. Muhya Bent Al-Tayyani." *Historia De La Literatura Árabe Clásica*, 952–57. Madrid, 2002.
- Meri, Josef W, ed. *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.
- Murray, Stephen O. "Woman-Woman Love in Islamic Societies." Essay. In *Islamic Homosexualities*, 97–104. New York, NY: NYU Press, 1997. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/j.ctt9qfmm4.7>.
- Schippers, Arie. "The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Story-Telling." Essay. In *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Erepresentation of Woman in Arabic Literature*, edited by Frederick de Jong, 139–52. Utrecht: M. Th. Houtsma Stichting, 1993.
- Segol, Marla. "Representing the Body in Poems by Medieval Muslim Women." *Medieval Feminist Forum* 45, no. 1 (2009). <https://ir.uiowa.edu/mff/vol45/iss1/12/>.
- Shaikh, Sa'diyya. "Allah, Hidden Treasures, and the Divine Feminine." The Immanent Frame. Social Science Research Council, March 27, 2019. <http://tif.ssrc.org/2019/05/27/allah-hidden-treasures-and-the-divine-feminine/>.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Almoravids." Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., April 17, 2014. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Almoravids>.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Almohads." Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., April 17, 2014. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Almohads>.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Job and the Unknown Wife: Through the Lens of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.”

Hannah Hathaway
Principia College

ABSTRACT

Who knew that one line from a nameless wife would be the reason for theological discussions and debates ever since it was first written? Considered a book of the people, the Book of Job has many lessons and ideas that we all can learn and live from. Throughout my research paper, I contend that comparatively analyzing Job’s wife in various texts presents a distinct perspective on a nameless wife. On the surface, Job’s wife is portrayed as a spouse lacking commitment: especially after uttering her famous words, she disappears from the story and is never heard from again, leaving her husband to suffer alone. Biblical and Qur’anic texts remain silent on her whereabouts, but a reception history of Job and his wife reveals a wealth of explanatory interpretations for Job’s wife’s words and their lives together as husband and wife. For centuries, scholars have questioned whether Job’s wife blesses or curses Job. By analyzing Jewish, Muslim, and Christian sources, one discovers the anti-feminist and feminists views that revolve around this topic.

Keywords: Book of Job, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Job, Job’s Wife.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Job and the Unknown Wife: Through the Lens of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.”

Hannah Hathaway¹
Principia College

INTRODUCTION

According to Katherine Low, “no other words spoken by a woman in the Hebrew Bible carry more bite and bafflement than those of Job’s wife in the book of Job, chapter 2, verse 9: “Curse God and die!”² On the surface, Job’s wife is portrayed as a spouse lacking commitment, especially because after uttering her famous words, she disappears from the story and is never heard from again, leaving her husband to suffer alone. Biblical and Qur’anic texts remain silent on her whereabouts, but a reception history of Job and his wife reveals a wealth of explanatory interpretations for Job’s wife’s words and their lives together as husband and wife.

At first glance, Job’s wife is portrayed as an undedicated spouse who is easily beguiled by the devil. However, throughout the centuries theologians and scholars decided to take a deeper look into the role of Job’s wife and what we can learn from her. One way which scholars and theologians learned and discovered more about Job, his wife, and their struggles, was to write more in-depth elaborations on the Book of Job. In Judaism and Christianity, one of the first translations and commentaries that was written on the Book of Job is “The Testament of Job”

¹ Hannah Hathaway is currently obtaining her Master's in Divinity from Boston University School in Theology. She graduated from Principia College in May 2020 as a Religious Studies Major with a minor in Global Studies. Hannah is currently serving as a military chaplain candidate.

² Katherine Low “Introduction” in *The Bible, Gender, and Reception History: The Case of Job's Wife* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1.

which is found in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Although she is not mentioned in the Qur'an, in the Islamic commentary *Qiṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā'*, Job's wife is given a name and plays a significant role in the story of Job as he struggles to understand his circumstances. When looking at the character of Job's wife, many scholars have come to the conclusion that there are two perspectives on how to look at Job's wife; she is either the devil's helper, or a dedicated loving wife. Through this essay, we will dive through the three largest Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and explore how they have come to know and understood the nameless wife of Job.

CHRISTIANITY

“Do you still persist in your integrity? **Curse** God, and die,”
New Revised Standard Version, Job 2:9.

The word “bless” comes from the Hebrew word *barak* (בָּרַךְ) which means “to bless, kneel, to be blessed, bless oneself; also (by euphemism) to curse (God or the King, as treason).”³ Due to these contrasting definitions, the word *barak* caused a lot of debate in early Christian writings. Many scholars have looked at the term in two different ways: looking at it literally to mean “bless,” or taking it as a euphemism for “curse” or “blaspheme.” Depending on the way you define the word, Job's wife is portrayed as a cruel, unsupportive, sharp-tongued “devil helper” or as a supportive wife caring for her ailing husband.⁴ Influenced by the works of the early church fathers- Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great, a majority of the interpretations of Job's wife viewed *barak* as a curse.

³ Blue Letter Bible, "Strong's H1288 – barak," <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H1288&t=KJV>.

⁴ Karla R Suomala, “The Taming of Job in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.” *Word & World* 31 (4): 402.

SEPTUAGINT

The first translation of the book of Job appears in the Septuagint (LXX), "the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek."⁵ While scholars do not agree on the reason why the Septuagint translation differs so much from its Hebrew parent text, "it is clear that the Greek version tames Job's character considerably."⁶ Not only is Job's character tamer, but the wife's speech that is found in the Hebrew text is changed as well. Compared to the Hebrew translation, the Greek version seems to have been aware of the ambiguity of the citation, "*Bless* God and die!," which has long been understood as a euphemism that means, "*Curse* God and die!"⁷ In the Greek version, the wife's speech has a fairly significant addition to her words. In the Hebrew text, Job's wife's speech only comprises two stichoi compared to "a full lament of 12 stichoi in the Greek book of Job."⁸ The origin of these extra stichoi is not certain but many scholars have "intertextually linked [Job's wife's speech] with Gen[esis] 3:16, Isaiah 65:23, and Tob 4:3-4."⁹ In this Greek translation, Job's wife is not speaking to him on impulse, but after waiting a while. Moreover, the reader has not pondered the suffering of Job's wife until now which the Septuagint makes a legitimate point that the suffering is not just Job's but hers as well, especially seeing as she bore their children.

EARLY CHURCH INFLUENCE

With the rise of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire in the 4th century CE, new ideas, translations, and commentaries emerged. Two of the early Doctors of the Church who produced commentaries on the Book of Job are Saint Augustine of Hippo and Gregory the Great.

⁵ Ibid, 398.

⁶ Ibid, 398.

⁷ Ibid, 398.

⁸ Markus Witte, "The Greek Book of Job" in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen*, ed. T. Krüger, M. Oeming, K. Schmid, and C. Uehlinger (Zürich: AZ Druck und Datentechnik GmbH, 2007) 42.

⁹ Ibid, 43.

Saint Augustine

Saint Augustine lived from AD 354 to 430 and is well known for his Christian theology.

In his treatise *On Patience*, Augustine suggests that Job's wife was not killed along with Job's children because the Devil might use her as another Eve-incident to deceive him into blasphemy.

Augustine then compares Job to Adam:

She brought no help to her husband, but went on blaspheming God. Skilled in wrongdoing, the Devil had not deserted her when he had destroyed her sons, for he had learned with Eve how necessary woman was for the tempter. But, this time he did not find another Adam whom he could entice through a woman.¹⁰

In another sermon titled, "To the Catechumens on the Creed," Augustine wrote of Job's wife's role:

After the pattern of the serpent, who, in Paradise, deceived the first man whom God made, so now she also thought by suggesting blasphemy to succeed in deceiving a man who pleased God. How great were his sufferings, brethren! Who can suffer so much in his possessions, in his house, in his person, yea, in his wife, the temptress who remained to him? But even her Satan would long before have taken from him if he had not kept her to be his helper. He had overcome the first man by means of Eve, therefore he had kept his Eve.¹¹

Augustine later stated, "[h]is wife, the devil's helper, not her husband's comforter, would fain have persuaded him to blaspheme."¹² In many of his writings, Augustine expressed his belief that "all women are impacted by Eve's act in Eden," and it is difficult for women to fall out of the tempter role.¹³

¹⁰ Augustine, Mary Sarah Muldowney, and Roy J. Deferrari, *Treatises on Various Subjects*, Vol. 1st pbk. reprint. The Fathers of the Church, a New Translation. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002.

¹¹ Charles A. Heurtley, ed., "On Faith and the Creed: Dogmatic Teaching of the Church of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries" in *The Bible, Gender, and Reception History: The Case of Job's Wife* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 33-34

¹² *Ibid*, 34.

¹³ *Ibid*, 34.

Gregory the Great

It would be remiss to discuss the book of Job without elaborating on Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*, "a work completed in the second half of the sixth century [which] is without question the single most important commentary on Job in the Middle Ages, exerting an influence on virtually every Christian exegesis of the book," even influencing Jewish interpreters.¹⁴ Similarly to Augustine, Gregory built his ideas off of the view that Job's wife was the New Eve. In his writings, Gregory saw Job's wife as another test Job needed to overcome. Focusing on "the mouth of Job's wife: 'the old foe put in motion the tongue of his wife' (*antiques hostis linguam mouit exoris*)."¹⁵ In his writings, "Gregory posit[ed] that the Adversary tests human beings in two ways: through suffering but also, more subtly through persuasion."¹⁶ Failing to 'break' Job by taking everything he owns, the Adversary returns to the cunningness found in Genesis. As the snake tricked Eve to speak perversely towards Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit, so the Adversary tried to trick Job through his wife to make him want to curse God.

JUDAISM

ותאמר לו אשתו עֲדָה מְחֹזֵק בְּתַמְתָּךְ בְּרַד אֱלֹהִים נָמַת:

Similar to the Christian narrative, while rabbis put Job on a pedestal, they were often critical of the advice Job's wife gave to him. Robert Alter wrote in his Hebrew Bible translation and commentary:

Job's wife assumes either that cursing God will immediately lead to Job's death, which might be just as well, or that, given his ghastly state, he will soon die anyway, so that he might as well curse the

¹⁴ Choon-Leong Seow, "Job's Wife, with Due Respect" in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 2007) 352.

¹⁵ Charles A. Heurtley, ed., "On Faith and the Creed: Dogmatic Teaching of the Church of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries" in *The Bible, Gender, and Reception History: The Case of Job's Wife* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 38.

¹⁶ Choon-Leong Seow, "Job's Wife, with Due Respect" in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2007) 352.

deity who inflicted these horrors on him. In either case, her use of the repeated phrase "still cling onto your innocence" is sarcastic: what is the point of your innocence, she says, after all that has happened?¹⁷

From Alter's commentary, we understand that there are two main interpretations; we either sympathize with the pain Job's wife must feel or we see her as a temptress. For some, they prefer to see the term "curse" for its Hebrew meaning as "bless," which places her speech in a more positive light. According to Eli Ginzberg, leading Talmud and Jewish Theological teacher wrote, "His wife, fearful that he would not bear his horrible suffering with steadfastness, advised him to pray to God for death, that he might be sure of going hence an upright man."¹⁸ He also wrote, "Job's wife told him to blaspheme God so that punishment of death would befall him to relieve his suffering."¹⁹ Which means that Job's wife was sympathetic to the pain that Job felt and saw the way to right his 'wrong' is through death. While other scholars look at her speech as a temptation and outright sin against God. Even comparing her to the devil himself.

OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

This dual rabbinical interpretation can be seen in the ancient interpreters who took on two rather divergent traditions.²⁰ In one rabbinic commentary, "the *Targum of Job*, and Pseudo-Philo- identifies the wife of Job with Dinah, the daughter of Jacob."²¹ During the time when Hebrew dialectic was declining, the *Targum* came out as an ancient Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew Bible for Jews to use. A second tradition "identifies Job's wife with a wretched Arabian

¹⁷ Robert Alter. "Job" in *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary; The Writings* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019) 469.

¹⁸ Eli Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1909-1938) 457.

¹⁹ Anne W. Stewart "Job's Wife and Her Interpreters" in *Women's Bible Commentary* ed. Carol A. Newsom, and Sharon H Ringe, and Jacqueline E Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012) 216-217.

²⁰ Michael C. Legaspi, "Job's Wives in the "Testament of Job": A Note on the Synthesis of Two Traditions." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 1 (2008): 71.

²¹ *Ibid*, 71.

woman."²² In the Jewish composition, "Testament of Job" found within *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, creatively provides a solution to lingering questions concerning his relation to ethnic Israel, and to elaborate on themes in the book of Job in a way that vindicates the role of women in Job's own moral athleticism.

In this version, Job is on his deathbed where he gathers his seven sons, three daughters and second wife around him where he talks about the events that occurred in his life and the suffering he endured. Job has two wives, one named Sitis, the other named Dinah. Sitis represents the unnamed Arabian wife that is found in Job 2:9 in the canonical account. Sitis, which "probably comes from "sitos," which is Greek for "food" or "bread," reflects one way Sitis provided for her husband in his moments of despair.²³ However, in this account, Sitis' "plays a major role and is the subject of extensive lament."²⁴ In a six chapter narrative, Job discusses his suffering with his family, describing Sitis as "something of a figure of pity, driven to enslavement and finally forced to sell her hair ignominiously to Satan."²⁵ Unlike Augustine and Gregory the Great who see Job's wife as a devil's tool, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* she is not only given the name Sitis, but she is revered by her husband for being a *figure of pity*.

