Rosen created and donated 18 outdoor sculptural installations in bronze and stone, to be found in Montreal and Toronto. Each of his sculptures exemplifies a positive uplifting message.

The Connection – La Connexion, “L'un Pour L'autre” is at the Segal Centre for Performing Arts, Montreal, Quebec and portrays Rosen’s belief that “We Need Each Other”.

The sculpture featured on the cover of this issue of Canons is by Harry Rosen, 1929-2018. Professor Emeritus, McGill University, Faculty of Dentistry

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Special thanks to the Faculty of Religious Studies and the Religious Studies Undergraduate Society for enabling us to publish this journal.

Cover image by local Montreal photographer Ezra Soiferman.
CANONS
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Volume XVIII: Unity

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Assistance Provided By
The Dean of Arts Development Fund

The Religious Studies Undergraduate Society

The School of Religious Studies
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

I’d like to first thank you for picking up this journal and, in turn, supporting all of the work that the authors and editors have put into this. Canons has been published at McGill since 2004, and it is because of your continued interest that we are able to bring this, the eighteenth edition, to you.

This year, our chosen theme is “unity,” which we believe is important in the study of religion. This term can be interpreted in many ways which suits this edition’s collection of writings, as we have entries from the Western and Eastern traditions as well as from the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. These entries are unified by their collective reflection on the way that religion penetrates everyday life, even in the secular sector. Without unity, many of us in the department would not have had the opportunities that we have to learn about different religions and their respective cultures. This edition truly showcases those opportunities.

I believe that the cover art for this year fits well with our theme as it truly embodies the feeling of unity that we are trying to exhibit. The sculpture was made by the late Harry Rosen, a former McGill professor in the Faculty of Dentistry. I would like to thank both him and his wife, Delores Rosen, for this beautiful piece of art.

I also wish to acknowledge the Dean of Arts Development Fund, the School of Religious Studies, and the Religious Studies Undergraduate Society for their assistance in publishing this journal. It is also necessary for me to recognize the dedication of my editorial board in both the selection and editing processes and for bearing with me while I got the hang of this Editor-in-Chief thing.

I hope you all enjoy these entries as much as I have!

Margaux Cazaban
Editor-in-Chief
ABOUT US

MARGAUX CAZABAN (editor-in-chief) is a U4 student at McGill University working towards a major in World Religions and a minor in Hispanic Studies. She is fascinated by religions and their ability to bring people together and hopes that her current studies and future work will reflect a goal of greater understanding and increased communication between religions. In her free time, she enjoys baking for family and friends.

KRISTINE BERTRAM (layout editor) is a U2 student completing a Joint Honours degree in World Religions and Art History. Captivated by the intersection between these two fields, she is most interested in how immaterial religious realities are captured and expressed in the material world through artistic means. In her spare time, she reads apocalyptic literature and tells her friends to buy Bitcoin before it’s too late.

LUCAS GARRETT (associate editor) is a U3 student in Anthropology and World Religions. Endlessly fascinated by the signs and symbols through which we navigate our lives, Lucas spends his days crafting snappy essay titles and working backwards from there. His dream is to advocate for the rights of the unseen-but-not-unknown in matters of ecological justice.

ALLEGRA MENDELSON (associate editor) is a U2 student currently pursuing a double major in Economics and World Religions. She enjoys learning about the intersection of religion and politics, particularly with regards to democratisation and human rights. She is passionately averse to anything orange.

ALANNA MOORE (associate editor) studies World Religions and Cultural Studies. She focuses on the study of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and is fascinated by the ways in which these religions continue to persevere in secular, individualistic societies. She loves finding the religious undertones in modern music, literature and film. Alanna is also the President of Religious Studies Undergraduate Society.

EMMA PADDOCK (associate editor) is a U3 student about to graduate with an Honours degree in Western Religions. Minoring in the Social Studies of Medicine, she is interested in the intersection of religion, politics, and decisions regarding health and healthcare. In her free time she enjoys cooking for and with friends and going dancing. Her goals after graduation include having a stable income and not stagnating.

DANICA SMITH (associate editor) is a U3 student currently pursuing a double major in History and World Religions and a minor in Political Science. She is interested in the study of ancient Israel, particularly its relationship with other Near Eastern civilizations, redaction history of the Bible, and early Christianity. She enjoys reading and writing poetry in her free time, as well as collecting books for her future home library.
ow can religious differences stop putting communities against each other? Are people who belong to different religious affiliations and beliefs inevitably prone to loathe one another? Due to the rise in globalized religious diversity, countries are no longer entirely culturally homogenous and the issues arising from such are abundant. Religion is increasingly perceived as necessary in the public sphere in order to solve the myriad of problems which silence and ignorance foster.

The focus of this research paper is to analyze the role education has on religions and beliefs in public schools. It will question how interreligious education enables a civil interaction between different religious and non-religious groups and why religion is difficult to include in school curriculum and how, in turn, does such lack of education allows violent extremism to spread.

Firstly, I claim that education on all religious and non-religious views not only is a prerequisite for a democratic society in which religious diversity thrives but it is also a substantial component of a child’s socialization process in order to avert attraction to violent extremism. Then, I posit that there are challenges to the implementation of religious education in schools. Respecting
universal human rights is a difficult task, especially in the context of trying to find academic approaches which promote tolerance. In this paper, I argue that education has a paramount role in promoting interreligious understanding. Such a role includes educating students on different religions and diverse beliefs. Doing so enables the right of religious freedom to operate properly and promote tolerance and respect which, in turn, decreases the probability of attraction towards violent extremism.

Mass murders, genocides and terrorist attacks which have been undertaken in the name of cultural or religious differences have shaped history, especially in the last two decades. In the aftermath of the horrendous happenings of 9/11, religious diversity has become increasingly understood as an issue that needs to be weathered. Open discussions about all religions foster knowledge, open-mindedness, mutual understanding, and tolerance. On the contrary, silence fosters ignorance which is conducive to stigmatization, discrimination, intolerance, and potential violent extremism.

Religious education is a means of making religious diversity an accepted and even relished component of the society. Education about the multifaceted aspects of communities is a prerequisite for mutual understanding. When religion become banned from schools, religious differences become perceived as problems. In order to foster a non-conflictual society, religious diversity needs to be visualized as an asset which enriches education and permits tolerance. Talking about these differences and studying the religious traditions in group brings forward respect. Michael A. Signer claims that when religion is discussed out loud within the public sphere, individuals utilize their senses which makes them aware of the potential prejudgments that they might have whereas “talking alone, unbridled with discipline cannot lead to respect”. Thus, individuals need to confront each other on the topic of all religions and beliefs in order to make religious diversity thrive. If knowledge about the confluence of different cultures is not passed down from generation to

generation, different groups will not understand that living together is possible.³

Religious and ethnic heterogeneity has always prevailed, and the traditional texts of the Abrahamic religions agree on the necessity to cohabit. Qur’an 49:13 introduces the notion of al-ta’aruf which can be translated into the “knowledge of one another”. Asma Afsaruddin claims that Qur’an 49:13 emphasizes the fundamental diversity amongst the population and the necessity to live in a tolerant spirit and according to morality.⁴ Likewise, Jewish traditions also promote the respect for religious diversity. As stipulated in the McGill Declaration on Judaism and Human Rights, the “right of each of the world’s religious, ethnic, and linguistics groups to preserve its unique cultural heritage” should be reemphasized.⁵ John Kerry asserts that even though traditional religions differ on major viewpoints, they still have “common denominators” which should be acknowledged in order to grasp the ultimate responsibilities human beings have toward one another.⁶ Thus, religious traditions can be used as ways to promote moral values intrinsic to all human beings, such as the cohabitation of religious diverse populations, without imposing particular worldviews.

Education about various religions and beliefs is a necessity in a democratic society committed to respect human rights. The Article 26 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights stipulates that “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, it shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all

⁵ McGill Declaration on Judaism and Human Rights, Declarations on Judaism and Human Rights, April 23, 1974.
nations, racial or religious groups.”

Pluralism depends on freedom of thought, conscience and religious freedom and is contingent on a well-functioning society which is conscious of its rights. Education permits to raise awareness about human rights, and pluralism is indirectly dependent on education. The latter is consequently a prerequisite for pluralism and religious diversity to operate in a democratic society.