ISLAM

Unlike in Christian and Jewish holy books, there is no 'Book of Job' in the Qur'an. Rather, The Qur'an or Koran consists of 114 units of varying lengths of suras with narrations of prophets and prayer appear within its texts. Instead of having a sole book dedicated to the character and story of Job, Job is mentioned only by name three times in the Qur'an; Surah 6:84,

²² Ibid, 71.

²³ Mayer Gruber "Job" in *The Jewish Study Bible* (eds. by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 1507

²⁴ R.P. Spittler, "Testament of Job" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1983) 839.

²⁵ Ibid, 835.

Surah 21: 83-84, and Surah 38:41-44. There is not much of a story or a clear explanation of who Job is or why he is considered a prophet, and there isn't even a mention of his wife. In order to gain an understanding of Job and his story, Muslims turn to the *Qiṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā'*. Written before 1200 by a man named al-Kisa'i, the *Qiṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā'* or "Tales of the Prophets," is a collection of various stories that have been adapted from the Qur'an to explain and expand on what is in the Qur'an.²⁶

QIṢAṢ AL-'ANBIYĀ

In the *Qiṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā'* is the story titled, "The Prophet Job." Similar to themes and stories that are found in the Christian and Jewish holy books, one significant difference in "The Prophet of Job," Job's wife plays a significantly positive role in Job's life and is considered a role model for Muslim women. In the Islamic story of the Prophet Job, Job, known in the Islamic tradition as *Ayyūb*, is a well-accomplished son "who married the daughter of Ephraim son of Joseph," who was called Rahmah, who blessed Job with twelve sons and daughters.²⁷

The story begins with Iblis watching over Job. Iblis, the personal name for the devil, is jealous of Job's material wealth and love for God. Rather than continuing to watch over Job, Iblis ascends to the seven heavens to ask Allah for permission to gain all the power over all of Job's possessions, family, children, and even his body. Similar to the Hebrew account, Iblis destroyed everything Job owned including his possessions and children, as well as caused a plague to fall over Job's entire body. As he lay there, afflicted with smallpox, Rahmah began to weep silently, but Job forbade her and asked her to move him to another place, as he lacked the strength to move. "Strengthened by God," Rahmah picked Job up and brought him to a place

²⁶ Ibid, xix.

²⁷ "The Prophet Job" in *Tales of the Prophets* (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic Word, Inc. 1997) 195.

“for the poor and unfortunate.”²⁸ Throughout Job’s suffering, Rahmah is “a paragon of patience, she stays with her husband when all others could not bear to be in his presence. She shows her love and support in every way and praises God with him. She physically carries him around, even as she continues to work for food and seeks relief for him.”²⁹ Then one day, Iblis disguises himself as a physician and tells Rahmah that Job will be healed if he slaughters a bird and eats it without recognizing God. Concerned and worried for her husband, Rahmah presents this suggestion to Job. Job, however, recognizes this as a trick from Iblis and does not fall for it. Angered, Iblis persists and disguises him again, this time telling Rahmah about a dualistic theological- a god of heaven and a god of the earth. Rahmah discusses this theological idea with Job where he rebukes her for toying with the idea that there can be multiple gods, and Job vows to whip Rahmah with a hundred lashes. Even then, “her concerns are first for her husband; she asks God to heal Job, even if it means twice as many lashes as Job promised.”³⁰ After this, Job anticipates that death is near to which Rahmah admits her undying love for him and goes on to beg for bread and eventually sells her hair for some bread.

After Job discovers that Rahmah sold her hair, he begins to lament in the sense that the loss of her hair is an affliction upon him. It was in this moment of suffering, the angel “Gabriel descended and greeted him saying, ‘I am Gabriel, who brought you glad tidings, Job, of God’s forgiveness.’ Taking him by the right hand, he said, ‘Rise, with the permission of God! And Job stood up.’”³¹ At this moment, Job is healed and fulfills his oath to give his wife a hundred lashes.

²⁸ Ibid, 195.

²⁹ Choon-Leong Seow, “Job’s Wife, with Due Respect” in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2007) 364.

³⁰ Ibid, 364

³¹ Prophet Job, 202.

God, however, recognizes the faithfulness and patience of Rahmah and suggests to Job to take a bundle of one hundred twigs and beat her once, which would fulfill the oath.³²

The Islamic account compared to the story from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, portrays Rahmah as a strong, devoted wife who is willing to sacrifice her own well-being, to protect and nurture for her ailing husband. Rather than being another tool for the devil to use, Rahmah is a worried and loving wife, seeking any means possible to heal her husband. While nurturing and caring for her husband, Rahmah was tempted by Iblis three times, which is evidence of the fact that Job is not the only one suffering from loss. In the Islamic account, there is a strong feminist view of Job's wife, depicting her carrying her husband with the strength of God and sacrificing herself for the well-being of her husband.

JOB AND RAHMA AND THE MORISCOS

According to the Islamic account, Rahma's devotion and love for her husband has proven to be inspirational for many women throughout the ages. In particular, is the story of the Muslims in the Iberia Peninsula which was recorded in the fifteenth-sixteenth century CE.³³ It was during this time "when Christian officials decreed that all Muslims who wanted to live in Spain had to convert to Christianity. Moriscos, as Christians referred to these converted Muslims, hid many of their writings as Christian officials began to call in and burn forbidden texts."³⁴ Although the story of Job, seeing that it came from the old testament, would be an unlikely text that would be taken by Christian officials, the Moriscos had their own version recorded in "*Aljamia*, a Romance dialect written in Arabic script."³⁵ Not only was the text

³² Choon-Leong Seow, "Job's Wife, with Due Respect" in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 2007) 364.

³³ Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Patience and Pluck: Job's Wife, Conflict and REsistance in Morisco Manuscripts Hidden in the Sixteenth Century" in *Women, Texts and Authority in the Early Modern Spanish World* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003) 91.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 91-92.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 91.

written in a forbidden language but it also became a "text of resistance."³⁶ On the surface level, the Book of Job is a reminder to remain steadfast and faithful during a time of suffering but in this version, we meet Rahma, who "remains faithful to her husband throughout all the applications that strike Job and his family. More than patient and submissive or a mere helpmate for Job, she shows courage, determination, faith, and intelligence in taking direct action to assure their survival."³⁷

This version of a strong, faithful wife must have been an inspiration to Moriscos who lived under the Christian rule in the sixteenth century. In 1568-1570, "some 50,000 Moriscos were forcibly uprooted from their homes to be relocated following their unsuccessful rebellion," some of which lost everything and were separated from their family.³⁸ Similar to Job, Moriscos suffered dramatic changes and lost everything they owned. The Book of Job reigned particularly inspirational to countless Morisco women who became "heads of households as husbands disappeared into slavery, hiding or captivity. Quietly, they replaced expelled Muslim leaders as they taught their children the prayers and beliefs of Islam."³⁹

Similar to the account that is found in the *Qışaş al-'Anbiyā'*, Rahma sacrifices her well-being to help her husband. In the *Aljamia* account, Rahma is marveled for her devotion and beauty. One difference in this account is that Rahma builds a house for Job to rest in, carrying him on her back as puss and worms drip down her skin from Job's body.⁴⁰ The happy ending in Job's story proved to be particularly comforting to the Moriscos, "even as oppression increased to culminate in the decrees expelling them from all the inspiration and empowerment to both

³⁶ Ibid, 92.

³⁷ Ibid, 92.

³⁸ Ibid, 92.

³⁹ Ibid, 92.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 98.

women and men."⁴¹ In the midst of their suffering, the Moriscos were able to find their inspiration through a wife who never gave up.

RAHMA(H)

According to "The New Encyclopedia of Islam," the word 'Rahmah' comes from the root *rā, hā, mīm*, and it means "mercy, to be merciful, to show mercy. This is an attribute of God which the Koran emphasizes over and over again, in keeping with its nature as the last revelation."⁴²

Unlike the Augustine commentary, Rahmah is not that of a temptress but is considered a strong, devoted wife, the opposite of Eve. "Thus the story is not just about faith and patience—both Job's and Rahmah's; it is also about the manifestation of God's compassion through human—here, female—agency."⁴³ In the case of the Moriscos in Spain, Rahmah is a symbol of hope and endurance not only for females suffering under the Christian oppression but men as well as they are taught to stay patient. In this translation, Rahmah herself has fallen victim to Iblis' charms and wicked ways. In contrast with the Christian and Jewish commentaries, Iblis isn't particularly using Rahmah to trick but trying to trick Rahmah herself and Job has to keep her in balance. In contrast to the story of Adam and Eve, Rahmah and Ayyūb didn't fall under Iblis's temptation and were rewarded for their endurance and patience through the trials.

CONCLUSION

As a character in the Hebrew Bible, Job's wife plays a minor role in the Book of Job, with only one line and no name. However, this one line raised an intriguing question, "should [*barak*] be taken at face value to mean "bless" or is it a euphemism for 'curse'?" Job's wife has

⁴¹ Ibid, 100.

⁴² Cyril Glasse, "Rahmah" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, Inc. 2008) 433.

⁴³ Ibid, 366.

been roundly condemned by interpreters throughout the ages as the devil's tool or temptress, or even a personification of the devil himself. Yet, with these anti-feminist views comes an alternate perspective that sees Job's wife as a caretaker and support for her ailing husband.⁴⁴ According to "the early doctors of the church," Job's wife is considered the *devil's helper*, used to deceive Job the same way Eve tempted Adam. In contrast, Islam held a very positive image of Job's wife, Rahmah and she was even one of the sources of inspiration for Moriscos in sixteenth century Spain. Overall, there is much more to know and learn from the nameless wife of Job 2:9. At the surface, Job's wife is seen as a temptress but as scholars and interpreters began to dig deeper into her character, they began to sympathize with her and portray her as a courageous wife, supporting her husband the best way she knows. Through the exploration of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, there is more than meets the eyes to the nameless wife. If only we could take the chance to learn from each other.

⁴⁴ Choon-Leong Seow, "Job's Wife, with Due Respect" in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 2007) 351.

Bibliography

- Al-Kisa i, Muhammad ibn Abd Allah and Thackston Jr., Wheeler M, and Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. "Introduction" in *Tales of the Prophets* Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic Word, Inc. 1997
- Alter, Robert. "Job" in *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary; The Writings*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019
- Augustine, Mary Sarah Muldowney, and Roy J. Deferrari. *Treatises on Various Subjects*. Vol. 1st pbk. reprint. The Fathers of the Church, a New Translation. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=498865&site=ehost-live>.
- Blue Letter Bible. "Strong's H1288 – barak."
<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H1288&t=KJV>
- Charlesworth, J.H. "Introduction for the General Reader." in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1983.
- Crenshaw, James L. "Job" Pages 692-731 in *The HarperCollins Study Bible Fully Revised and Updated: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, Student Edition*. Edited by Harold W. Attridge et al.; San Francisco: HarperOne, 2006.
- Ginzberg, Eli. *Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1909-1938
- Glasse, Cyril. "Rahmah" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, Inc. 2008
- Greenberg, Moshe, and Greenfield, Jonas C, and Sarna, Nahum M. *The Book of Job: A New Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980.
- Charles A. Heurtley, edu, "On Faith and the Creed: Dogmatic Teaching of the Church of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries" in *The Bible, Gender, and Reception History: The Case of Job's Wife*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Legaspi, Michael C. "Job's Wives in the "Testament of Job": A Note on the Synthesis of Two Traditions." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 1 (2008): 71-79.
doi:10.2307/25610107.
- Reichert, Victor E. *Job: Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*. London: The Soncino Press, 1963

Seow, Choon-Leong. "Job's Wife, with Due Respect" in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2007

Spittler, R.P. "Testament of Job" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1983.

Stewart, Anne W. "Job's Wife and Her Interpreters" in *Women's Bible Commentary* ed. Carol A. Newsom, and Sharon H Ringe, and Jacqueline E Lapsley. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

Suomala, Karla R. "The Taming of Job in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam." *Word & World*.

"The Prophet Job" in *Tales of the Prophets*. Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic Word, Inc. 1997.

Wilcox, John T. *The Bitterness of Job: A Philosophical Reading*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1989.

Witte, Markus. "The Greek Book of Job" in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen*, ed. T. Krüger, M. Oeming, K. Schmid, and C. Uehlinger. Zürich: AZ Druck und Datentechnik GmbH, 2007.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

"Religious Dimensions of Kurdish Environmentalism."

Hugh Schmidt
University of Puget Sound

ABSTRACT

This article examines the religious function of environmental ideology in Kurdish liberation movements in Kurdistan. Using four characteristics of dark green religion derived from Bron Taylor's *Dark Green Religion*, this paper analyzes the language used by Abdullah Öcalan of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and Chya The Green Association, a Kurdish environmental NGO in Iran, and outlines the way that environmentalism occupies religious space. Despite claims to secularism or outright rejection of religion, the rhetoric of Kurdish nationalist and environmental groups reflects a belief in the earth as a divine entity. The religious role of environmentalism in these groups ties in to nationalist struggle through appeals to stewardship and solidarity. Further, this paper argues that western models for studying green religion fail to accurately capture non-western environmental movements. Islamic environmental thought is discussed to provide an alternative lens through which to analyze the language of Kurdish environmentalism and their claims to secularism.

Keywords: Environmentalism, Green Religion, Kurdistan, Chya, Kurdish Nationalism, Abdullah Öcalan.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Religious Dimensions of Kurdish Environmentalism.”

Hugh Schmidt¹
University of Puget Sound

INTRODUCTION

In the context of ethnic struggles for independence or political struggles in general, environmental avenues for achieving self-determination are often pushed to the wayside. Despite a strong correlation between the outbreak of civil war/violence and environmental degradation, the idea of revolutionary struggle rooted strongly in environmental protection is relatively uncommon.² Consciousness regarding climate change, deforestation, and environmental issues is largely seen as the prerogative of white, wealthy progressives in America and Europe, where caring about the environment is seen as a privilege.³ In stark contrast to this idea, environmental consciousness has increased in prominence within the Kurdish struggle for autonomy in the Middle East, in some cases playing a central role in its revolutionary ideology. The Kurds are an ethnic group of roughly 35 million people, dispersed primarily across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, in a roughly continuous area of land known as Kurdistan.⁴ While primarily Sunni Muslim, the religious makeup of the Kurdish people includes Christians, Alevis, and Jews among other

¹ Hugh Schmidt graduated from University of Puget Sound in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in religious studies. Their research focuses primarily on the role of religion in left-wing social movements. They plan to continue that work through a commitment to eco-socialist organizing.

² Mehmet Gurses. "Environmental Consequences of Civil War: Evidence from the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." *Civil Wars* 14:2 (2012). 254

³ Amanda Baugh. "Nepantla Environmentalism: Challenging Dominant Frameworks for Green Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 20:20 (2020): 3

⁴ Gurses. "Environmental Consequences of Civil War: Evidence from the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." 258

groups.⁵ In response to persecution and assimilation efforts by the governments of all four nations, various Kurdish nationalist groups have engaged in both violent and non-violent struggle to establish autonomous regions for their people throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.⁶ Environmental consciousness plays a significant role in the ideology of Abdullah Öcalan, founder of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a militant socialist party which began advocating for Kurdish independence in 1974. Inspired by the PKK, various militias and political parties across Kurdistan have adopted this environmentalist program into their revolutionary struggle, placing great importance on the protection of nature.⁷ Further, in the absence of legal political parties, environmental struggle in Kurdish regions of Iran has been taken up by various NGOs which aim to foster Kurdish identity alongside their eco-activist programs. While these Kurdish activist groups are constantly referred to as secular or identify as such, the language used in their publications has a uniquely religious character, with references to nature as a sentient entity and the moral imperative to protect it. Kurdish environmental movements function as religion in the way they advocate for united environmental struggle as an imperative resulting from a belief in the interconnectedness of all beings with the earth. Further, this belief contains within it a reverence for the earth as a spiritual entity.

DARK GREEN RELIGION

In order to establish whether these environmental movements function religiously, I will be using four characteristics of spiritual environmental thought adapted from the introduction to Bron Taylor's *Dark Green Religion*. Any one of these characteristics alone would not make

⁵ Richard Foltz. "The "Original" Kurdish Religion? Kurdish Nationalism and the False Conflation of the Yezidi and Zoroastrian Traditions." *Journal of Persianate Studies* 10 (2017) 91.

⁶ Gurses. "Environmental Consequences of Civil War: Evidence from the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." 258

⁷ These include militias, like the YPG and YPJ (primarily in Syria) and non-militant organizations like the Mesopotamian Ecology Movement. For more information, see Lau, et al.(2016) "A Kurdish response to climate change."

Kurdish environmentalism a religion, and even when all four apply I would be hesitant to call it such. However, these are characteristics of environmental movements and thought that Taylor points to as occupying religious space, and as such I will be using them to determine whether Kurdish environmental movements function religiously in a significant way.⁸ The first of these is horizontal connection, which I am using to refer to the (re)connective or unifying nature of environmentalist thought or action between its participants. This could be a connection that happens directly between people because of their love for environmental activism, or it could be the unifying aspect of these movements as they relate to a variety of different struggles. In the Kurdish context, national and religious autonomy, class conflict, and women's liberation are all struggles that can intersect with environmentalism.

The second characteristic is spiritual intelligence, which is adapted from Taylor's discourse to refer to the personification, agency, and quasi-divine nature of the earth. Within this concept of spiritual intelligence is the idea that the earth or nature as a whole is something that can be communicated with, that people can have relationships with.⁹ The third is a rejection of anthropocentrism in favor of reverence for the earth, which is derived from Taylor's discussion of nature religion and Rousseau. Rousseau believed that human fulfillment and happiness could be drawn from "intimate contact with and open-hearted contemplation of nature, which was itself an epistemological principle; a belief that indigenous peoples lived closer to nature and were thus socially and ecologically superior to "civilized" peoples."¹⁰ Essentially, I am identifying the belief that a nature-centric society is ultimately the solution to alienation. The fourth and final characteristic is that of interconnectedness, of oneness with the earth. This is tied up with all of

⁸ Taylor, Bron. *Dark Green Religion*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). 2-3

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9

the prior aspects I have mentioned, but deserves special attention because within this idea is a necessity of action and stewardship. If a person is one with the earth, and every day they see nature being destroyed, they might see those wounds upon the earth as wounds unto themselves. As such, humans have a moral imperative to stop the destruction of the earth. This is central to Taylor's definition of dark green religion, "in which nature is sacred, has intrinsic value, and is therefore due reverent care,"¹¹ This connective reverence is what turns concern into action. When that imperative to action is synthesized with spiritual intelligence, environmentalism becomes a divine obligation.

ABDULLAH ÖCALAN AND SOCIAL ECOLOGY

While there are a number of different Kurdish groups which incorporate environmentalism into their struggle for liberation, I will be focusing on only two in this paper, the first of which is the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Abdullah Öcalan helped found the PKK as a secular Marxist party in Turkey, which has engaged in on and off militant insurgency against the government since 1984. He has been imprisoned since 1999, but continues to be the party's spiritual and ideological leader. In prison, he adopted the ideas of social ecologist Murray Bookchin, among a variety of other thinkers, into a left-wing political ideology called Democratic Confederalism, which emphasizes communalism, feminism, and environmental consciousness. In a piece titled "A Return to Social Ecology", Öcalan outlines the importance of eco-consciousness and protection within the context of a revolutionary, left-wing political party: "A social 'consciousness' that lacks ecological consciousness will inevitably corrupt and disintegrate, as was seen in real-socialism."¹²¹³ In this, we see evidence of Öcalan's appreciation

¹¹ Ibid., 10

¹² Abdullah Öcalan. "Abdullah Öcalan on the return to social ecology." in *Social Ecology and Democratic Confederalism*. Edited by Make Rojava Green Again and YKX/JKK. (2020) 6

¹³ "Real-socialism" refers to socialism as a mode of production w/r/t the Soviet system.

for the integration of environmentalism into his revolutionary program, where, along with women's rights, he positions it as equally important to the national class struggle of the PKK. He argues that any kind of social revolution that takes place will fall apart if environmental consciousness is not prioritized, because it is the current social order which has made environmental degradation its mission. Thus, a socialist movement which does not seek to protect nature will eventually fall into the ways it should be opposed to. To base a socialist economy on resource extraction, for example, will eventually poison its populace and destroy a future in which total liberation is possible. However, Öcalan does not depict his ecological ideas as new ones, instead advocating for a return to a primitive, communal way of living, which he implies is the original one that all humans once lived under: "The natural religion is the religion of the communal primitive society. There is no contradiction to nature, no anomaly in the emergence of society. Philosophy itself defines the human being as 'nature becoming aware of itself.' The human being is basically the most developed part of nature. This proves the unnaturalness and anomaly of this social system, which puts the most developed part of nature in contradiction to it."¹⁴ Öcalan attributes ecological destruction to a social order which positions humans above nature rather than as a part of it, and argues that that social order is in fact unnatural. This aligns particularly with Rousseau's thought on nature religion outlined by Taylor, that it is the solution "to the West's spiritual malaise, social violence, economic inequality, and callousness to nonhuman nature: a harmonious future characterized by fulfilling relationships among the earth's diverse forms of life."¹⁵ To bring an end to the pain caused by a capitalist system reliant on alienation, Öcalan argues that once the interconnectedness of nature and human is recognized, only then will people be able to "feel true and with all their senses," whereas

¹⁴ Öcalan. "Abdullah Öcalan on the return to social ecology." 6

¹⁵ Taylor. *Dark Green Religion*.9

otherwise, society produces "a disturbed social feeling."¹⁶ Öcalan holds up an image of past communal societies as an order which will bring joy and fulfillment, which further agrees with Rousseau's assertion that non-Abrahamic, "primitive" societies have a more harmonious and sustainable relationship with nature. Öcalan is not a primitivist, he is not anti-technology, but he believes the structure of society must be returned to a communal way of living in order to achieve true liberation. This lines up with Taylor's examination of the etymology of the word religion to mean "to reconnect."¹⁷ His ideology aims to reconnect society with a more harmonious, communal way of living which it has departed from.

Within his description of this past communal society, Öcalan describes the relationship between these societies and the earth as "like the bond between child and mother. Nature is understood as something alive. The golden rule of the religion of this time was not to do anything against it in order not to be punished by it. The natural religion is the religion of the communal primitive society."¹⁸ In this excerpt, nature is revealed as a spiritual, possibly sentient (or at least reactive) entity which can be communicated with. The use of the word "punished" indicates at least some kind of agency on part of the earth, which combined with the idea of nature as a mother, brings to mind nature as a sort of divine entity. While Öcalan is not calling for worship of the earth, he is using the idea of natural religion to promote a return to a similar kind of consciousness applied to a socialist program. As such, he positions climate disaster as Earth's retaliation against humanity for the betrayal of what should be a reciprocal relationship. He finds a root for this natural relationship between humanity and nature in the word "Amargi" which in Sumerian means both freedom and "return to the mother-nature. Between human beings

¹⁶ Öcalan. "Abdullah Öcalan on the return to social ecology." 7

¹⁷ Taylor. *Dark Green Religion 2*

¹⁸ Öcalan. "Abdullah Öcalan on the return to social ecology." 6

and nature there is a quasi-love relationship. This is a great love story.”¹⁹ Despite the PKK being a secular organization, they find great meaning within this idea of a loving relationship between humans and nature. The equation of freedom with a mother-child relationship is further evidence of how Öcalan’s environmental ideology uses the idea of spiritual intelligence to espouse sustainability within his revolutionary framework. Protection of the environment within this belief system is necessitated by the understanding that humans and nature are intrinsically linked, cut from the same cloth. Öcalan does, in a way, set up a hierarchy in claiming “The human being is basically the most developed part of nature.”²⁰ However, it does not mean that humans should take from nature unhindered. Because of their connection, he cites a moral imperative for humanity to take care of the earth: “Humans gain in value when they understand that animals and plants are only entrusted to them.”²¹ This is the very first line of this pamphlet; and it serves to establish an idea of stewardship - that humans have a responsibility to protect all living creatures. To understand how this idea functions in a socialist, secular context, I find it helpful to examine the phrase “An injury to one is an injury to all” popularized as the slogan for the Industrial Workers of The World.²² In this case, rather than just apply that idea of solidarity to fellow workers, it is applied to the entire earth. According to Öcalan, the earth is also engaged in the struggle against global capitalism, so any assault on it should be seen as an assault on humanity. This framework makes fighting for the environment a moral struggle just as fighting for your fellow humans would be: “The amorality of capitalism can only be overcome by an ecological approach.”²³ With this in mind, fighting for the earth becomes as necessary as class struggle,

¹⁹ Ibid., 7

²⁰ Ibid., 6

²¹ Ibid., 6

²² International Workers of the World, an international radical labor union

²³ Öcalan. “Abdullah Öcalan on the return to social ecology.” 7

national struggle, women's liberation, etc.²⁴ Öcalan uses this sentiment to appeal to the Kurdish nationalism the PKK was founded on, stating "Great patriotism means reforestation and planting trees. This is a valuable slogan."²⁵ The idea of taking care of the land as patriotism makes sense as a position for Öcalan to adopt, considering how important Kurdistan as a homeland is to a sense of national and ethnic identity.²⁶ The destruction of the environment has also been a common war tactic used by occupying governments against the Kurds, so it's not entirely difficult to see how an appeal to land preservation would connect with the larger Kurdish nationalist movement.²⁷ This is another example of the connective nature of the PKK's ideology, which aims to bring people together under the common thread of environmental preservation. Outlined in "A Return to Social Ecology" is the idea of environmental consciousness and action as a connective framework which functions through appeals to interconnectedness, spirituality, and related liberation movements.

CHYA AND THE PEOPLE OF ZAGROS

The second subject of this article are NGOs in Iran, which have had to pick up the mantle of Kurdish environmental action, as all major Kurdish political parties have been banned in the country. Kurdish environmentalist NGOs also face extreme political repression due to the state's belief that they are fronts for nationalist militant groups. While they appear not to be, the IRGC²⁸ concerns are not entirely unfounded, as these groups are committed to advancing the causes of their people at the expense of Iran's interests.²⁹ Kurdish identity is essential to these groups; in

²⁴ Ibid., 8

²⁵ Ibid., 7

²⁶ Taspinar, Omer. *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition*. (New York: Routledge, 2005) 78

²⁷ Gurses. "Environmental Consequences of Civil War: Evidence from the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." 255

²⁸ Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Islamic Republic of Iran's military intelligence service.