Pluralism also depends on peaceful coexistence between individuals with different beliefs and religious affiliations. Violent extremism, that is a set of beliefs advocating for violence as a means to achieve radical ideological, religious and political aims, must be averted in order to enable individuals to flourish in culturally diverse societies. The education system plays a large role in a child’s socialization process. The growing individual learns how to interact with other peers and must therefore learn how to cooperate rather than fight with people not sharing one’s views. Besides implementing a necessary “zero tolerance to violence policy” within schools, the education system must act in a manner which does not permit violent extremism seeming attractive. Education does not aim to combat extremism directly but seeks to counter factors that lead to radicalization. The role of education in promoting literacy on diverse religions and beliefs is in itself a means to foster tolerance. The increased understanding about human rights hampers drivers of violent extremism to spread. When discussion about all religious affiliations and non-religious beliefs is fruitful, marginalization of minorities or stigmatization of certain religions is hindered. Interfaith dialogue at early ages in public schools, enables individuals to counter radical views from luring them into their nest and educational approaches may foster “learners’ resilience to violent extremism”.

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10 Ibid. 37.
12 Ibid. 22.
Religious education is not solely an academic subject per se. It must be understood as a broader edification aimed at developing conscious individuals prepared to live in a democratic society where human rights are protected and where violent extremism is averted. In Jackson’s words, grasping the multitude aspects of our rich world is substantial in our understanding of “democratic citizenship”. However, with religious education being inherently related to human rights, certain challenges threaten its effectiveness in promoting tolerance and mutual understanding.

Implementing religious education in schools poses important human rights issues. Some circumstances might arise where the promotion of one human right might threaten or violate another. Religious education needs to be sensitively approached in order to bring about interreligious understanding which is compatible with religious freedom. Four main obstacles to the efficient implementation of education on religions and beliefs include the freedom of expression, children’s and their parents’ rights, the rights of minorities, and a country’s duty to protect religious freedom.

Participating in any form of religious expression raises important controversies when undertaken in public areas such as schools. To compel students to participate in religious classes is a violation of human rights, states have enforced laws on the necessity of making these classes voluntary. Still, states disagree on the extent to which school and religion must be separated wherein religious freedom is concerned. The Supreme Court of the United States forbade religious classes even though they were voluntary in the McCollum case because they were deemed as a breach to the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause of the US Constitution. However, this still raises the issue of how to talk about religion in the public sphere. Important issues such as blasphemy, defamation and proselytization challenge the teachers’ capacity to educate about various religions and beliefs. Even

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though some actions may be involuntary, they can be serious cases for contempt regarding violations of human rights and especially religious freedom. The teaching must be undertaken in a neutral fashion. It should aim to broaden the knowledge of the students and not encourage approval of any of the religious or non-religious views.15

What is more, even though the teacher has a difficult task of disseminating “facts” or ideas for reflection, one’s experience and personal knowledge will necessarily shape the way the educational approach is framed. The information displayed will never be fully neutral nor impartial. However, David Basinger argues that this inevitable bias and subjective interpretation does not make religious education ineffective nor purposeless. If all individuals in these interactions understand and accept the fact that preconceptions are necessarily present in any form of dialogue, these unavertable preconceived views of the world can still enrich the mutual understanding.16 Such discussions are conducive to greater mutual understanding because students become aware of their differences and can therefore reflect upon those dissimilarities. They do not solely grasp facts about the other, they also deliberate on it.

Some exemptions may not be granted because of an unconscious (or conscious) bias toward the majority religion of the country. The “rule of reasonable accommodation,” that is the exemption from certain courses, may be applied when some families believe what is being taught is incompatible with their convictions.17 However, when it is not granted, not only is religious education in conflict with the parents’ rights but it also undermines the protection of the minority’s right. Students from minority communities in a country may feel stigmatized and marginalized and such is reinforced when religious education solely engages with the majority religion. In order to avoid the curtailment of minority rights, the government can intervene. The Irish government recently compelled schools to implement alternatives for religious

15 ODIHR, Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools, 21.
classes which solely offered education about Catholicism, the majority Irish religious affiliation.\textsuperscript{18} The government has a responsibility to protect individuals’ right to freedom of religion and conscience which necessitates it to intervene in certain cases; nonetheless, it also has a duty not to interfere with the diverse worldviews.\textsuperscript{19} Decisions about when intervention is necessary and when it is not can be utterly challenging. Government officials might curtail the religious freedom of some in order to protect that of others beyond what national legislation allows.

Countries often face dilemmas which make them embark on the wrong path. For instance, the Canadian Charter does not allow state-funding for specific private schools endorsing particular religions but allows public funding for religious institutions if all establishments benefit equally. Richard Moon claims that since the religious practices themselves are not hampered, this policy is not deemed to violate the freedom of religion and conscience of Canadian citizens.\textsuperscript{1} However, whether the provinces fund the religious schools or not implies different costs for the students which may be seen as a discriminatory approach. Another unfair practice is the Irish “baptism barrier.”\textsuperscript{2} The Catholic schools, largely outnumbering the other schools in Ireland, are allowed to offer preferential treatment for Catholic students. This policy has led parents to baptize their children even though they did not hold the same view as the Catholic church. By permitting this type of admission into school, the Irish government does not embrace the inclusiveness and diversity of its population.

Teaching about the myriad of religions and beliefs co-existing on the earth is thus challenging. The difficulty of this task can be summarized as follows: “Teaching about religions and beliefs should be sensitive, balanced, inclusive, non-doctrinal, impartial, and based on human rights principles

\textsuperscript{19} ODIHR, \textit{Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools}, 30.
\textsuperscript{1} Richard Moon, \textit{Freedom of conscience and religion}, (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2014), 173.
relating to freedom of religion or belief”.\textsuperscript{3} The complexity of transmitting knowledge about the worldviews should however, by no means, impede governments to promote religious education in public schools as a means to foster tolerance and mutual understanding. Individuals cannot endorse respect nor toleration if they do not understand the complex world which they share with their neighbors.

Interreligious dialogue and education are thus all-encompassing tasks which aim at creating solid individuals prone to cohabit in a civilized manner. When individuals are confronted with numerous beliefs and various religious understandings about the world already at the outset of their lives, they are more prone to cohabit in a violence-free manner in the long-term. Today, people know about the existence of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and the myriad of other religious affiliations and non-religious beliefs. However, they fail to grasp the importance of the history and the culture of their neighbors with whom they share the planet. People know about the what, why and where, yet contemporary issues urge us to raise awareness about the how and the why.

Religious education has a substantial role in re-introducing tolerance, mutual understanding and respect within human values. By fostering discussion about the religious diversity of the world, the population becomes acquainted with the implications of pluralism. The latter is a necessary component of democratic societies promoting universal human rights. Albeit religious education raises a slew of challenges regarding the respect of human rights of all, it must be recognized as essential in order to safeguard the rights of all individuals and the enticement to respect human dignity. Re-incorporating the Church, the Mosque, the Temple, and the Synagogue into our schools and encouraging dialogue on Humanism, Atheism and all of the different views on the world does not mean a regression into the past. On the contrary, it proves that we understand our modernity wherein we all must coexist in order to continue to flourish as an intrinsically diverse culture of human beings.

\textsuperscript{3} ODIHR, \textit{Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools}, 40.
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UNESCO. *Preventing violent extremism through education: a guide for policy makers.*
The Canadian government’s relationship with First Nations has evolved rapidly since the second half of the 20th century. Despite the adoption of a new Constitution in 1982 and the abolishment of assimilationist policies, the recent Canadian Supreme Court ruling in *Ktunaxa v. British Columbia* has called into question the effectiveness of the Canadian constitution in protecting Aboriginal rights and spirituality. In this essay, I argue that the SCC’s failure to recognize the Ktunaxa nation’s freedom of religion in *Ktunaxa v. British Columbia* rests on a biased Canadian legal language informed by Christocentric and Eurocentric conceptions of religion and land. This essay considers the Ktunaxa court case through two interrelated issues that hamper the proper protection of aboriginal spirituality in Canada: (I) the courts’ focus on “belief” and tangible sites and objects of worship and (II) the fundamentally different conceptions of land between Canadian courts and First Nations.

The Canadian government and United Nations’ increased focus on Aboriginal rights is a fairly recent phenomenon. At the international level, the largest development in Aboriginal rights has been the UN Declaration on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was ratified in 2007 and signed by Canada in 2010.¹ While many scholars have classified the UNDRIP as a remarkable advancement for Indigenous peoples worldwide, many have also been sceptical about its effectiveness at the domestic level due to its non-binding nature.² As we will soon see, in *Ktunaxa v. British Columbia* the UNDRIP ultimately proved ineffective in defending Ktunaxa interests, despite the nation’s appeal to the document.³

In Canada, Aboriginal title and land claims negotiations were only recognized in the early 1970s whereas distinct group rights for indigenous peoples were recognized in the Constitution Act of 1982.⁴ A Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples was established in 1991 and the governmental “duty to consult” was embraced in the first decade of the 21st century. This consultation doctrine legally obligates the state to consult and accommodate Indigenous communities affected by government projects. It however remains up to the courts to determine whether satisfactory consultation has taken place. In addition, Aboriginal right to self-government is protected under section 35 of the 1982 Constitution, a section commonly used by Aboriginal peoples to mount legal challenges on the grounds of religious freedom, although this has often been unsuccessful.⁵ (Shrubsole 67, Newman & al. 321).