²⁹ Allan Hassaniyan. "Environmentalism in Iranian Kurdistan: causes and conditions for its securitisation." *Conflict, Security & Development*, 20:3, (2020) 2

addition to promoting environmental causes, they are also involved in Kurdish language programs, education reform, and efforts to stop Iranian state violence against kolbars (Kurdish mountain porters).³⁰ Environmental NGOs are able to encapsulate a number of Kurdish issues within their publications under the unifying force of environmental protection of their land. In particular, the forests of the Zagros mountains in Iranian Kurdistan serve as a symbol of an independent Kurdish identity from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Speaking on Kurdish student activist publications, Allan Hassaniyan writes: "Referring to the Kurds as "the people of Zagros," a terrain with different geographical, cultural and social characteristics to southern, central and eastern Iran, this self-identification proclaims the historical difference between Kurdish and Persian identity."³¹ This language speaks to a strong association between the identity of Kurdish activists and the land they reside on, so it will come as no surprise that they seek to protect that land from environmental degradation and destruction. Chya the Green Association, based in the city of Marivan, is one NGO that has been particularly outspoken and the subject of media attention, in large part due to its reforestation and fire-fighting efforts. In an article titled "The Land is Beautiful With Zagros," the organization decries the destruction of the forests and calls for immediate action to protect them. Similar to Öcalan's framing of the relationship between primitive humans and the environment, Zagros is presented as a nurturing mother, with whom the Kurds have traditionally shared a reciprocal relationship: "Zagros is not happy these days and is on its way to turn into a desert owing to the activities of the people whom it has brought up in its bosom for thousands of years".³² Zagros is given agency here, as if it has fulfilled its end in supporting its people, who in turn have exploited it. It is the "kind

³⁰ Ibid., 7

³¹ Allan Hassaniyan. "The Gains and Risks of Kurdish Civil Activism in Iran." *Middle East Research and Information Project* 295 (2020).

³² "This Land is Beautiful with Zagros" *Chya The Green Association*. November 30, 2018.

mother," which, through the current political order, is being destroyed. This reflects a spiritual intelligence in conjunction with the idea that the traditional, Kurdish way of life is one of harmony and care for the environment. This article blames not "humanity" as a whole, but the current system that exploits it, which is central to the idea of social ecology (as espoused by the PKK). Chya places blame on laws that make the destruction of the environment profitable, laws which place private ownership of land above public ownership. Further, for Chya, fault can also be found at the consumer level, where they criticize people who engage in activities that benefit from the forest's destruction, specifically listing "charcoal kabob, hookahs and charcoal tea" consumption.³³ They go as far as to place fault on everyone who is not actively committed to stopping deforestation and degradation in Zagros: "The current trend is not acceptable by no means, and all those who take part in this obvious plunder and irreparable treason, whether knowingly, as the dealers and merchants and with their axes and saws, or unknowingly, through irresponsibility and indifference, are committing an unforgivable crime."³⁴ This sets up the moral imperative, characteristic of dark green religion, as playing a central role in Chya's ideology. Here, not only are the directly destructive people and organizations at fault, but anyone who is not actively fighting against those systems are as well in their complicity. Indifference is labeled as a crime, and considering their framing of the destruction of Zagros as the betrayal of a nurturing mother, it is not unreasonable that they would arrive at this conclusion. They frame this destructive behavior as "inhuman", which implies that humanity is predisposed to an original, harmonious relationship with the earth. As such, the current system that destroys the entity that birthed them ("the people of Zagros") is committing a horrible sin by denying that relationship. In Chya's view, the Kurds are intrinsically bound to the land and have a duty to protect it,

³³ Ibid.,

³⁴ Ibid.,

making any destruction of it an affront towards both human nature and Kurdish identity.³⁵ In connection with the increased securitization of Kurdistan, Chya calls for the protection of the environment to preserve "natural autonomy." This could be interpreted as a call for independence through the preservation of what is ostensibly Kurdish land, thus also a call to protect Kurdish identity. With this in mind, it is not altogether surprising that the Iranian government has so heavily surveilled Kurdistan's environmental movements, considering this is a direct appeal to Kurdish nationalism and a challenge to the system of exploitation in Iran. It could also be perceived as a call for connection among the Kurdish people in pursuing preservation of the land, because it links environmentalism to Kurdish identity specifically, connecting people for the sake of that greater struggle. This fits nicely with Taylor's most basic definition of religion: "religion has to do with that which connects and binds people to that which they most value, depend on, and consider sacred."³⁶

In August 2018, two activists who worked with CHYA, Sharif Bajour and Omid Kohnepoushi, died along with two others while fighting forest fires outside of Marivan. Within the week, four political prisoners in Iran, three of them Kurdish, published a letter in solidarity and in memoriam of the activists who died. The letter had a specific focus on Sharif Bajour, who was a high profile activist for a number of non-environmental causes as well. They begin the letter with verse:

*It is not my lot to die a natural death;
Better for the holy grail than in blissful sleep,
And on truth's command, I welcome that death
which releases freedom from chains of darkness³⁷*

³⁵ Hassaniyan. "Environmentalism in Iranian Kurdistan: causes and conditions for its securitisation." 5

³⁶ Taylor. *Dark Green Religion 2*

³⁷ "Political Prisoners Pen Condolences in Wake of Deadly Forest Fire" *Human Rights Activists News Agency*. August 31, 2018.

This verse alone serves as evidence of the central nature of martyrdom in Kurdish environmentalism; it is the glorification of dying for the sake of a higher, divine cause. The use of the phrase "and on truth's command" indicates that the cause Sharif and other activists died for is itself a higher truth, one not necessarily dictated by human laws. Considering that this truth he died for is protection of the environment, which is regarded as having agency and housing divinity in both this letter and in the previous Chya piece, it is appropriate to call him and other activists martyrs. The large turnout at their memorial and the subsequent imagery of the pair appearing at various CHYA actions since their deaths bolsters the assertion that these activists are martyrs.³⁸ Bajour is positioned in this letter as "a true friend to the mountains, plains, and forests of Kurdistan," which is language that establishes the kind of personal relationship that one can have with nature.³⁹ This, combined with the opening verse of the letter, firmly establishes an acknowledgement of the spiritual intelligence of nature that Bajour is said to have felt. The prisoners who wrote this letter, while not all Kurdish, and none of them necessarily environmentalists, still felt the need to express solidarity with Sharif because he too was engaged in a struggle against the government of Iran. Environmental struggle is part of a larger struggle against political repression, and thus encourages solidarity among Kurds and non-Kurds alike: "We extend our deep sympathy to his friends and comrades from the Chya Green Association, to all those who care about the environment, and to the people of Kurdistan. They have lost some of the most honorable men of their time. Much like the fire that took their lives, the loss of these beloved souls has burned our spirit."⁴⁰ Here they position the loss of Bajour as one that should be felt by all of Kurdistan and by the entire environmental movement

³⁸ https://www.instagram.com/chya_ngo/

³⁹ "Political Prisoners Pen Condolences in Wake of Deadly Forest Fire" *Human Rights Activists News Agency*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*,

because of the role that Kurdish environmentalism has as part of both a larger environmental struggle and a larger Kurdish struggle. This appeal to all Kurds and eco-activists of all backgrounds on the basis of a kind of martyrdom and shared struggle is characteristic of the connective potential of religion. With this in mind, when the authors of the letter write: "His new and creative path of resistance is his legacy," it is reasonable to perceive this as a call for "the Chya Green Association, to all those who care about the environment, and to the people of Kurdistan," to honor that legacy through resistance.⁴¹

SECULARISM AND ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTALISM

Despite calls to action based in martyrdom and the near deification of nature, representatives of various student organizations in Iran, including Chya, still staunchly maintain that they are secular: "Esmailnazhad argues that in the Iranian regime's interpretation of Islam, human beings are viewed as superior to any other beings and therefore allowed to exploit anything in their advantage. However, Kurdish environmentalists promote a secular approach, and the need for the coexistence of man and nature."⁴² While much of this paper is about how that coexistence of man and nature can in fact be seen as deeply religious, it makes sense that in establishing Kurdish identity separate from the Islamic Republic, they would want to reject Islam, especially the form espoused by the state. A pair of Kurdish Sunni Imams in Turkey, who are passionate about both Kurdish nationalism and Marxism, acknowledge that Islam has not traditionally been a liberatory vehicle for many Kurds:

After converting to Islam, Kurds have always prioritized their religious identity. Although they have had an ethnic consciousness, it has always been a secondary issue... Yet our Prophet says, "Whoever is killed while he/she is seeking his/her rights (against injustices), he/she is a martyr." I mean, our Prophet never ever said "always seek the hereafter!". In fact, God says, "thou shalt not forget this

⁴¹ Ibid.,

⁴² Hassaniyan. "Environmentalism in Iranian Kurdistan: causes and conditions for its securitisation." 10

world." But Kurds have forgotten the world! On the other hand, our (Islamic) brothers – Turks, Arabs, and Iranians – have never shown us mercy.⁴³

While these Imams are able to find a basis for the Kurdish national struggle within Islam, they acknowledge that this is not the role that Islam has played for Kurdish people. They seem to argue that perhaps the focus on Islam and Islamic brotherhood among Kurds has taken away energy that could be spent on the national struggle. If Iranian Islam is seen as an oppressive and destructive force, it makes sense that the Kurdish NGOs in Iran would not want to embrace it. Some Kurds have even gone as far as to adopt Yazidi religion or Zoroastrianism (often conflating the two) as a way to distance themselves from Islam with regards to their national identity.⁴⁴ The same unnamed Imam quoted above even claims that the reason the Kurds have not received mercy from other Islamic groups is "because only Kurds remained in Allah's hands! All others gave up the religion except Kurds."⁴⁵ While obviously these Imams are Muslim, some feel the need to distance themselves from the Islam of other nations because of the way it has factored into Kurdish persecution and erasure.⁴⁶ Despite this, these Kurdish Imams believe that those who died fighting for the PKK are in fact martyrs according to the word of Allah. Considering Sharif Bajour is also a sort of martyr for a higher cause connected to Kurdish nationalism, the religiosity of the response to his death can be compared to the martyrdom of PKK soldiers. While I am not arguing that the Chya is taking direct influence from this kind of thought, it reflects a similar, religious way of thinking.

Esmailnazard in his analysis of Kurdish NGOs in Iran positions the Islam of the

⁴³ Gürbüz, Mustafa. *Rival Kurdish Movements in Turkey: Transforming Ethnic Conflict*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016) 117

⁴⁴ Foltz. "The "Original" Kurdish Religion? Kurdish Nationalism and the False Conflation of the Yezidi and Zoroastrian Traditions." 90

⁴⁵ Gürbüz.. *Rival Kurdish Movements in Turkey: Transforming Ethnic Conflict*. 116-117

⁴⁶ Mehmet Gurses. "Is Islam a Cure for Ethnic Conflict? Evidence from Turkey." *Politics & Religion* 8, no. 1 (03, 2015): 137

government as being clearly hierarchical and thus exploitative because of the framing of humans as superior to nature. While this is certainly not incorrect, it does not reflect the varied positions of different Islamic scholars on this issue. Instead, some frame this hierarchy as one necessitating stewardship, not exploitation: "contemporary Islamic environmentalists have defined environmentalism as a facet of the Qur'anic concept of stewardship, expressed by the Arabic term *khalifa*. The following verses are cited: "I am setting on the earth a vice-regent" (Qur'an 2:30), and "It is He who has made you his vice-regent on earth" (Qur'an 6:165).⁴⁷ In this interpretation, humans are still positioned as superior to other creatures on earth, but are responsible for taking care of it, not exploiting it. This parallels Öcalan's interpretation of humans as being the most developed part of nature, to whom the rest of nature is entrusted.⁴⁸ Öcalan and the PKK are secular, yet the idea of stewardship being entrusted to humans (he doesn't say by who) is similar to the idea of Allah entrusting care of the earth to humanity. Ideas of interconnectedness of all beings, something which Taylor outlines as central to his conception of nature religion, appear throughout the scriptural basis for Islamic environmentalism. Specifically, the concepts of *ayat* and *tawhid*, as defined by Richard Foltz, align startlingly well with those which Taylor labels as precursors to nature religion and deep ecology:

According to the writings of Islamic environmentalists, all aspects of creation are miraculous signs of God (*ayat*), and must be respected. The Arabic (and Persian) term for the natural environment is *muhit*, which in the Qur'an means "all-encompassing": "And He it is who encompasseth all things" (Qur'an 4:126). The Qur'anic concept of *tawhid* (unity) has historically been interpreted by Muslim writers mainly in terms of the oneness of God (in contradistinction to polytheism), but Islamic environmentalists have preferred to see *tawhid* as meaning all-inclusive. They suggest that the idea of *wahdat al-wujud*, or "unity of being," associated with the medieval philosopher Ibn 'Arabi, can be understood in environmentalist terms. Ibn 'Arabi, however, has always been a

⁴⁷ Richard Foltz. "Is There An Islamic Environmentalism?" *Environmental Ethics* 22 no.1 (2002): 64

⁴⁸ Öcalan. "Abdullah Öcalan on the return to social ecology." 8

highly controversial figure for Muslims, since many have accused him of holding pantheist or monist views incompatible with Islam's radical monotheism.⁴⁹

While these interpretations are not necessarily popular within Islam as a whole, these concepts remain useful in comparing an explicitly religious environmentalism with both Kurdish movements and Taylor's framework. The all-encompassing nature of the earth is a feature of nature religion which Taylor sees as central to understanding how environmental movements can function religiously. Spinoza, someone to whom Taylor attributes much of the base for contemporary nature religion, was controversial for some of the same reasons Foltz claims Ibn 'Arabi was; both were accused of pantheism or monism for outlining ideas focused on the universality of God-being.⁵⁰ Compare the interconnectedness and universality of nature Foltz references in the above excerpt with a line from Taylor on Spinoza: "for if every being and object is a manifestation of God or God's activity, then everything has value, which presents a fundamental challenge to the prevailing anthropocentrism."⁵¹ Despite Islam containing a hierarchy between humans and the rest of nature, these ideas of unity of being and interconnectedness serve to soften that hierarchy into something that is not necessarily exploitative.⁵²

Identifying green Islamic thought allows for a better understanding of the avowed secularism of Kurdish environmentalism. In discussing a version of Islam with similar goals of rejecting environmental exploitation and oppression, the Islam they are fighting against can be separated from Islam as a whole. Secularism in this context is rejecting the authority of Islam as it relates to the hierarchical nation states they are fighting against. The PKK and Chya are

⁴⁹ Foltz. "Is There An Islamic Environmentalism?" 65

⁵⁰ Taylor. *Dark Green Religion* 8

⁵¹ Taylor. *Dark Green Religion* 8

⁵² Foltz. "Is There An Islamic Environmentalism?" 65

opposed to Islam in Turkey and Iran because they have functioned as tools of oppression. With this in mind, the seeming contradiction between their secularism and the deeply spiritual, pre-Islamic language they use is eased, as both ultimately challenge the state. In describing Kurdish environmental movements as functioning religiously, we are able to see how those movements fight those nation-states on a spiritual front. Their mere existence challenges the social order, and thus the religious basis of the state's authority.⁵³

CHALLENGING WESTERN MODELS OF GREEN RELIGION

Examining Islamic environmentalism is further necessary so as to avoid using exclusively western models for studying religious environmental movements. Kurdish environmentalism cannot be entirely understood using models based on white, progressive thinkers because its roots are clearly deeper than that. This is not to then claim that its roots are in Islam, but to simply provide another lens for analysis. For example, attempting to understand Öcalan's work as based purely on the ideas of American left thinker Murray Bookchin would be a mistake. Bookchin, who developed in large part the theory of social ecology which Öcalan writes about, perpetuated colonial ideas surrounding environmentalist movements:

In social ecology a truly natural spirituality, free of mystical regressions, would center on the ability of an emancipated humanity to function as ethical agents for diminishing needless suffering, engaging in ecological restoration, and fostering an aesthetic appreciation of natural evolution in all its fecundity and diversity.⁵⁴

Bookchin centers a new spirituality which would center science, rather than "supernaturalistic or pantheistic areas of speculation."⁵⁵ By referring to past sustainable religious practices as "mystical regressions", Bookchin dismisses indigenous knowledge and ways of life as

⁵³ Hassaniyan. "Environmentalism in Iranian Kurdistan: causes and conditions for its securitisation." 10

⁵⁴ Murray Bookchin. "What is Social Ecology?" in *Social Ecology and Democratic Confederalism*. Edited by Make Rojava Green Again and YKX/JXK. (2020) 8.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 10

something to be left behind in favor of western science. Bookchin's thinking reflects western ideals of progress and linear time, in which the old (and non-western) ideas are left behind as society moves forward. Öcalan's use of the word *Amargi* and his calls for a return to primitive, communal society, while reminiscent of Bookchin's ideas somewhat, are not reflective of Bookchin's dismissive attitude toward indigenous, pantheistic religion. As such, to define his environmentalism entirely within the confines of Bookchin or western environmentalism would be to misrepresent the nature of Öcalan's environmental program and erase its unique cultural identity.

The idea of green religion being a merger of spirituality with science-based environmental thought is something Amanda Baugh criticizes Bron Taylor for perpetuating almost exclusively, at the cost of erasing indigenous and non-western narratives of environmentally conscious religion.⁵⁶ Further, certain aspects of Kurdish environmentalism, specifically the references to the Kurds as "the people of Zagros" and to ties between the land and Kurdish identity, are not explained away by either Islamic or western environmentalism. To determine that link between Kurdish ethnic identity and environmentalism is beyond the scope of this essay, but deserves further research in order to understand the motivations for some of the language used and actions taken by activists. Baugh further argues that scholarship (including Taylor's) on green religion has focused on "explicit environmentalism", which "maintains a classed moral valence requiring environmental actions to be explicitly motivated by concerns for the planet. Recycling for the good of the earth is easily identified as environmentalism within an explicit environmental framework, whereas recycling motivated by monetary reward is not."⁵⁷ This scholarship thus is not able to fully account for the varied

⁵⁶ Baugh "Nepantla Environmentalism: Challenging Dominant Frameworks for Green Religion." 8

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6

motivations for environmentalism in Kurdistan, which as we have seen, is pursued also as part of a larger ethno-nationalist struggle for autonomy. If environmental action that is not directly motivated by a love for nature is not environmentalism as practiced by western eco-activist groups, then using theories based on those groups might prove problematic. Even with that consideration however, it is without question that despite (or perhaps in spite of) nationalistic motivations, the PKK's environmental ideology and Kurdish activists within Iran do have a deep love for nature. This love manifests in recognizing the urgency of environmental struggle, that their fight extends beyond their people to the entire earth. Even if these groups succeed in this lifetime, their movements must ensure a future in which all can be free from exploitation, including the earth. It's this moral imperative that drives Kurdish environmentalists, spurred by the centrality of a nurturing, maternal role of the earth in their ecological worldview. This reverence for the earth is a unifying force among people and the earth, allowing Kurdish environmentalism to function as a religion alongside claims to secularism.

Bibliography

- Baugh, Amanda. "Nepantla Environmentalism: Challenging Dominant Frameworks for Green Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 20:20 (2020):1–27
- Bookchin, Murray. "What is Social Ecology?" in *Social Ecology and Democratic Confederalism*. Edited by Make Rojava Green Again and YKX/JXK. 9-27. 2020
- Foltz, Richard. "Is There An Islamic Environmentalism?" *Environmental Ethics* 22 no.1 (2002): 63-72.
- Foltz, Richard. "The "Original" Kurdish Religion? Kurdish Nationalism and the False Conflation of the Yezidi and Zoroastrian Traditions." *Journal of Persianate Studies* 10 (2017) 87-106
- Gürbüz, Mustafa. *Rival Kurdish Movements in Turkey: Transforming Ethnic Conflict*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016.
- Gurses, Mehmet. "Environmental Consequences of Civil War: Evidence from the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." *Civil Wars* 14:2 (2012). 254–71.
- Gurses, Mehmet. "Is Islam a Cure for Ethnic Conflict? Evidence from Turkey." *Politics & Religion* 8, 1:3 (2015): 135-154.
- Hassaniyan, Allan. "Environmentalism in Iranian Kurdistan: causes and conditions for its securitisation." *Conflict, Security & Development*, 20:3, (2020) 355-378
- Hassaniyan, Allan. "The Gains and Risks of Kurdish Civil Activism in Iran." *Middle East Research and Information Project* 295 (2020).
- Lau, Anna., Sirinathsingh, Melanie., Baran, Erdelan., "A Kurdish response to climate change." Open Democracy. November 16, 2016.
- Öcalan, Abdullah. "Abdullah Öcalan on the return to social ecology." in *Social Ecology and Democratic Confederalism*. Edited by Make Rojava Green Again and YKX/JXK. 2020.
- Taspinar, Omer. "Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition." New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Taylor, Bron. *Dark Green Religion*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- "Political Prisoners Pen Condolences in Wake of Deadly Forest Fire" *Human Rights Activists News Agency*. August 31, 2018. <https://www.en-hrana.org/prisoners-of-conscience-pen-condolences-in-wake-of-deadly-forest-fire>.
- "This Land is Beautiful with Zagros." *Chya The Green Association*. November 30, 2018. <https://en.chya.ir/?p=162>.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Jesus, James, and Job: Christian Perspectives on Innocent Suffering.”

Naomi Brill
Smith College

ABSTRACT

In the book that bears his name, Job is argumentative, demanding answers from God as to the cause of his suffering. Jewish scholars, particularly Anson Laytner, view Job’s arguments as the pinnacle of the Hebrew Bible’s permitted and encouraged “law-court prayer.” Yet the New Testament’s only mention of him praises “the patience of Job.” This description sits uneasily in the Christian tradition, and many Christian scholars criticize Job for arguing against God. Because most Christians believe that Jesus was sinless, the cry of dereliction provides a fitting text by which to challenge the widespread Christian view of Job’s complaints as sinful. Jesus himself complains to God when he asks, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Thus, Christian scholars should not criticize Job simply for complaining, but they can criticize Job for claiming that God is the source of his suffering.

Keywords: Book of Job, Innocent Suffering, Cry of Dereliction, Book of James, Theodicy, Wisdom Literature, New Testament.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

“Jesus, James, and Job: Christian Perspectives on Innocent Suffering.”

Naomi Brill¹
Smith College

INTRODUCTION

Job is mentioned by name only once in the New Testament, and that is in James 5:11; “Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful” (*The New Revised Standard Version*). The more widely known translation in the King James Version highlights “the patience of Job.” Yet this verse seems unusual—Job, at least as we encounter him in the canonical book that takes his name, is hardly the epitome of patience. He spends the bulk of the book arguing with his companions and God, demanding a reason for his suffering rather than waiting patiently for God to restore him. Based on the lack of evidence for this characterization in the book of Job itself, “It would seem that James has considerable responsibility for shaping the perception of ‘endurance/patience’ as the most memorable feature of Job.”² Though many Christian interpreters “desire to exalt [Job] as a moral exemplar, probably due to the influence of the James passage, none can treat his behavior in the dialogue as completely exemplary given his vehement complaints against God.”³ This paper aims to explore

¹ Naomi Brill, Smith College class of 2022, is a senior studying religion and archaeology. She is especially interested in comparisons between Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. This paper was written for a seminar on Job with help from Professors Joel Kaminsky and L. Scott Brand at Smith College.

² Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James*, vol. 37 A, The Anchor Bible (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995), 320.

³ Will Kynes, “The Trials of Job: Relitigating Job’s ‘Good Case’ in Christian Interpretation,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 66, no. 2 (May 2013): 174–91, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930613000045>, 187.

the ways in which James and the broader Christian tradition on innocent suffering have influenced Christian interpretation of the book of Job, and how this issue is complicated by the existence of Jesus' own complaint to God: the cry of dereliction.

THE CONTEXT OF JAMES 5:11

The Epistle of James is the first of the Catholic Epistles, and traditional attribution holds that it was written by James the brother of Jesus, a prominent figure in the early church in Jerusalem. If this were the case, the letter would have had to be written between 33 and 62 CE.⁴ However, many scholars have contested this attribution because, like many of Jesus' followers, James was probably uneducated and illiterate, and almost certainly not capable of the well-composed Greek found in the epistle that bears his name.⁵ If the letter is indeed pseudonymous, the dating becomes less clear, but most scholars estimate that it was written around the end of the first century.⁶ The book focuses on a number of themes, as James (as we will continue to call him despite the contested authorship of this book for the sake of simplicity) encourages self-control, warns against the danger of riches, and asserts the necessity of patience in the face of suffering.⁷ This last topic is the focus of chapter 5. Here, James condemns the rich who have gained their wealth through deceit, warning that they will be punished after the imminent Parousia (the Second Coming of Jesus Christ). To the faithful, he leaves instructions to "be patient...until the coming of the Lord" (James 5:7), and to follow in the example of "the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord" — though he does not name any individual

⁴ Patrick Gray, "Points and Lines: Thematic Parallelism in the Letter of James and the Testament of Job," *New Testament Studies* 50, no. 3 (July 2004): 406–24, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688504000232>, 408.

⁵ Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 6th ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 515.

⁶ Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 322.

⁷ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 516.

prophets (James 5:10). It is after this that James names Job as another example for his readers to follow.⁸

So why does James choose Job as the primary example of patience? Scholars present different theories. Some scholars claim that James refers to an older version of the story, represented today by the prologue and epilogue, typically termed the story of "Job the Patient."⁹ Some claim that this is the version that is also referenced in Ezekiel 14:14, so it is sometimes called the story of the "legendary intercessor Job" who is compared to Noah and Daniel.¹⁰ Others argue that James is referring to *The Testament of Job*, a pseudepigraphal document that presents a much more conventionally pious and patient version of Job.¹¹ Christopher Seitz takes a different view, arguing that the word "patience" as it appears in the KJV is an inaccurate translation from the Greek, and that the word would be better translated as "endurance," "perseverance," or "steadfastness."¹² This, he argues, eliminates any contradiction that might lead modern readers to believe that James is referring to anything other than the canonical book of Job, because,

"[E]ndurance" would be a wholly inappropriate characterization of Job in the Prologue. It would serve far better as a description of Job in the dialogues...[as] it is only as Job moves toward God and demands to know him [in the dialogues],

⁸ Johnson points out that it is possible to read this as Job being included among the prophets. See Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 319.

⁹ Martin Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, ed. Helmut Koester and Heinrich Greeven, trans. Michael A. Williams, 11th ed., Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1976), 246; Hillel A Fine, "Tradition of a Patient Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74, no. 1 (March 1955), 32; Christopher Seitz, "The Patience of Job in the Epistle of James," in *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte: Festschrift Für Klaus Baltzer Zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. Rüdiger Bartelmus, Thomas Krüger, and Helmut Utzschneider (Fribourg, Switzerland: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 374.

¹⁰ Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, 246; Seitz, "The Patience of Job in the Epistle of James," 374.

¹¹ Gray, "Points and Lines." Though Gray disagrees with Spitta's claim that there is enough evidence to support a connection between *The Testament of Job* and the reference in James 5:11, he examines the connections between the two texts to illuminate their meanings; Patrick J Hartin, "Call to Be Perfect through Suffering (James 1,2-4): The Concept of Perfection in the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount," *Biblica* 77, no. 4 (1996): 422.