The 2017 SCC *Ktunaxa v. British Columbia* ruling demonstrated that the constitutional protections ostensibly enjoyed by Aboriginal peoples in Canada can be largely ineffective due to contradictory Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal conceptions of land and religion. The *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia* case involved the development of a ski resort called the Jumbo Glacier on the Jumbo Valley—known as Mt. Qat’muk to the Ktunaxa—near the town of Invermere,

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² McFayden, "An Aboriginal Perspective on Canada's Human Rights 'Culture'”, 29.
⁴ Nicholas Shrubsole, "Religion, Land and Democracy in Canadian Indigenous-State Relations." University of Waterloo, 2013: 3.
⁵ Ibid., 67.
The Ktunaxa were opposed to any disturbance of the Qat’muk area as it is home to an important population of grizzly bears and to the Grizzly Bear Spirit, a central figure in Ktunaxa spirituality. The Ktunaxa nation argued that any disturbance of the land would drive the spirit away and would impact the religion and welfare of their community. The case was brought forward to the BC Supreme Court and then to the BC court of appeal in 2012, after two decades of consultations regarding accommodations for the construction of the resort. The Ktunaxa nation concluded that accommodation in any form would still impact the Grizzly Bear Spirit and that Qat’muk had to remain completely untouched. The case was overturned by the BC courts and brought forward to the Supreme Court of Canada, who also refused to recognize the claim. SCC Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin reemphasized that freedom of religion was restricted to “holding and manifesting beliefs” as held in the Constitution and that the construction of the resort did not affect the Ktunaxa’s right to belief.

Scholars have criticized Canadian constitutional conceptions of religion as having a Christian Eurocentric construction that is largely meaningless insofar as Aboriginal spirituality is concerned. Indigenous religion is defined as a global form of religiosity or spirituality associated with Indigenous peoples. Canadian religious laws tend to objectify belief and religion. Religious studies scholar Ronald Niezen refers to this as the “practical effect” of the law, which pushes it to seek a specified delineated basis for the application of religious rights. Courts hence tend to support claims only when they are readily identifiable through concrete sites and objects of worship and are supported by “demonstrable facts”. This clashes with the extended Aboriginal religious connection to the life inherent to forests, rivers, animals etc. Even traditional ways of life and daily activities

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Shrubsole, “The Impossibility of Indigenous Religious Freedoms.”
12 Ibid., 4.
such as hunting can be imbued with spiritual meaning. To quote Niezen again, this leads to “disjunctures between conceptual ideals of indigenous spirituality and the consequences of the law”. Indigenous religions are not exclusively associated with concrete sites and objects of reverence, as Christianity is. In the case of the Ktunaxa nation, the Grizzly Bear Spirit inhabits the whole of Qat’muk and is not located within a particular area.

While Aboriginal peoples in Canada are subject to protection of culture and maintain the right to self-government under Section 35 of the Constitution, their right to freedom of religion is located under section 2, which extends to all Canadian citizens. Section 2 defines religious freedom as freedom of conscience, religion and belief — but not spirituality. Because it is specifically the term “religion” that holds legal-political value, Aboriginal people seeking protection of their sacred lands must litigate using this constitutional language of religion and belief. This is inherently problematic for Aboriginal spirituality. The Ktunaxa nation recognized part of this issue and chose to omit the word belief in its court challenge, citing the UNDRIP, which, also omitting the word “belief”, states that: “Indigenous Peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies . . . and the right to access and privacy to their religious and cultural sites”. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, the UNDRIP remains a non-binding declaration and the Ktunaxa’s appeal to the document did not mean that the court had to accept its authority, which it did not. The Ktunaxa nation further stated that “our people care for the land, the land cares for our people”. It is the entirety of the land of Qat’muk that holds spiritual significance. Thus the well-being of the land is intrinsic to the well-being of the Ktunaxa nation, and vice versa.

It is clear that the Ktunaxa court challenge was not a mere issue of worship or belief. Nonetheless, the Ktunaxa nation was judged as a normal Canadian

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14 Ibid.
16 Shrubsole, “The Impossibility of Indigenous Religious Freedoms”.
18 Shrubsole, “The Impossibility of Indigenous Religious Freedoms.”
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
litigant under which the religious right to belief was considered. As Chief Justice McLachlin wrote, “with respect to the (Section 2) claim, the Ktunaxa stand in the same position as non-Aboriginal litigants”. The majority thus concluded that the Ktunaxa’s claim, which sought to protect the Grizzly Bear Spirit and the spiritual meaning associated with it, was beyond the scope of Section 2(a) and that the resort’s construction did not harm the Ktunaxa’s right to their belief in the Spirit. The presence of any material object associated with the Grizzly Bear Spirit on Qat’muk would undoubtedly have made the case entirely different.

The SCC’s ruling, informed by the Canadian constitution, analyzed the presence of the Grizzly Bear Spirit and Qat’muk as separate entities, leading to the conclusion that the resort’s construction did not harm the Ktunaxa nation’s freedom of belief. Differing Canadian and Aboriginal conceptions thus do not stop at the manifestation of concrete belief and worship. Canadian legislation has also been reluctant to acknowledge the link between land (in the absence of concrete sites or objects) and religion. While the connection between land and religion is central to Aboriginal spirituality, it is completely marginalized under Canadian law. The Canadian historical and legal conception of land is informed by Euro-Christian philosophy. In fact some scholars have argued that this land-person relationship was the most notable difference between Europeans and Indigenous peoples at the time of colonization. Europeans define their land-person relationship through the Christian creation story in which God ordered for man “to have dominion over every living thing”. Historically, this has provided a basis for the deprivation of land and power from indigenous communities. Conversely, Canadian indigenous communities share the belief that humans are a part of the cosmological order.

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Raymer, "Building Ski Resort on Sacred Land Not a Breach of Freedom of Religion: SCC."
25 Shrubsole, "Religion, Land and Democracy in Canadian Indigenous-State Relations",
22.
26 Ibid., 24.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
The Canadian state to this day tends to act on Indigenous rights only to the extent that they do not support claims to sovereignty or territory.\(^{29}\) This has had serious implications for the protection and preservation of indigenous religious traditions and their sacred spaces since they are so closely linked.\(^{30}\) Indigenous spirituality continues to be manifested not only on reserves but also on unceded territory. The loss of land title through colonisation has added a significant barrier to the protection of Indigenous sacred sites that continue to hold spiritual value, such as Qat’muk.\(^{31}\) These different understandings of land and religion as well as the history of colonization not only make Indigenous claims to protection of sacred natural sites a major legal challenge, they also lead to situations wherein non-Indigenous peoples are unable to recognize or understand these sacred sites.

This differing conception of land entailed a major legal problem in *Ktunaxa v. British Columbia*. The Ktunaxa nation had a spiritual claim over the land as it held major symbolic meaning to the community. But this claim was invalid because of the lack of an identifiable place or object of worship related to the Grizzly Bear Spirit. The Ktunaxa case demonstrated that Indigenous territorial claims couldn’t be based on religion solely. Indeed in the absence of an identifiable site or object of “belief”, the Ktunaxa nation would first have to claim sovereignty over the territory. Yet it is precisely because of the religious dimension of the land claim that the Ktunaxa nation was trialed through Section 2, which led to the conclusion that “belief” in the Grizzly Bear Spirit was not impaired, but only the spirit’s location, which amounts to the same thing for the Ktunaxa but not under Canadian law.\(^{32}\) While the Ktunaxa have the right to be consulted and accommodated regarding lands where there is no Aboriginal title under Section 35, they cannot invoke a religious connection to that title, as this goes under Section 2. This also means that the Ktunaxa cannot claim sacred connection to a land unless they prove dominion over this land, a problem points to the Eurocentric conception of land as humans’ “dominion”. Thus the final ruling was that the duty to consult and accommodate had been met under Section 35 and that freedom of religion was not violated under Section 2.\(^{33}\) Our Canadian

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\(^{31}\) Ibid., 321.

\(^{32}\) Shrubsole, “The Impossibility of Indigenous Religious Freedoms.”

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
legal language clearly fails to adequately understand and protect Aboriginal spirituality. The Constitution not only relies on an inherent connection between concrete sites and religion, but also relies on the Western Christian conception of land claims—that must be unrelated to religion in this case—. The reasoning behind this case reflects what we could qualify of loopholes within the constitution whereby the Ktunaxa are granted two fundamental constitutional rights which, when tried separately, annul each other as far as religious freedom is concerned. The Ktunaxa nation is rendered legally powerless because they cannot appeal to religious freedom; their “belief” in the Grizzly Bear Spirit was not encroached upon—only the location—yet in the absence of an identifiable site or object of worship, the court will not recognize the land claim solely based on religious grounds.

Beyond the Canadian courts’ unwillingness to modify their exclusivist conceptions of religion and land, one must also keep in mind that Indigenous peoples, beyond dealing with clashing cultures, also have limited resources with which to denounce religious freedom violations and are still in the process of recovering many lost religious traditions. 34 First Nations continue to face institutionalized racism in Canada and face challenges articulating their interests in a legal language that is antagonistic to their beliefs. The Canadian effort to “assimilate” Indigenous peoples only recently began to perish with the state’s adoption of neo-democratic liberal values. What the Ktunaxa v. British Columbia ruling demonstrated however is that these liberal democratic principles, including the 1982 Constitution, continue to be informed by the same philosophies as Canada’s old assimilationist policies: the supremacy of Eurocentric and Christocentric worldviews.

34 Smith, "Religion and Spirituality of Indigenous Peoples in Canada
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Many scholars have debated the nature, and meaning, of *hijra*. The term originates from Urdu culture and is primarily understood as designating individuals who are intersex in India.¹ In fact, Indian society refers to *hijras* as intersex, impotent and asexual: endowed with the power to confer blessings of fertility or curses of infertility upon others.² However, some *hijras* are neither hermaphrodites nor asexual. Some are castrated, while some remain predominantly male; some engage in homosexual relationships and others embrace asceticism and celibacy. Much of Indian society regards *hijras* as transvestites, however, to call them transvestites is reducing them to belonging only to a community who engages in cross-dressing. The great

majority of hijras disavow the male sex and identify as females, however, they cannot experience the menstruation or pregnancy cycles. This inventory demonstrates the difficulty of trying to accurately define hijras. It is also important not to try and explain their identity in terms specific to Western conceptions of sexuality and sexual orientation. The idea of sexual orientation itself was created by “cultural/social/historic forces that are irreducibly particular to a specific time and space.” For this reason, this paper will identify hijras as belonging to a ‘third gender’, born men but having special affinities for the female sex.

While examining people who identify as hijras, this paper will explore the presence of third-gendered individuals in traditional Hindu mythology and literature. However, through British colonialism and globalization, this context is trumped by hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity, that are also present in Hindu religious traditions. As a result, hijras are forced to engage in sex work and are victims of intense discrimination, as well as violence in regards to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Although improvements have been made within national and international policies regarding hijras, the final section of this paper will look at their important limitations. The case of the hijras of India is extremely relevant as it inscribes into a wider discussion on gender equality, human rights and religion. Throughout this paper, terms such as transvestism, transsexualism or intersex will be used in accordance with the sources used to support the arguments presented in this essay.

Hindu Mythology and Traditional Roles of Hijra through Time

Eighty percent of Indians practice Hinduism. Rajesh Sampath argues that it has “infused Indian culture with a mythological diversity that has normalized multiple gender identities.” Indeed, there is a prominent theme in Hindu literature about sexual ambiguity, transvestism and sex/gender transsexualism. Many of these myths have been passed on among hijras through oral traditions, and although many of them do not know the content of

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4 Stief, “The Sexual Orientation and Gender Presentation of Hijras”, 73.
these myths specifically, they gain great pride and legitimacy from these references.⁶ In contrast, today, *hijras* are discriminated and portrayed as deviant because of their divergence to heteronormative practices of marriage, procreation and gender.⁷ The myths of Lord Rama and the goddess Bahuchara Mata will bear witness to the presence of third-sex individuals in ancient Hindu texts.

In the first myth Lord Rama went into exile for fourteen years and implored his people, “men and women”, to go back and perform their duties and leave him be. When Rama returned from exile, he found a cluster of people still gathered at the edge of the riverbank, since they did not identify with either sex.⁸ For this act of devotion, Rama blessed them. This myth is referenced to justify *hijras’* position in society and to “allude to possible rewards for their sufferings.”⁹ *Hijras* see themselves in these individuals who were neither man nor woman who waited on the riverbank. The second myth concerns Buhuchara Mata, a goddess that is worshiped by *hijras* for being their protector and spiritual guide.¹⁰ Some say one becomes *hijra* through the her blessing. Multiple versions of this myth exist but the most common narrates the story of the maiden Bahuchara passing through a forest in Gujarat. Thieves attack her and to ensure she is not raped, she cuts off her breasts.¹¹ This action deifies “her.” In other versions Bahuchara is a powerful man who transforms himself into a woman and then cuts off her breasts, to be neither woman nor man.¹² These myths are considered to legitimize specific actions such as castration, ritual power, and so forth, helping *hijras* navigate their identity and explain aspects of their lives. This also explains why self-mutilation and sexual abstinence are so important to *hijras* since they legitimize not only their own self-identification, but also the broader Indian society’s understanding of their roles and powers. Furthermore, Jennifer Ung Loh argues that, through the aspects of “sacred” and “sanctioned” present in the myths, *hijras* explicitly

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⁷ Ibid, 25.
⁸ Lal, “Not This, Not That”, 135.
⁹ Ung Loh, “Narrating Identity”, 32.
¹⁰ Ibid.
¹¹ Ibid, 34.
¹² Ibid.
“create a meaningful and intelligible identity” that is respected and recognized by Hindus in India.

In his article for *Foreign Policy*, Jake Scobey-Thal talks about the *Manusmriti*, also known as the Laws of Manu. It is the most authoritative legal text addressing Hindu rules in India and prescribes Hindus their *dharma* – their obligations. The Laws of Manu recognizes a third-sex which *hijras* are commonly equated with. Today, these individuals are often set apart from mainstream societies. Indeed, they are stigmatized because of their transgressive gender identity. Yet, as seen earlier in the popular Indian imaginary, *hijras* are religious figures, blessed by a Hindu goddess. They are depicted as cheerful with colorful feminine outfits and they perform blessings at weddings and births of newborns in society. They visit temples, homes and religious sites to bless children. Today’s reality is much darker. With the effects of British colonialism and globalization, sexuality is becoming more and more of a commodity. In fact, with the rise of global ties, gender identity and individual human rights have come to the fore. Ergo, *hijras* are now mainly perceived as sex workers or beggars in India. It is estimated that 72% of *hijras* who work in the sex industry in Bombay have HIV/AIDS. This “new” identity, understood in terms of visible differences related to gender and sexuality, further marginalizes *hijras* and distances them from their traditional role. Thus, they are victims of violence, forced to work in the sex industry to survive, and are unable to access basic health care or gain political recognition and human rights.

*Masculinity and Hinduism: A Gateway for Violence and Human Rights Violations*

Prior to introducing various testimonies of third-sex individuals facing violence, it is important to examine traditional conceptions of femininity and

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13 Jake Thal-Scobey, “Third Gender: A Short Story”, *Foreign Policy*, (2014).
16 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
masculinity in Hindu religious traditions. In doing so, the reasons that motivate violence against *hijras* can be better understood. Conceptually, masculinity is a “set of images, values, interests and activities held important to the successful achievement of male adulthood.” Correspondingly, femininity is then the same set of phenomena but leading to the realization of female adulthood. Some argue that masculinity, is historically, politically, and culturally constituted. This section, however, will argue that there is a hegemonic form of masculinity, particularly in the consideration of Hindu traditions.

By far, a greater number of *hijras* acknowledge having been born as males. In fact, it is important to point out that very little literature in India examines the transition of women into men. This is arguably caused by very narrow understandings of female versus male gendered roles. The hegemony of masculinity is widely perpetuated through myths, Indian/Hindu literature and Indian television. Through these mediums, men are often portrayed as heroes. Indeed, they are especially represented as military heroes, lords, masters or fearsome lions. Accordingly, masculinity is often associated with war and conquest. In fact, colonialism itself was a very gendered and masculine experience. Colonialism, as a global process, brought about a set of interactions leading to the homogenization of these conceptions about masculinity. Indian television, and cinema to a certain extent, continue to portray women in need of male validation and men as hyper-masculinized with large, muscular bodies, proving their virility to their female audience through acts of bravery. As previously mentioned, many *hijras* act and consider themselves more in line with female-gendered characteristics. They often dress in saris and all of them wear bras—clothing preferences common to Indian women. However, *hijras* are also very present in public spaces, they talk loudly and smoke cigarettes, all notions contrary to Hindu and Indian nationalist views on the appropriate roles for women.