¹² Seitz, "The Patience of Job in the Epistle of James," 378-379.

rather than conventions of his own moving construction [in the prologue]...that the potential for endurance is made real in the book.¹³

While some modern translations such as the NRSV have accepted this translation as more accurate, many of the scholars mentioned previously might protest that this change does not explain the issue away as neatly as Seitz claims. Several of them reference translations in which the word is "endurance," but do not accept this as a guarantee that James was referring to the canonical book of Job. Thus, in order to better understand James' description of Job's endurance, one must broaden the scope of this analysis to view Job in the context of the Christian tradition's perspective on innocent suffering more generally.

JOB AND JAMES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION: REASONS FOR INNOCENT SUFFERING

Christianity in some places maintains and in others alters the explanations for innocent suffering that are posited in the Hebrew Bible. One of the main reasons behind innocent suffering that is developed in the Epistle of James and other New Testament literature is the fact that it increases endurance. James and Peter specifically hold that this endurance is a necessary component for spiritual growth and salvation; James says to his readers that they should "know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:3-4). In James and Peter, "endurance in difficulty is the key witness to the reality of a person's faith and a part of the process through which they are saved."¹⁴ James proposes that the development of endurance is the means to self-perfection.¹⁵ The idea that endurance is a necessary component for salvation

¹³ Seitz, "The Patience of Job in the Epistle of James," 380.

¹⁴ Mariam Kamell Kovalishyn, "Endurance unto Salvation: The Witness of First Peter and James," *Word & World* 35, no. 3 (2015): 231.

¹⁵ Hartin, "Call to Be Perfect through Suffering (James 1,2-4)," 479.

stands in contrast to Paul, for whom faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation (Romans 3:28). Yet for all three, "in the suffering of the righteous one, God is working purposefully."¹⁶

Also uniquely relevant to New Testament portrayals of suffering is the imminent eschatology that is present in many of its works. Many Christians at the time when the New Testament works were being produced believed that the Parousia was imminent, and that with this event the entire world as they knew it would end. The righteous believers would be rewarded by God for their faith, and the wicked would perish. James warns that "the Judge is standing at the doors!" (James 5:9), a reference to the proximity of the Parousia.¹⁷ This imminent eschatology makes the New Testament perspective on suffering and patience uniquely temporal, as "the exhortation to be patient is even more pertinent for those expecting an event to happen soon as it is for those who know it is delayed."¹⁸ As well as believing that their suffering was due to end soon, the early Christians who read James' letter would know that the *reason* that God allowed them to suffer was to test them and to develop their endurance. This stands in contrast to Job as he appears in the canonical book, who for the sake of the test's integrity must not know that he is being tested.¹⁹ The imminent eschatology present in the book of James mirrors more closely Job's self-awareness of his testing in the *Testament of Job*—while neither is given a precise time at which to expect God's judgement and renewal, both the early Christians that James writes to and Job in the *Testament* are promised that this will occur at any moment, and thus are given hope to hold onto that Job in the canonical book lacks.

¹⁶ Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 324.

¹⁷ Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 317.

¹⁸ Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 322.

¹⁹ Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, 3rd ed., vol. 15, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974), lxxiv – lxxv.

Christian literature's perspective on innocent suffering is also influenced by the distinction it makes in which "friendship with the world" and "friendship with God" are inherently incompatible.²⁰ In this view, obedience to God does not guarantee or even predict security or success in life. One's reward for faith and good works is likely to come after the Parousia or death—whichever comes first. This stands in contrast to conventional wisdom literature, which posits that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked in this world.²¹ This is also the view that Job's friends take in some sections of the dialogues, where they maintain that Job must have done something deserving of punishment that justifies his suffering (see, for example, Job 22:5). Christian views of suffering usually do not argue that only the wicked will suffer; in fact, the righteous are frequently more likely to suffer due to their fidelity to God, as the prophets did.²²

Another particularity involved in Christian discussions of innocent suffering is the essential fact that in Christian belief, God cannot be the cause of innocent suffering. This is also a perspective maintained in many parts of the Hebrew Bible. Applying this view to the book of Job, Aquinas held that even though Satan is accountable to God in the story, and thus everything that happens on Earth is a result of divine providence, it is important to remember that God permits Satan to do harm, but doesn't order him to do so.²³ While Satan intends to hurt Job and tempt him into blasphemy, God allows the testing so that Job can demonstrate his virtue.²⁴

²⁰ Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 319.

²¹ Some scholars argue that the wisdom literature poses this as an ideal for the world, a way that the world *should* be, rather than a description of what is actually true in many cases. See Joel S. Kaminsky, "Would You Impugn My Justice? A Nuanced Approach to the Hebrew Bible's Theology of Divine Recompense," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 69, no. 3 (July 2015): 310, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020964315578207>.

²² Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 319.

²³ Roger W Nutt, "Providence, Wisdom, and the Justice of Job's Afflictions: Considerations from Aquinas' Literal Exposition on Job," *Heythrop Journal* 56, no. 1 (January 2015): 44–66.

²⁴ Nutt, "Providence, Wisdom, and the Justice of Job's Afflictions."

Putting himself in conflict with both Christian belief and other wisdom literature, Job declares that God is directly harming him. He asserts this particularly in Job 16:12-14, where he says,

I was at ease, and he broke me in two;
 he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces;
 he set me up as his target;
 his archers surround me.
 He slashes open my kidneys, and shows no mercy;
 he pours out my gall on the ground.
 He bursts upon me again and again;
 he rushes at me like a warrior.

While the language is certainly metaphorical, Job still places the blame for his suffering squarely on God. This sentiment in which God himself is Job's attacker would be fundamentally unacceptable in Christian thought. While he might permit innocent suffering to serve some greater purpose, God himself is never its cause.

JAMES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION: APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO INNOCENT SUFFERING

As well as their unique justifications for innocent suffering when compared to texts in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament writers give different instructions on how one ought to respond to innocent suffering. One of the primary instructions echoed by James, Peter, and Paul is that Christians should rejoice in suffering. When encouraging communities in the face of trials, the letters of Peter and James encourage them "to rejoice despite these trials—and even in the trials—because they know the outcome"—that is, exaltation in the Parousia.²⁵ James tells his audience to "consider it nothing but joy" when they face trials and suffer (James 1:2). Intensely important to these authors was that innocent sufferers stay loyal to God. This was especially essential for the authors of James and Peter, since they held that the loyalty that developed through endurance was necessary for salvation. For this reason, Johnson argues that James refers

²⁵ Kovalishyn, "Endurance unto Salvation: The Witness of First Peter and James," 235.

to Job in order to highlight the end of the book, in which "God rewarded the one who, despite his suffering, stayed loyal to God."²⁶ Early Christians were also told to celebrate in suffering because it was in suffering in silence that one could emulate Christ, which was always desirable. Paul associated Jesus with the suffering servant described in Isaiah 53, and "as [the] suffering servant, Christ did not complain to God."²⁷ Additionally, Volf argues that Paul condones a specific kind of "self-aware non-understanding," in response to the fact that the reasons for innocent suffering are usually not explained. Instead, like in the Exodus story and the book of Job, "God's response to suffering was liberation, not an explanation."²⁸ On a more specific level, James instructs that those who are suffering should pray (James 5:13), and 1 Peter asserts that the best course of action is that "those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good" (1 Peter 4:19). None of these authors, it seems, would condone Job's questioning and complaints against God—an issue that will be examined further in the following section.

JOB THROUGH A CHRISTIAN LENS

In light of the explanations for and condoned responses to suffering that are found in the New Testament, later Christian interpreters attempted to apply these lenses in their analyses of the book of Job. Kynes claims that despite wanting to view Job positively due to the influence of James 5:11, they all "share the assumption that challenging God is wrong" based on more general New Testament views.²⁹ On this basis, some prominent interpreters asserted that Job's complaints were not actually accusations against God—Ambrose, bishop of Milan (339-397) and

²⁶ Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 324.

²⁷ Miroslav Volf, "Vanquishing Suffering: Apostle Paul and the Victory Over Suffering," University Center for Christian Thought, March 25, 2019, video, 11:18, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9ReIlvDEG0>.

²⁸ Volf, "Vanquishing Suffering: Apostle Paul and the Victory Over Suffering," 17:09.

²⁹ Kynes, "The Trials of Job," 187.

Gregory the Great (540-604) maintained this position.³⁰ In a similar vein, Aquinas (1225–74) and Calvin (1509–64) attempted to lessen the impact of Job’s complaints, Aquinas by claiming his questions are rhetorical rather than an attack on God, and Calvin by condoning Job’s message but not his method of conveying it.³¹ Lastly, Luther (1483–1546) and Barth (1886–1968) argued that while Job is wrong to defy God, God’s mercy is enough to cover that wrong.³² Yet, because of their Christian view that complaining is an inappropriate response to suffering, “none of them can maintain that [Job] is wholly innocent.”³³ While they all attempt to portray Job as praiseworthy, they would all be likely to agree that “God cannot be summoned like a defendant and forced to bear witness against himself. No extreme of suffering gives mere man license to question God’s wisdom or justice as Job had done.”³⁴ It is concerning this assertion that complaint is never the correct response that Christian and Jewish theology on innocent suffering and the book of Job differ the most.

JOB AND LAYTNER’S “LAW-COURT” PRAYER: A UNIQUELY JEWISH APPROACH TO INNOCENT SUFFERING

In contrast to scholars who view the book of Job through this Christian lens, however, there are those who apply a Jewish outlook in their interpretation of the book. Even for Christians, “the broad tradition challenges an easy equivalence between conflict with God and rebellion against him,”³⁵ as many of the most prominent heroes of the Hebrew Bible argue with God and demand that he make things right. Anson Laytner presents Job as “the climax of the

³⁰ Kynes, “The Trials of Job,” 182-183.

³¹ Kynes, “The Trials of Job,” 184-185.

³² Kynes, “The Trials of Job,” 187.

³³ Kynes, “The Trials of Job,” 187.

³⁴ Pope, *Job*, lxxx.

³⁵ Kynes, “The Trials of Job,” 188.

Bible's use and development of the arguing with God motif and the law-court pattern of prayer."³⁶

Laytner describes the law-court pattern of prayer as "a particularly (and perhaps uniquely) Jewish response to the problem of theodicy. The law-court argument prayer is an authentic Jewish form of prayer that, though rooted in deep faith, nevertheless calls God to task for His lapses of duty which result in suffering and injustice."³⁷ Laytner claims that while all three Abrahamic religions allow for their covenant to act as a fealty oath, in which God is the king to whom believers swear loyalty, only Judaism allows for a covenant between two "contractual equals," a "partnership" that becomes "the tool by which an individual can challenge or even defy the will of God."³⁸ Part of this, Laytner argues, is only possible because of the uniquely emotive nature of the Jewish characterization of God—he can be convinced to change his mind, or feel emotions that drive him to act—especially when compared to the way that Christians and Muslims characterize God.³⁹ Laytner describes the ways that this pattern applies in the stories of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Job, and in various pieces of rabbinic literature.

Laytner outlines the way in which this pattern defines the book of Job. The climax to the frequent legal language used in the book occurs in chapter 31, where "Job swears a series of oaths designed to ascertain his innocence," through which "Job ceases to accuse God; he now takes steps to compel God to act."⁴⁰ Laytner argues that God's statement that Job is in the right in Job 42:7 proves that God approves of "Job's vociferous insistence of his innocence and his

³⁶ Anson Laytner, *Arguing with God: A Jewish Tradition* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1990), 3.

³⁷ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, xv.

³⁸ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, xvii. One notes that the presentation of the Israelites and God as equals in this or any context may be an overstatement.

³⁹ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, xvi.

⁴⁰ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, 33.

right for justice at the hand of God," and thus would likely approve of the similar complaints in the book of Lamentations and in national lament psalms.⁴¹ This interpretation is in direct conflict with the Christian interpretations described in Section 4, in which Job's complaints and questioning of God were condemned. This view is not held by all Christian scholars, though, and the next section will investigate the claims of Christian interpreters whose views on Job align more closely with Laytner's.

THE EXCEPTIONS: CHRISTIAN INTERPRETERS ALIGNED WITH LAYTNER

Though many Christian interpreters use views from the New Testament to condemn Job's complaint, other Christian scholars refute this stance. Will Kynes, for example, argues that to challenge God, one must have faith in his goodness, and that complaint is thus an act of faith. Additionally, Kynes points out many of the patriarchs and prophets challenge God, and they are not condemned for doing so. Kynes wonders, "if Job had not complained as he did, would he have been restored? Would the submissive Job of the prologue still be sitting in the ash heap?"⁴² Thus, he claims that though Christian interpreters may oppose Job's manner of asking for justice, "Job is not wrong to ask, even to complain."⁴³ Kynes claims that, just as Job's friends do, "Christian interpreters also fall into the trap of defending God," despite the fact that this is explicitly condemned in the text.⁴⁴

Gustavo Gutiérrez, a prominent Peruvian theologian who is one of the founders of liberation theology, examines the story of Job in his book *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*. In the book, he aims to apply Job's lessons on innocent suffering to modern humanitarian crises in Latin America. Despite his Christian lens, he too aligns his conclusions

⁴¹ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, 34.

⁴² Kynes, "The Trials of Job," 190.

⁴³ Kynes, "The Trials of Job," 190.