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20 Lal, “Not This, Not That”, 127.
23 Ibid., 128.
behavior of women.\textsuperscript{24} Therefore, third-sex individuals challenge and embody this confrontation between femaleness and maleness.\textsuperscript{25}

An essential element in Hindu understanding of the normal masculine role is the reproduction of children, especially male children.\textsuperscript{26} On the other hand, Hindu women are seen as wives or mothers, often characterized as being sexually aggressive. As well, they are also seen as auspicious, preserving the well-being of the household.\textsuperscript{27} Consequently, when \textit{hijras} embody the figure of the women, taking care of the household, and defy male ideas of procreation through sexual abstinence, they threaten the preconceived understanding of male roles. Men are haunted by the search to prove their masculinity and superiority in changing circumstances.\textsuperscript{28} This translates into high rates of violence and discrimination against communities of gender non-conforming individuals. Often families are not understanding, ashamed to nurture them, and disavow their third-gendered children.\textsuperscript{29} Consequently, \textit{hijras} are often uneducated and resort to street prostitution or begging to survive, resulting in high rates of rape and HIV/AIDS related deaths. Moreover, \textit{hijras} who practice prostitution are not allowed to live with the \textit{hijras} who continue to perform traditional ritual performances to earn their money.\textsuperscript{30} Hence, at the same time, \textit{hijras} lose the support of their communities as well as the traditional respect and legitimacy of the larger Hindu-Indian society. In turn, they lose their identities and are trapped into a larger vicious circle shaped by religious traditions, economic hardship, discrimination and violence.

Per the Trans Murder Monitoring project of April 2009, there were 1,700 transphobic killings of gender non-conforming individuals from 2008 and 2014.\textsuperscript{31} Taking into consideration that many killings go unreported, and that many cases of torture, mutilation and detention are not added to the calculation, this number is alarming for international and national organizations.

\textsuperscript{24} Nanda, “The Hijras of India”, 53.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Khandelwal, \textit{Ungendered atma, Masculine Virility and Feminine Compassion}, 85.
\textsuperscript{28} Dasgupta, Gokulsing, “Introduction: Perception of Masculinity”, 7.
\textsuperscript{29} Agoramoorthy, Hsu, \textit{Living on the Societal Edge} (2014).
\textsuperscript{30} Nanda, “The Hijras of India”, 48.
advocating for the respect of human rights. Aishwarya, 23-year old hijra and sex worker, tells the story of how she was attacked and abused by police forces. She starts, “Suddenly a Hoysala police van came (…) to me and asked me for money.” When she refused, the police officers ripped her wig off and threw her into the van, “they were all laughing at me” and “they started pressing them and feeling them [her breasts] after I told them they were not real.” Further, she explains, “they demanded I should pay, or I would be booked under a theft case (…) I am poor, I do sex work for food, but their ears were deaf.” Aishwarya was then taken to a police station, abused and kept there for three days. Aishwarya is not an isolated case; such violence is incessant, widespread and ubiquitous in the daily life of a hijra sex worker. Prejudices held towards third-gender individuals explain the violent reaction of society and police forces, who are trying to preserve a traditional heteronormative status quo. The PUCL (People’s Union for Civil Liberties) report that Aishwarya was a part of, also argues two reasons for such gratuitous violence: first, it considers the abuse of sexuality, the most intimate part of a person, as a tool of dehumanization; secondly, violence can be seen as a punishment for a transgressive sexuality, with sexuality at the heart of the effective carrying-out of the threats. Transphobia can have long-term impacts on the choice of profession, access to education/health and information specific to sexual minorities. Transphobia is a reaction to the perceived difference between biological sex at birth and gender expression. It is important to mention that it is a socially constructed response, such as racism or sexism, which promotes the marginalization of sexual minorities as well as their subsequent vulnerability to epidemics, economic backlashes, political repression, etc. This reaction is intimately linked to Hindu understandings of man-hood and female-hood as well as traditional hijra duties that are not portrayed in the sex performances which hijras must rely on to survive.

32 People’s Union for Civil Liberties, Karnataka (PUCL-K), Human Rights Violations Against the Transgender Community: A Study of Kothi and Hijra Sex Workers in Bangalore, India. Ed. 1000, (2003).
33 Ibid.
34 (PUCL-K), Human Rights Violations Against the Transgender Community.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
National and International Policies: 
Successes and Limitations

Although some improvements have been made with regards to the conditions of hijras in India, human rights advocates, such as the United Nations, have witnessed not only serious limitations to defining third-gender individuals, but also violations of the protection policies. This section will address broader issues and solutions for gender equality, gender identity and sexual orientation in relations to religious freedom in India.

In January 2015, Madhu Kinnar, a third-gender candidate, was elected mayor of Chhattisgarh’s Raigarh Municipal Corporation. One year before, Madhu was singing and dancing in the streets of Raigarh. In 2015 she won the election by 4,537 votes against the opposing BJP party. Although she is not the first hijra to get elected, she is the only one who has successfully stayed in office. This is made possible in part because, in 2014, the Supreme Court of India recognized hijras as third-gender in the law. Through recognition, as well as the establishment of employment and education quotas, third-gender options for passports and official documents, and the possibility to run for elections, India has tackled a major human rights issue. The policy acknowledges for the first time the needs of hijras—addressing issues in law and crime, shelter, public health and education.

The core fundamental rights are concentrated in Article 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution. Article 14 addresses the equality of all people before the law, saying that the State cannot deny this equality based on religion, race, caste, sex and so on. Article 15 prohibits discrimination based on these criteria, and article 21 guarantees all individuals the right to life and personal liberty. Nonetheless, no clear definition is given to understand the specific needs and characteristics of third-gender peoples, it simply emphasizes the stigma over

38 Rituparna Chartterjee, “History is Made As Newly Elected Third Gender Mayor Won’t Face Legal Hurdle”, The Huffington Post, (2016).
40 BBC, “India Court Recognizes Transgender People as Third Gender”, BBC, (2014).
42 First Post, “Right to Privacy Verdict” (2017).
their sexual orientation and gender identity. Furthermore, Rohan Abraham asserts that the Constitution is “riddled” with internal contradictions.43 For example, *hijras* are legally recognized and protected under the law, but consensual gay sex is still prohibited because of an old British colonial law in the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.44 Although this act was repealed, Geeta Panday argues that mistrust of gender non-conforming individuals persists, and that gender identity becomes illegal when expressed in a sexual context. Moreover, to be recognized as ‘transgenders’, they must submit to a medical examination accompanied by a Chief Medical Officer, a psychiatrist and a social worker; giving way to more violence, sexual assault and further stigmatization in the course of said examinations.45 Thus, many are not recognized and protected by the law. Finally, *hijras* still cannot attain a driving license, or be recognized for the national income tax since ration cards for government subsidies and property rights are restricted to ‘He’ or ‘She’.46

The United Nations Human Rights Council called for attention towards discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity as early as June 2011.47 However, this resolution was reviewed and improved in September 2016. The latter defines various terms such as sexual orientation, intersex, transgender and sexual or gender minority. It acknowledges that some laws criminalize sexual and gender minorities on moral grounds involving corporal punishment or death.48 Furthermore, the resolution is based on Article 1 of the UDHR which states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and are entitled to all the rights set forth by the UDHR without distinction of any kind.”49 It

also deplores acts of violence and discrimination in all regions of the world and appoints an Independent Expert on protection against violence based on sexual orientation. It is important to mention here that when the United Nations Human Rights Council voted on this motion, India abstained.\textsuperscript{50} Such policies are crucial for the protection of rights within the ICCPR—the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—concerning issues such as gender identity and gender expression. However, stigma is incorporated by society and enacted by institutions. Without proper actions to tackle discrimination, violence, and to respond to the needs of \textit{hijras} without undermining their religious identities and freedom, they will continue to be victims of brutality.

Although Hinduism recognizes third-gender individuals in its ancient texts and mythology, \textit{hijras} have been victims of severe violence, strong stigmatization and human rights violations in the years following British colonial rule. Considering that Hinduism has four goals: moral order, basic resources, happiness and salvation/liberation – one can argue that it is a relatively tolerant religion. Although being the largest democracy, with a population of 970 million people, India is often criticized for its caste structure as a system that operates against the promotion of human rights.\textsuperscript{51} Harold Coward asserts that there is no specific mention of human rights in classical Hinduism, however, “ideas of human dignity” rest on the notions of duty and obligation.\textsuperscript{52} Unfortunately, classical Western-understandings of human rights have distanced Hindus relations with the concept of \textit{dharma}—their duties and obligations. Nonetheless, Kana Mitra argues that \textit{Svadharma} asserts that “each human being deserves and should have equal consideration and concern.”\textsuperscript{53} Hinduism acknowledges the natural right of all Hindus to pursue the notion of good and the respect of all human beings. For this reason, Hinduism integrates within its religious tradition, basic notions of human rights. Despite that, other images of masculinity and femininity within Hinduism have led to increased violence against gender non-conforming individuals. The clash between religious tradition and rights that embodies the discourses on \textit{hijras} inscribes

\textsuperscript{52} Coward, “Are There Rights in Hinduism?”, 25.
\textsuperscript{53} Mitra, (2018).
into a larger debate concerning human rights and religion in India and on a
global stage.

Bibliography


American evangelicals are now undoubtedly at the core of US foreign policy, and no politician nor party can realistically avoid their influence. This entrenchment of the religious Right is a recent phenomenon and its study becomes ever more relevant to investigate today, Jeremy Gunn argues. Lee Marsden articulates this urgency: “Rather than standing on the outside looking in, conservative evangelicals are inside the corridors of power, seeking to influence policy decisions and exercising their electoral power.”¹ However, before one can delve into an analysis of the so-called “Christian Right,” a definition of the term must be put forward. I pose a definition similar to that of Marsden, in that the “Christian Right” applies to conservative evangelicals found within the Republican Party, organisations, and body of constituency whose moral religious convictions determine their positions on domestic and

international political questions. This paper investigates the role of the Christian Right in reorienting the rhetorical structure of foreign policy away from traditional “American realist” diction towards moralism. This is a twofold investigation: initially defining the Christian Right’s political ethic, and secondly analysing its impact upon the discourse of three American presidents, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. Ultimately, this paper aims to provide evidence for the existence of a temporal shift in presidential rhetoric towards morality, largely fuelled by the increasingly powerful influence of a rising moral constituency.

An analysis of the Christian Right’s foreign policy advocacy is required before pursuing its application to formal discourse. Regardless of whether American civil religion is inherent to its political culture or a product of modernity, which remains a question of scholarly debate, civil religion has been an effective force in the U.S since the Cold War. Since the mid 1990s, the “Moral Majority” has been successful in politicising a majority of white American evangelicals, and “attempts to influence state and federal government to adopt conservative social policies on such issues as abortion, homosexuality, pornography, and national defence” at the domestic level. George Lackoff’s *Moral Politics* further compliments this logic by arguing that, on a foreign policy level, American politics are governed by “worldview,” and decision makers are concerned with “systems of metaphor for morality.” The Christian Right, which Gunn argues began influencing American politics as early as the Truman era, is centred on the Strict Father Model, which has since been pivotal is dictating American president’s political ethos.

This model posits a traditional nuclear family, with the father having primary responsibility for supporting and protecting the family as well as the authority to set overall policy; to set strict rules for the behaviour of the children, and to enforce the rules. 

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5 Ibid., 11.
highest priority to such things as moral strength. 6

This influence on policy debate marked a stark departure from the liberal pragmatic worldview, based on the Nurturing Parent model where “love, empathy and nurturance are primary, and children become responsible, self-disciplined and self-reliant through being cared for and respected.”7 With the rise of the Moral Majority came a strengthening of the belief in American exceptionalism, rooted in Puritanism, which assumes that the US is “a chosen nation, a city set on a hill to be a light to the world.”8 This ideology was simultaneously employed by contemporary politicians in their quest for power and their justifications for American involvement abroad. This embodied the Strict Father Model in assuming a paternalistic, interventionary, disciplinary attitude towards situations abroad, punitive rather than aid-oriented. This can be compared to the biblical King-Father model of God, in which God is understood both as the King who dispenses ultimate Justice and as the Father who shows love and mercy unto His people. In contrast to the rhetoric one can detect after the rise of the Moral Majority, decision makers previously attached themselves to a typically American liberal pragmatism in which national self-interest was promoted by presidents as the core objective of any foreign policy. The linguistic shift that followed has since taken the shape of the Strict Father Model, where the American president, himself the embodied paternal figure, is expected to lead America and its “children” in times of moral crisis. The previous classical realist language, “with all its subtlety, commitment to caution and respect for conventions”9 was gradually transformed to emphasise America’s individualism, dignity, self-reliance, goodness, merit and chosenness, shaping a new brand of political speeches. While contemporary American politics can still be analysed through a realist lens, this paper argues that, since the rise of the Moral Majority, political discourse and policy debates have departed from classical realist language and since adopted sacralised diction.

While the evidence for this structural shift in rhetoric can be found as early as the Truman era, due to the scope of this paper, this investigation starts

6 Ibid., 33.
7 Ibid., 36
9 Rosato, Sebastian, and John Schuessler A Realist Foreign Policy for the United States (Perspectives on Politics, 2011), 804.
this investigation with the Carter administration. The initial departure from the national interest argument was partial and the “theological belief in American exceptionalism [did] not imply support for imperialism and self-righteousness. Rather, this notion suggests that America bared a responsibility to countries that were unable to attain similar levels of economic and political prosperity.”\textsuperscript{10} This sentiment echoed throughout the Cold War, and Carter effectively activated his political base in order to put forward a discourse of American obligation, responsibility, and freedom. To Carter, the post-Vietnam and Watergate context illustrated the failure of realism and the public discontent regarding the nation’s self interest. In 1977 he stated “this [Realist] approach failed, with Vietnam the best example of its intellectual and moral poverty. But through failure we have now found our way back to our own principles and values, and we have regained our lost confidence.”\textsuperscript{11} For Carter and his constituency, this context represented a existential threat to America’s identity. This “crisis of confidence” that had made Americans doubt their status within the global hierarchy was central to Carter’s administration. He thus dedicated his presidency to “[ensur[ing] a revival of American self-confidence and provide the rest of the world with affirmation of our Nation’s continuing moral strength and our belief in an undiminished, ever-expanding American dream.”\textsuperscript{12} Carter thus marks the first translation of evangelical exceptionalism and morality into a new presidential discourse. Linda Miller argues:

Jimmy Carter pledged to release American instincts the Republicans had denigrated. The moralistic quality of the anti-war and anti-Soviet movements would serve as the basis for a new consensus built on the wreckage of Vietnam and Watergate. Global priorities would replace the stale machinations of power balancing. Domestic lobbies and corporate interests would rally to the cause because the United States would have a foreign policy as good as the American people.\textsuperscript{13}

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\item \textsuperscript{10} Amstutz, Mark R. \textit{Evangelicals and American Foreign Policy} (Oxford University Press, 2014), 144.
\item \textsuperscript{11} McCrisken Trevor, American Exceptionalism and the Legacy of Vietnam, (Palgrave Macmillan 2003), 57.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Carter, ‘Inaugural Address’, 1998, 1–4.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Miller, Linda \textit{Morality in Foreign Policy: A Failed Consensus?} (Daedalus 1980), 146 .
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Through his “godly” diction, Carter put forward the innate goodness of the American people rather than realist tactics, portrayed himself as the Father, and justified his policies through rhetoric rooted in conservative evangelical moral values.

The evangelical political revival continued its course in the 1980s, with Reagan producing an interesting blend between realism and moral rhetoric when referring to the Soviet Union. In an address to the National Association of Evangelicals in 1983, “Reagan famously referred to the Soviet Union as ‘the focus of evil in the modern world’. He urged Americans to never ignore ‘the aggressive impulses of an evil empire’. No American, he said could afford to remove themselves ‘from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.’”14 Reagan’s rhetoric is perhaps the most famous embodiment of the Strict Father’s unwillingness to compromise. By employing the biblical imagery of “good” and “evil” Reagan thereby reshaped foreign policy debates into a clear black-and-white separation which would justify his ability to set and enforce strict rules. His diction choice illustrates his dedication to a father who imposes strict rules for the behaviour of his children. As early as 1981, Reagan warned terrorist groups worldwide: “‘when the rules of international behaviour are violated, our policy will be one of swift and effective retribution.”15 While Reagan was famously attached to a Strict Father model of speech, in reality his policies were on par with what most scholars would define as realist. As argues McCrisken, the US approached this period through the guiding principles of “realism, strength, and dialogue.”16 Yet, in an attempt to mobilize a growing evangelical base, Reagan adopted the Strict Father Model into his discourse, invoking the “morality of reward and punishment.”17 This illustrates a commitment to the two models, realism and morality, seemingly incompatible, and the increasingly powerful force of the Christian Right upon foreign policy discourse.