⁴⁴ Kynes, "The Trials of Job," 190.

more closely with Laytner, describing Job as "a rebellious believer" whose "rebellion is against the suffering of the innocent, against a theology that justifies it, and even against the depiction of God that such a theology conveys."⁴⁵ In debating how we ought to speak of God today, Gutiérrez argues, "Job shows us a way with his vigorous protest, his...concrete commitment to the poor and all who suffer unjustly, his facing up to God, and his acknowledgement of the gratuitousness that characterizes God's plan for human history."⁴⁶

Greenstein takes a unique perspective. He argues that whether or not Job is correct in his accusations is completely irrelevant. What matters is that he speaks his own individual truth instead of following the example of his friends, who "have rejected any new thinking in favor of traditional norms."⁴⁷ Job's speaking out is what justifies him to God, as in the speeches from the whirlwind God "stand[s] up for one value, the value that has been classically exemplified by Job—the value of speaking truthfully, with unalloyed integrity, the integrity that had marked Job as different from other people at the beginning of the book."⁴⁸ In Greenstein's view, it is not what Job says that is important—it is the fact that he says it, and speaks truthfully from his own experience.

Kovalishyn argues that the writers of the New Testament do not actually posit suffering in silence as the ideal at all. In citing as examples the prophets and Job, she argues, James proves that he does not expect his audience to suffer in silence, because none of the examples that he cites did so.⁴⁹ Yet, James draws the distinction that while Job and the prophets "engaged in the process of discerning the purposes of God...the audience *has seen* it," as they know of God's

⁴⁵ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 14.

⁴⁶ Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 102.

⁴⁷ Edward Greenstein, "Truth or Theodicy? Speaking Truth to Power in the Book of Job," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 27, no. 3 (2006): 258.

⁴⁸ Greenstein, "Truth or Theodicy? Speaking Truth to Power in the Book of Job," 258.

⁴⁹ Kovalishyn, "Endurance unto Salvation: The Witness of First Peter and James," 237.

mercy and can anticipate the Parousia.⁵⁰ They are as Job would be if Job knew that his reward was nigh.

So, on one side, some Christian scholars condemn Job's complaints, claiming that acceptance of and rejoicing in suffering are the appropriate responses; on the other side, some Christian scholars argue that Job's complaints, and examples of Laytner's law-court prayer pattern in general, are allowed and even encouraged in both the Jewish and the Christian tradition. To further investigate the debate between these two sides, it would be useful to select a Christian text on which to test these two theses—preferably one from the gospels, as Christianity's commitment to Jesus' sinlessness means that whatever response he has to innocent suffering must be a pious one.⁵¹ Most useful would be a scene in which a comparison between Job and Jesus would be clear. A particularly pertinent moment for this comparison comes at the "cry of dereliction" in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. In these passages, Jesus utters his final words from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This cry raises troubling questions that are echoed in the text of Job: "Can a God who forsook this Son [or any righteous person] be trusted as just?"⁵² What is the significance of innocent suffering? What is the faithful response to it? Because of these similar questions and themes, the cry of dereliction is a suitable gospel text to compare to the book of Job. Comparing Jesus' and Job's responses to innocent suffering can clarify whether traditional Christian criticisms of the book of Job have been appropriate.

⁵⁰ Kovalishyn, "Endurance unto Salvation: The Witness of First Peter and James," 237.

⁵¹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*, vol. 2, 2 vols., The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1994), 1049.

⁵² Paul Sevier Minear, "The Messiah Forsaken . . . Why," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 17, no. 1 (June 1995): 63.

THE CONTEXT OF THE CRY OF DERELICTION

The cry of dereliction (or “abandonment”) occurs in Matthew and Mark. Mark, the shortest and probably earliest of the gospels, was produced around 70 C.E., likely by a Greek-speaking Christian outside of Palestine.⁵³ If one follows the widely-accepted Two Source Hypothesis, Mark was one of two major sources used by the authors of Matthew and Luke to produce their gospels. Thus, Matthew was probably produced later, around 80-85 C.E., by an author in a similar situation to that of Mark.⁵⁴ (Despite the uncertain authorship of the gospels, we will again continue to call their authors by the names of their books for the sake of simplicity.) In both of these gospels, the cry of dereliction constitutes Jesus’ last words. In total, there are seven phrases spread across the four gospels that Jesus is reported to have said during the Passion narrative.⁵⁵ The cry of dereliction is the only one of these seven that occurs in more than one gospel.⁵⁶ The cry is transliterated from the original Aramaic as well as translated into Greek.⁵⁷ The phrase is a reference to Psalm 22, sometimes called the “passion psalm” due to this reference and the close similarities between the events of Psalm 22 and the death and resurrection of Jesus.⁵⁸ While some hypothesize that “Jesus merely cried out in a loud voice, and the church (in the form of the Markan evangelist) placed Psalm 22’s first line in his mouth,”⁵⁹ this is impossible to prove, and thus this paper will address this passage without attempting to investigate its historicity.

⁵³ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 118.

⁵⁴ Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 147.

⁵⁵ Ryszard Zawadzki, “The Prayer of Jesus on the Cross,” *Verbum Vitae* 22 (2012): 94.

⁵⁶ Zawadzki, “The Prayer of Jesus on the Cross,” 101.

⁵⁷ The transliteration preserves mixed forms of Aramaic and MT Hebrew; see Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1051.

⁵⁸ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1455.

⁵⁹ Rebekah Eklund, “Jesus Laments (or Does He?): The Witness of the Fourfold Gospel,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 72, no. 3–4 (August 2014): 7.

Before analyzing the cry of dereliction in detail, it is important to acknowledge its absence in Luke and John, and to compare it to what appears in those books. Recent scholarship has focused less on deciding which of the final words of Jesus are historically accurate,⁶⁰ instead honing in on the way in which the words that are chosen are "reflections of the evangelists' particular theological emphases."⁶¹ In Luke, the reference to Psalm 22 is substituted by a reference to Psalm 31, and Jesus says "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). In changing this reference from the one made in Mark, Luke emphasizes that Jesus, "as a prophet...knew that this had to happen,"⁶² in contrast to Mark and Matthew who choose to emphasize Jesus' agony in his final moments. In John, Jesus only says "It is finished" in the moment before his death (John 19:30). The striking differences between Matthew and Mark's portrayal of the death of Jesus and those of the other gospels emphasize their thematic differences and make the cry of dereliction a somewhat controversial passage.

One of the major debates surrounding the cry of dereliction is whether it should be called a cry of dereliction at all. Is Jesus really abandoned by God on the cross? And, perhaps more importantly, does Jesus *feel* that he has been abandoned? Pertinent to this issue is whether one considers Jesus' words in isolation or within the context of the rest of Psalm 22. While the psalm begins with "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" the rest of the psalm proves that the innocent sufferer is not actually forsaken—in verse 21 the psalmist's tone shifts; he no longer cries out to God for deliverance but instead celebrates being redeemed by God:

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.
I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
You who fear the Lord, praise him!...

⁶⁰ Some, however, do maintain that the cry of dereliction should be treated as the "only authentic cry from the cross" due to the widely accepted notion of Markan priority, see Eklund, "Jesus Laments (or Does He)?" 7.

⁶¹ Eklund, "Jesus Laments (or Does He)?" 4.

⁶² Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 163.

For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him (Psalm 22:21-24).

Because of the way in which this psalm seems to mirror the Passion narrative, many scholars maintain that Jesus' cry is in fact a reference to the entire psalm, and thus is not a cry of dereliction after all—it is in fact “a confession of faith and trust in ultimate vindication.”⁶³ Some maintain that Jesus actually recited the entirety of Psalm 22 from the cross,⁶⁴ since “citing the first words of a text was, in the tradition of the time, a way of identifying an entire passage.”⁶⁵ Others maintain that the connection was merely implied, and readers can supply the context of Psalm 22 based on their prior knowledge while reading the text.⁶⁶ In these interpretations, the cry of dereliction is not really one of dereliction at all—it is one of redemption and victory.

Yet there are also scholars who maintain that the cry of dereliction is just that—the cry of one who feels utterly abandoned. Brown points out that many Christians, “from the early Church Fathers to contemporary scholars and preachers... have resisted the surface import that would have Jesus expressing the sentiment of being forsaken by God.”⁶⁷ Some scholars maintain that Luke's use of Psalm 31 instead of Psalm 22 “seems to reveal a bias or a trajectory away from a lamenting Jesus in the earliest Christian tradition”⁶⁸ and that “the tone of despondency is probably what caused Luke not to copy this psalm prayer from Mark and to substitute a much more positive psalm prayer.”⁶⁹ Yet, Yocum points out, “while this is possible, there seems to be no evidence for such a development, beyond the fact that the two later gospels do not contain the

⁶³ Robert Holst, “Cry of Dereliction: Another Point of View,” *Springfielder* 35, no. 4 (March 1972): 286; see also R.E.O. White, “That ‘Cry of Dereliction’ ...?,” *The Expository Times* 113, no. 6 (March 1, 2002): 188–89, <https://doi.org/10.1177/001452460211300604>.

⁶⁴ Holst, “Cry of Dereliction,” 287.

⁶⁵ James Luther Mays, “Prayer and Christology: Psalm 22 as Perspective on the Passion,” *Theology Today* 42, no. 3 (October 1985): 322.

⁶⁶ White, “That ‘Cry of Dereliction’ ...?” 189.

⁶⁷ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1047.

⁶⁸ Eklund, “Jesus Laments (or Does He)?” 8.

⁶⁹ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1049.

cry.”⁷⁰ Brown claims that Christian scholars might be wary about interpreting the cry in a way that implies that Jesus feels abandoned by God because of Jesus’ assertions elsewhere in the gospels that he has “untroubled communion with God.”⁷¹ This connection would imply a total awareness of God’s intent that should prevent Jesus from feeling abandoned. Yet, Brown maintains, if Mark wanted to convey Jesus as giving a message of victory, he would have chosen a quotation from Psalm 22 that clearly conveys that message, as in other references to scripture he is more direct.⁷² Balthasar maintains that the cry “should not be read as if it implied everything that followed in that psalm, right up to the point of the vindication of the sufferer by God.”⁷³ In these interpretations, the cry of dereliction is aptly named, and is an earnest cry from a Jesus who feels truly abandoned.

As well as being appealing due to its simplicity, this second interpretation is also more strongly implied in the text. One key piece of evidence that seems to support this reading is the way in which Jesus speaks his final words. It is clear that in Matthew and Mark, Jesus lacks the composure on the cross that is characteristic of him in the other two gospels, particularly in John. In John, he converses with the beloved disciple and his mother, asks for a drink, and says his final words—there is no description of how they were said, so one is left to assume it was without extreme distress (John 19:26-27; 19:28; 19:30). In Luke, Jesus is calm enough to ask God to forgive his tormentors and speak to the criminal beside him, before at last he says his final words, “crying out with a loud voice” (Luke 23:34; 23:43; 23:46). In conveying his forsakenness, Jesus also “cried out with a loud voice” or “screamed with a loud cry”⁷⁴ in Mark

⁷⁰ John Yocum, “A Cry of Dereliction?: Reconsidering a Recent Theological Commonplace,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 1 (January 2005): 75.

⁷¹ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1049.

⁷² Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1049.

⁷³ Yocum, “A Cry of Dereliction?” 76.

⁷⁴ Zawadzki, “The Prayer of Jesus on the Cross,” 103.

and Matthew (Mark 15:34; compare Matthew 27:46). Yet in these two gospels, there is no other dialogue from the cross besides the cry of dereliction—and this difference is stark. In Matthew, Jesus lets out another wordless scream before dying (Matthew 27:50). The violence inherent in the image of a scream—one let out without any calmer words spoken beforehand to mitigate its impact — makes the argument that Jesus' cry was actually one of victory seem implausible in context.

Another particularly relevant detail in the cry of dereliction is Jesus' use of "my God." This stands in contrast to the rest of the gospels of Matthew and Mark, where Jesus frequently refers to God as "father." Zawadzki maintains that this use of "my God" instead of "my father" shows Jesus' identification with the suffering humanity.⁷⁵ It also demonstrates a certain level of alienation from God, as, "Feeling forsaken as if he were not being heard, [Jesus] no longer presumes to speak intimately to the All-Powerful as 'Father' but employs the address common to all human beings, 'My God.'"⁷⁶ This seems to indicate a real alienation from God that would be absent if Jesus were letting out a cry of victory.

Boring presents a nuanced view on the cry of dereliction, in which readers *can* examine the cry within the context of Psalm 22, but "the Matthean Jesus should not be pictured as merely reciting the opening line for an outline of salvation history. The human Jesus is pictured as dying with a cry of anguish and abandonment on his lips."⁷⁷ This is the view that the remainder of this paper will take, as it allows for both sides of the argument to contribute to the conversation; while the context of Psalm 22 can certainly provide an interesting lens through which to examine

⁷⁵ Zawadzki, "The Prayer of Jesus on the Cross," 104.

⁷⁶ Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 1046.

⁷⁷ Eugene Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *New Testament Articles, Matthew, and Mark*, vol. 8, 12 vols., *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 492.

the Passion narrative, it should not be assumed that this was inarguably or even probably the intent of the author, and thus one is inclined to defer to the simpler option: Jesus meant what he said when he cried to God, "why have you forsaken me?"

THE CRY OF DERELICTION AND APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO INNOCENT SUFFERING

The cry of dereliction posits a unique condoned response to innocent suffering in the Christian theological tradition. It directly contradicts the idea of a Jesus who is utterly silent in the face of his pain, on which Paul based his assertions about the appropriate response to innocent suffering.⁷⁸ It also creates tension between the Passion narrative and the instructions presented in James and maintained by traditional Christian interpreters on how one ought to respond to innocent suffering. This section will examine these tensions, aiming to discover whether they can be reconciled. As summarized in Section 3, James gives three primary instructions to Christians who are suffering: to be patient and endure; to rejoice in suffering, knowing that endurance will result in exultation; and to pray.