The final piece of evidence and perhaps, the most relevant one, lies in the W. Bush presidency, which Rogene Buchholz has called “the first faith-based

The Bush Administration best exemplifies the height of the Christian Right’s influence upon presidential discourse. Where Reagan had aligned with the Christian Right only “when it did not conflict with his own interests,” Bush fully embraced the positions of the Moral Majority. Bush’s enduring adherence to his own evangelical faith “allowed him to ignore the lessons of history with regard to countries like Iraq and argue that all people around the world yearned for freedom and democracy.” No prior president was as committed to the Strict Father Model as Bush, and this was relentlessly emphasized in his speeches. As the Soviets had been the contemporary paradigm of evil for Reagan, Bush harnessed the catastrophe of 9/11 to employ the same moral rhetoric. However, the sheer quantity of references to moral absolutes during the Bush Administration was unprecedented; between 2001 to 2008, the word “evil” appeared in 711 Bush public documents. Wade Roof analyzes this trend: “The events of 9/11 made some question America’s place as a chosen nation. Bush moved to reassert this belief by focusing on the evil of America’s enemies as contrasted with the own inherent goodness of the United States.” Bush’s unwavering commitment to a moralistic rhetoric can be attributed to the immense pressure of an enormous evangelical political base. Unlike Reagan, Bush’s departure from realism was not solely limited to discourse, but rather also reflected in international acts of war, the most striking example being the Iraq War of 2003. President Bush not only argued that “U.S. morals are synonymous with God's larger plan,” but also that “the battle this nation is in is a spiritual battle, it is a battle for our soul.” Bush’s reliance on moral justification for this conflict presents the strongest evidence towards a shift from liberal pragmatism to a strictly evangelical moralism in presidential rhetoric. However, while the Christian Right still bears heavily upon American foreign policy and the presidential rhetoric that surrounds it, Bush is more of an exception than a

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18 Buchholz, Rogene, America in Conflict: the Deepening Values Divide (Hamilton Books, 2007), 129.
rule. As early as Eisenhower, who was the first to “conclude major political addresses with phrases such as ‘God bless America,’” 23 religious discourse has been central to a president’s time in office. As argue Domke and Coe pose, “these phrases have become a way for presidents to pass the God and country test.” 24 Yet, American presidents and U.S foreign policy remains largely realist, with self-interest as the root of policy.

The rise of moralist religious diction in presidential rhetoric aligns with the chronological rise of the Moral Majority. With some presidents, such as Carter and Reagan, one can witness a partial shift from American pragmatism rooted in self-interest, where they, as the Father figure, seem unable to attach themselves to just one model of leadership. In cases where the President owes much of his success to the Christian Right such as Bush, one can see a more devoted shift. Not only is Bush’s rhetoric surrounding foreign policy deeply religious, but so were the acts of political and military hostility that followed it. Ultimately, with the rise of a strong evangelical political base, presidents often sacralised their role as the Strict Father. However, as this paper argues, this sacralization is limited to diction rather than action, with the exception of Bush. A theory popularized by Stark and Finke, the “sacralization ideology,” argues that “there is little differentiation between religious and secular institutions and that the primary aspects of life, from family to politics, are suffused with religious symbols, rhetoric and ritual.” 25 This theory may best help to explicate why the morality one can detect in presidential discourse may not be acted upon. Rather than shaping policy itself, the American Moral Majority has, since its rise, influenced “the extent to which individuals feel that their religion should be a part of public policy debates.” 26

23 Gunn, 57.
26 Ibid, 123.


A Gendered Analysis of the Perception of Gentiles in the Chronicles of the First Crusade

Maranda Raskin

The literature that comes from the Crusades participated in the construction of a gender order, just as it shaped religious hierarchy and understanding. Crusade Chronicles from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim liturgy were written extremely deliberately with the intentions of giving partial meaning to the violent string of events. The narratives of the Crusades seldom mention women and “tended deliberately to universalize the male experience - to masculinize the historical world.”¹ Therefore those few intentional stories that included women offer a rich basis for analysis of the medieval Jewish constructions of history and views of gender and gender roles of Jews and Gentiles during a tumultuous time of violence. Sarah Lambert argues that through Crusade narratives involving women, the idea of the Crusade was created.² Through Jewish Crusade Chronicles and their gendered perceptions of Jews and others, the idea of the Crusade in the perspective of the Jewish people was created. This essay will

¹ Lambert, 2.
² Ibid, 13.
examine the historical events leading up to the First Crusades and analyze the violence of 1096 against the Jewish communities through a gendered lens. An analysis of martyrdom before 1096 will be utilized to understand the historical conditions that prompted Jewish women to massacre themselves and their children instead of convert to Christianity or be killed by the Crusaders. An analysis of specific Hebrew texts describing acts of female martyrdom and the role women played in the physical and literary battles between Jews and Christians during the First Crusades will also be addressed. Finally, the implications of these gendered acts and Chronicles on the shaping of Jewish identity and conceptions of others after 1096 will be explored. The Jewish women of the First Crusades were able to perform traditionally masculine acts of violence and were praised for such acts due to the anomic situation of the volatile and ambiguous time period. The descriptions of Jewish female martyrdom in the First Crusades by Hebrew chroniclers served to defend their actions, construct a narrative of the Crusades that viewed the Jews heroically, and to undermine Christianity.

Historical Context

The First Crusades began when Pope Urban II mobilized his Christian followers in 1095. In their journey East the Crusaders often stumbled upon Jewish settlements in the Rhineland, of which they swiftly attacked and decimated in the name of religious superiority. Aside from the onset of the First Crusades, 1096 also marked the growing urbanization of medieval society in Europe and the increased interaction between religious groups. Urban centers were hubs of business, trade, and political organization. Jewish men and women are mentioned frequently in documentation of these interactions. The 10th and 11th centuries also saw great amounts of geographic mobility by Ashkenazic Jews and many small Jewish communities were established all over Europe. In their travels and businesses, Jewish men and women often encountered Christians. There were also many reported cases of Jewish conversions to Christianity. Although there was extensive contact between the two groups, the overall attitudes by the Christian majority were anti-Semitic and Jewish attitudes

3 Chazan, 2.
4 Ibid., 13.
5 Duby, 134
towards Christian were equally negative. Yet throughout the Jewish texts written about the First Crusades, there also is a wide breadth of attitudes and behaviors towards Christians, including conversion, negotiation, flight, passive acceptance of the Crusader’s violence, and active dissent through martyrdom.

The chronicles of the violence towards Jews in 1096 by Jewish chroniclers marked the development of a stylized narrative of the Jews, depicted a heightened sense of religious fervor as well as shifts in Jewish attitude and behavior towards the Christians, and shaped the Jewish experience in the subsequent 12th and 13th centuries. As previously mentioned, the Jewish chroniclers of the First Crusades deliberately chose what to include and how to portray the events they were recorded. The chroniclers wrote in the 12th century so they never experienced the events firsthand, often recording testimonies by survivors. They were committed to recording historical accuracies, but also highlighted Christian cruelty and emphasized Jewish heroism. The abandonment of Judaism, intense commitment to Judaism, martyrdom, and the bloody sacrificing of children are all included. An analysis of these attitudes through the gendered lens, specifically of depictions of female martyrdom, will be explored throughout this essay.

The Gendered Implications of the Violence of 1096

The devastation of Jewish communities by Crusaders is explored deeply in Jewish Crusade Chronicles. The attacks were both random and premeditated, which contributed to a pervasive sense of anarchy and confusion among medieval Jewry, and were also ideational in nature. One account describes, “They [the Crusaders] said to one another: ‘Behold we travel to a distant land to do battle with the kings of that land. We take our souls in our hands in order to kill and to subjugate all those kingdoms which do not believe in the Crucified. How much more so [we should kill and

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6 Chazan, 35.
7 Ibid., 45; Chazan, 49.
8 Ibid., 8.
9 Ibid., 48.
10 Cohen, 129.
The main goal of these attacks was to assert religious dominance through physical domination. The physical nature of these assertions of dominance emphasizes the masculine undertones of the Christian Crusaders’ rhetoric and the subsequent Jewish responses. Megan McLaughlin argues that in the European Middle Ages warfare “was generally viewed as the quintessential masculine activity, through which ‘manhood’ was demonstrated. Descriptions of warfare in medieval texts were peppered with references to gender, references which equated fighting ability with virility. Throughout the Middle Ages the man who failed in warfare was considered almost by definition ‘effeminate’ and became subject to ridicule.” The rapid social and economic changes of the early 11th century necessitated the enforcement of societal roles and the violence of the First Crusades was crucial in the enforcement of a gendered societal structure. The Christian Crusaders established themselves as the hegemonic social group through acts of militarized masculinity while the status of Jews, women, heretics, and other minority groups was subordinated. As the Ashkenazi Jewry were facing unfamiliar persecution during a turbulent time in which gender identity was actively being constructed and had no solid boundaries, Jewish women were able to participate in masculine acts of violence. In writing about a time of violent social upheaval in which Jews were actively feminized by Christian violence, Jewish chroniclers utilized the female figure, normally a sign of weakness, to represent sacrifice and strength. To combat the creation of the Jewish image as impotent, feminine, and inferior, the Jewish chroniclers developed a literary narrative of courageous Jewish women martyrs piously dissenting against the male Crusaders and

11 Peters, 113.
12 McLaughlin, 194.
13 Ibid, 195.
14 There are a few Christian and Muslim chronicles depicting women Crusaders, but they were viewed as unwomanly or as using more “feminine weaponry.” For a more thorough discussion of female Muslim and Christian female Crusaders see Michael R. Evans “Unfit to Bear Arms: The Gendering of Arms and Armour in Accounts of Women on Crusade” Gendering the Crusades (Columbia University Press, 2002), 45-58.
15 McLaughlin, 195.
Christianity. These depictions attempt to portray Gentiles as less holy and less masculine than the Jews they committed violence against.