The first two instructions offered by James are echoed in Jesus' own teachings. Jesus tells his followers, "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, and for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12; compare Luke 6:22-23). Yet, one might argue, Jesus is hardly rejoicing in his suffering when he utters the cry of dereliction. This seems to indicate a conflict between what Jesus instructs his

⁷⁸ Volf points out that Paul could not take this into account because he was likely unaware of the gospel accounts (as his works were probably produced earlier). Additionally, Volf argues that it is possible that, even if Paul was aware of the cry of dereliction from the oral tradition, he might have taken "the lesson of it from what followed after the cry of dereliction rather than the cry of dereliction itself." Unfortunately, Volf did not have time to expand upon this point extensively in the lecture. See Volf, "Vanquishing Suffering: Apostle Paul and the Victory Over Suffering," 12:00.

followers to do (to rejoice in suffering) and what he himself does (cry out to God and lament his forsakenness). Yet, one could also argue that this is not a contradiction at all. The remainder of this paper will argue that both more traditional Christian perspectives and those that are aligned with Laytner can co-exist as canonically condoned responses to innocent suffering.

To begin, a simple question must be asked: what does it mean to rejoice in suffering? Jesus tells his followers that persecution is a sign of blessedness (Matthew 5:11, Luke 6:22). The instruction to rejoice in the face of persecution is heavily based on the anticipation of a future reward; in Matthew Jesus says "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven," (Matthew 5:12) and in Luke he says "Rejoice in that day [when you are persecuted] and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven" (Luke 6:23). One should rejoice in suffering because it is a sign that they are blessed and because it will bring them to their heavenly reward, *not* because suffering is sacred or desirable in itself. Because of this, one could argue that a pious Christian can rejoice in the blessedness that leads to their suffering *while simultaneously asking God for deliverance from that suffering*, since suffering itself is not inherently sacred, blessed, or desirable. It is in this nuance that one can find space to allow for a more Laytner-aligned view to co-exist with the instruction to rejoice in suffering.

The final instruction which James gives to his readers is to pray in the midst of innocent suffering. He does not specify what these prayers should contain. One could argue, based on the cry of dereliction, that this instruction leaves room for prayers that are complaints and requests for deliverance. Mays claims that in the cry of dereliction, Jesus "gives all his followers who are afflicted permission and encouragement to pray for help. He shows that faith includes holding

the worst of life up to God."⁷⁹ With this in mind, could James' instruction allow for prayers that fit the pattern of Laytner's law-court prayers?

One question is particularly relevant in this discussion: does the cry of dereliction itself qualify as a law-court prayer? Unfortunately, this single line does not provide enough of a structured argument to see whether it matches up with Laytner's pattern. But it is worthwhile to examine whether the *intentions* underlying the cry of dereliction are similar to those that Laytner argues are at the heart of this pattern. To do so, it is useful to return to the definition which Laytner offers for the law-court pattern of prayer, which he describes as "an authentic Jewish form of prayer that, though *rooted in deep faith*, nevertheless *calls God to task for His lapses of duty which result in suffering and injustice* [emphasis added]."⁸⁰ Many scholars who analyze the cry of dereliction describe it as a lament. Lament is defined as "a form of speech directed toward God that *presumes a God who keeps promises*, and *calls upon that God to keep those promises in the midst of distress* [emphasis added]."⁸¹ One can see immediately the similarity between this definition of lament and Laytner's explanation of the intent of the law-court prayer: both present to God a call to action, rooted in deep faith in God's justice. Daniel argues that the cry of dereliction is "the lament to end all laments and lamenting."⁸² Jesus' *protest* in the face of apparent abandonment is a key part of the Passion narrative and constitutes a radical act of faith and trust—one that closely mirrors that of the figures of the Hebrew Bible who similarly demand justice from God in Laytner's analysis. This trust is implied in the cry itself—even if Jesus does not address God as Father, "he still addresses his lament to God, and as 'My God.'"⁸³

⁷⁹ Mays, "Prayer and Christology," 323.

⁸⁰ Laytner, *Arguing with God*, xv.

⁸¹ Eklund, "Jesus Laments (or Does He)?" 9; Daniel provides a similar definition: F Harry Daniel, "Where Is God?: Matthew's Passion Narrative and the Triune God," *Journal for Preachers* 24, no. 2 (2001): 34.

⁸² Daniel, "Where Is God?" 34.

⁸³ Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," 492.

There are some obvious limitations to this argument. Laytner focuses particularly on the structure of the law-court prayer, which cannot be applied to this single line. Additionally, Laytner highlights that many examples of this pattern are based on appeals to the covenant, which is not mentioned explicitly in the cry of dereliction.⁸⁴ Yet the connection between the intentions at the heart of the law-court prayer and the cry of dereliction is enough to assert that calling for God to take action in the face of innocent suffering cannot be condemned on principle by Christian scholars, as is common practice when they examine Job. If these scholars condemn Job simply because he protests, they are condemning Jesus, too.

CONCLUSION: JESUS AND JOB

The previous section established the possibility of an intermediate position between Christian scholars aligned with James and those aligned with Laytner, asserting that it is possible simultaneously to rejoice in suffering as a sign of blessedness and to cry out to God for deliverance from that suffering. If the cry of dereliction adds this nuance to Christian views of appropriate responses to innocent suffering, one is inclined to ask: what does this mean for Christian interpretations of Job? To begin, it casts doubt on interpretations in which Job is condemned merely for crying out in his suffering, such as those of Luther and Barth. If Jesus, the obvious moral exemplar of the Christian faith, can cry out to God in his suffering, then others who suffer innocently (including Job) should not be condemned for doing the same. Additionally, Job should not be condemned for failing to rejoice in his suffering. Because the instruction to rejoice in suffering is so heavily based on the promise of a heavenly reward, it seems inappropriate to extend it to Job, who in his Hebrew Bible context had little reason to anticipate the Parousia or even a reward after death (see, for example, Job 14:10).

⁸⁴ The covenantal relationship *is* implied, however, in the wider context of Psalm 22; see Psalm 22:4.

Yet Job is not left without criticism from a Christian point of view, even when one takes the cry of dereliction into account. Even though Jesus protests, he accuses God of abandoning him, not of actively harming him. In contrast, as established in Section 2, Job claims that God is actively harming him and has become Job's enemy. Even at the peak of his suffering, Jesus never goes so far as to accuse God of this. Thus, while Christian scholars cannot condemn Job for crying out for justice, they can condemn passages in which he takes this extra step and accuses God of actively attacking him.

In conclusion, James' use of Job as an exemplar of patience has raised many questions, leading Christian scholars to attempt to mitigate Job's often-impatient nature in the canonical book with this high praise. Despite wanting to portray Job as blameless, however, many Christian interpreters have found fault with him based on broader Christian views of the causes of and appropriate responses to innocent suffering. Many condemn him simply for demanding justice from God. In contrast, Anson Laytner's analysis of the law-court prayer pattern promotes Job as a prime example of traditionally Jewish argument with God that is present and condoned throughout much of the Hebrew Bible. Some Christian scholars align themselves with Laytner's view, arguing that Job's complaints are justified and encouraged. The cry of dereliction has provided a test case on which to debate whether the appropriate response to innocent suffering is rejoicing or protest. While the cry of dereliction seems to conflict with Jesus' teachings to rejoice in suffering, this difference can be reconciled if one remembers that a person can simultaneously rejoice in the blessing that has led to their suffering *and* ask God for deliverance from that suffering, since suffering in itself is presented as neither sacred nor desirable. While James gives little specificity in his encouragement to innocent sufferers to pray, one can argue that Laytner's law-court pattern of prayer is permitted within this instruction, especially with the cry of

dereliction as context. Therefore, while some Christian criticisms of Job are justifiable, Job cannot be condemned simply for speaking out in the midst of his suffering due to the influence of the cry of dereliction.

Bibliography

- Boring, Eugene. "The Gospel of Matthew: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." In *New Testament Articles, Matthew, and Mark*, 8:87–505. The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1994.
- Daniel, F Harry. "Where Is God?: Matthew's Passion Narrative and the Triune God." *Journal for Preachers* 24, no. 2 (2001): 33–36.
- Dibelius, Martin. *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*. Edited by Helmut Koester and Heinrich Greeven. Translated by Michael A. Williams. 11th ed. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1976.
- Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 6th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Eklund, Rebekah. "Jesus Laments (or Does He?): The Witness of the Fourfold Gospel." *The Covenant Quarterly* 72, no. 3–4 (August 2014): 3–18.
- Fine, Hillel A. "Tradition of a Patient Job." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74, no. 1 (March 1955): 28–32.
- Gray, Patrick. "Points and Lines: Thematic Parallelism in the Letter of James and the Testament of Job." *New Testament Studies* 50, no. 3 (July 2004): 406–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688504000232>.
- Greenstein, Edward. "Truth or Theodicy? Speaking Truth to Power in the Book of Job." *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 27, no. 3 (2006): 238–58.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Hartin, Patrick J. "Call to Be Perfect through Suffering (James 1,2-4): The Concept of Perfection in the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount." *Biblica* 77, no. 4 (1996): 477–92.
- Holst, Robert. "Cry of Dereliction: Another Point of View." *Springfielder* 35, no. 4 (March 1972): 286–89.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Letter of James*. Vol. 37 A. The Anchor Bible. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995.

- Kaminsky, Joel S. "Would You Impugn My Justice? A Nuanced Approach to the Hebrew Bible's Theology of Divine Recompense." *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 69, no. 3 (July 2015): 299–310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020964315578207>.
- Kovalishyn, Mariam Kamell. "Endurance unto Salvation: The Witness of First Peter and James." *Word & World* 35, no. 3 (2015): 231–40.
- Kynes, Will. "The Trials of Job: Relitigating Job's 'Good Case' in Christian Interpretation." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 66, no. 2 (May 2013): 174–91. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930613000045>.
- Laytner, Anson. *Arguing with God: A Jewish Tradition*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1990.
- Mays, James Luther. "Prayer and Christology: Psalm 22 as Perspective on the Passion." *Theology Today* 42, no. 3 (October 1985): 322–31.
- Minear, Paul Sevier. "The Messiah Forsaken . . . Why." *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 17, no. 1 (June 1995): 62–83.
- Nutt, Roger W. "Providence, Wisdom, and the Justice of Job's Afflictions: Considerations from Aquinas' Literal Exposition on Job." *Heythrop Journal* 56, no. 1 (January 2015): 44–66.
- Pope, Marvin H. *Job*. 3rd ed. Vol. 15. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1974.
- Seitz, Christopher. "The Patience of Job in the Epistle of James." In *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte: Festschrift Für Klaus Baltzer Zum 65 Geburtstag*, edited by Rüdiger Bartelmus, Thomas Krüger, and Helmut Utzschneider, 373–82. Fribourg, Switzerland: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993.
- Volf, Miroslav. "Vanquishing Suffering: Apostle Paul and the Victory Over Suffering." Biola University Center for Christian Thought. March 25, 2019, video, 30:41, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9ReIIVDEG0>.
- White, R.E.O. "That 'Cry of Dereliction' ...?" *The Expository Times* 113, no. 6 (March 1, 2002): 188–89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001452460211300604>.
- Yocum, John. "A Cry of Dereliction?: Reconsidering a Recent Theological Commonplace."
- Zawadzki, Ryszard. "The Prayer of Jesus on the Cross." *Verbum Vitae* 22 (2012): 93–110.

UCLA Journal of Religion

Volume no. 5 (2021)

If you are a current undergraduate student or recent graduate who would like to publish their work, the UCLA Journal of Religion is looking for you!

Qualifications

Must be an undergraduate student or alumnus who has graduated in the past year. No previously published material will be considered. Open to submissions currently under peer-review for other journals. The author must notify the UCLA Journal of Religion immediately if the work will be published elsewhere.

Submissions

- ◆ **Format:** Word (.doc/.docx files) or Adobe/PDF document (.pdf files) – NO INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE AUTHOR IN BODY OF THE WORK. Submissions are blindly reviewed and will not be accepted if the author's name is anywhere on the document (this includes margins).
- ◆ **Title page:** Should include author's full name, institution, year, major, and a history of the manuscript (e.g. course for which the paper was written, derived from senior thesis, presentation of the manuscript etc.). Note: the title page is the only place where the author's name must appear.
- ◆ **Style:** Any standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.) is permitted for submission, but accepted manuscripts must conform to Chicago Style with footnotes. The author must undertake this revision should it be necessary. Submissions must be in English.
- ◆ **Length:** Submissions should be approximately 10-15 pages, but there is no minimum or maximum length; honors theses are especially encouraged.
- ◆ **Abstract and keywords:** Please include a 150-word abstract and 5-7 keywords.
- ◆ **Editing:** If your submission is accepted, we may require you to edit it before publication, according to suggestions by the editorial board.
- ◆ **Submission:** When the call is open, please email your document files (submissions will include 2 documents: the main paper and separate title page) to uclareligionjournal@gmail.com. There is no submission fee. Please email questions to Professor Ryan Gillespie at rgillespie@ucla.edu.

You will be notified when your submission is received, as well as if it is rejected or accepted. For more information — including call dates and deadlines — please visit our website.

[UCLA Journal of Religion Website](#)

————— CENTER FOR THE —————
STUDY OF RELIGION