A Brief History of Gendered Martyrdom before 1096

Martyrdom and self-sacrifice have been used as tools of declaring allegiance to faith since biblical times and were historically utilized by both Christians and Jews. There are contrasting opinions as to which of the two religions martyrdom stems from, with each claiming the holiness of the act as their own. W.H.C. Frend argues that the practice of martyrdom has its origins in Judaism, but the Church “prolongs and supersedes” the Jewish practice.¹⁶ Contrastly, G.W Bowersock argues that martyrdom is not a characteristic of one religion, but instead a universal “response to complex social, religious, and political pressures.”¹⁷ Early reports of Jewish martyrdom appear in 2 Maccabees, a philosophical homily dated between first century BCE and the first century CE.¹⁸ Christian claims to divine martyrdom appear in the 4th century CE writing, Eusebius’s Ecclesiastical History. Eusebius writes, “For it is a fact that some of the other heresies have immense numbers of martyrs, yet surely we shall not for this reason give them our ascent, nor acknowledge that they possess the truth.”¹⁹ A rabbinic parable from the Babylonian Talmud also recalls contention over claims to martyrdom.²⁰

The battle for ownership over martyrdom is occurs together with the interpretive conflict over claiming the biblical image of Jacob and Esau. These figures of these biblical twins served “as figures for authenticity and primacy in the fraught and ambiguous relation of nascent rabbinic Judaism and Christianity in late antiquity.”²¹ Both Jews and Christians wanted to claim the title of Jacob, the chosen younger child who gained the birthright and died first, as representative of their own covenantal status. Claiming

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¹⁶ Frend, 32.
¹⁷ Bowersock, 6.
¹⁸ Boyarin, 94.
²⁰ Boyarin, 102.
²¹ Ibid, 125.
martyrdom as their own was a tool for identifying with Jacob and attributing the undesirable identity of Esau to the other.

**Gendered Martyrdom and Perception of Gentiles in the First Crusades**

In a time when the Christian Crusaders repeatedly slaughtered Jews and forced them to convert, the martyrdom of Jewish women became a defense of Jewish honor in the Jewish accounts. The descriptions also portray a nuanced attitude towards Christians which belittles the religion while simultaneously including Christian imagery. Three prominent Hebrew texts written in the early 12th century are used to analyze Jewish attitudes to the violence of 1096: those of Solomon ben Samson, German-Jewish scholar Rabbi Eliezer ben Natan, and an anonymous author. In Solomon ben Samson’s account, he describes a community of Jews from Mainz who failed to physically defend themselves, but through the chronicles of their martyrdom they were able to take an active stance against Gentiles. He describes, “a distinguished pious woman there...was the first among all the communities of those who were slaughtered.”  

In this literary realm of martyrdom, women were equal to men while in the material political world they remained inferior. However, Jewish women were instrumentalized to produce martyrdom narratives which painted an attitude of Jewish superiority against the Christian Crusaders Jewish women “taunted and reviled the Crusaders with the name of the crucified, despicable, and abominable son of harlotry, saying, ‘In whom do you put your trust? In a putrid corpse?’” When the Jews were experiencing great oppression and abnormal brutality, women were able to emerge as combatants against Christianity. Women were described as having a more intense sense of revulsion towards the Christians, recorded as even unable to stomach the smells of the church. The Jewish women not only vehemently encouraged their husbands to defend themselves and committed acts of martyrdom and sacrificing of children, but at times physically attacked the Crusaders. In one instance, “These righteous women would throw stones at their enemies

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22 Eidelberg, 1977.
23 Marcus, 46.
25 Grossman, 199.
through the windows and the enemies would stone them in return, and they would be hit by the stones until their flesh and faces were completely cut up into pieces.”

Through vivid depictions describing the sacrifice and valor of women, the Jewish chroniclers attempted to create the image of the exemplary martyr. Juxtaposing the fervor of Jewish women with the slight meekness of the Jewish men furthered the creation of this image. This cultivated image was ultimately meant to belittle the actions of the Christians to Jewish readers and make Christian violence seem less masculine and all-consuming. By equalizing the status of women in the context of martyrdom, by deeming their acts of martyrdom as holy, and by including the violent action and language they used against the Crusaders, the writers of the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles attempted to emasculate the Gentiles.

While women were hailed as pious and honorable fighters in martyrdom literature they were viewed as inferior in the social structure of contemporary Judaism as well as in Christian and Muslim societies. The creation story of Eve deriving from Adam’s rib and her temptation by the serpent allowed these medieval groups to justify the treatment of women as subservient and sinful respectively. Emphasizing the actions of Jewish women against Christian men, an inferior group in the eyes of both religions, further contributed to the writers’ attempts to emasculate Christians. The Jews of antiquity lived in close proximity to Christian society and were aware of images of Mary’s martyrdom as the rectification of Eve’s sinfulness. Therefore the writers of the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles specifically emphasized the commitment of Jewish women to Kiddush Ha-shem, the sanctification of the divine name, to contrast their loyalty with that of Christian women. Additionally, the chroniclers seldom refer to the rape of Jewish women so as to preserve the holy nature of female Jewish martyrs and argue their superior image through Christianity’s own imagery and conceptions of female piety.

The figure of Mistress Rachel of Mainz is emblematic of the specifically crafted gendered perceptions of Gentiles in the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles. Her story appears in the First Crusade Chronicle, “Account of

26 Habermann, Gezerot Ashkanaz ve-Zarfat, 33.
28 Grossman, 10.
the Persecution of Old”, otherwise known as the “Mainz Anonymous Chronicle”, as well as in Solomon bar Samson’s Chronicle of the event. Both accounts describe Mistress Rachel slaughtering her two daughters and two sons in God’s name before the Christian Crusaders arrived to slaughter or convert them. When the Crusaders came and saw the dead children, they beat and killed her. However, the two accounts of the event highlight different details and allude to different elements of Jewish and Christian mythology. The Solomon bar Samson Chronicle reads,

Who ever witnessed the like of this? Who ever heard of something like the deed of this righteous, pious woman, the young Mistress Rachel, daughter of R. Isaac b. R. Asher, wife of R. Judah. She said to her companions, "I have four children. Even on them have no mercy, lest these uncircumcised ones come and take them alive and they be maintained in their error. Sanctify the name of the holy God in them, too."...[Rachel] then extended their necks and sacrificed them to the Lord, God of hosts, who commanded us not to compromise our untainted fear of him and to be totally forthcoming with him, as it is written in Scripture, ‘You must be wholehearted with the Lord your God.’...the enemy took the room, and they found her sitting and lamenting over them. They said to her, ‘Show us the treasure that you have in your arms.’ When they saw the children and that they were slaughtered, they beat her and killed her along with them; her soul expired, and she died. Of her it is written in Scripture, ‘Mothers and babes were dashed to death together," as was she along with her four children, just as the righteous woman died with her seven sons; and of them it is written in Scripture, ‘a happy mother of children." The father, well-built and handsome, screamed, crying and wailing, when he beheld the death of his four children. He went and threw himself on the sword in his own hand; his entrails came out, and he lay in the middle of the road, drenched in blood.29

The “Mainz Anonymous” account tells the same story with less detail and vivid imagery. It also excludes the depiction of the suicide of

29 Internet Sourcebook Project, 1997.
Mistress Rachel’s husband, instead ending the account with the reference from Psalm 113:9. Additionally the “Mainz Anonymous” chronicle does not refer to Rachel’s two daughters as virgins or include the detail about the daughters sharpening the knives used to slaughter them, while Solomon ben Samson’s account does. These two accounts in comparison offer insight into the various expressions of the mother-martyr figure in the Hebrew Chronicles. However, this figure of the complex sacrificial mother emerged before these accounts and must be traced back to its biblical associations.

The biblical Rachel, like the Crusades Rachel, is regarded as a dual figure. She is the beautiful sister, but also the bitter and wily one. She wanted nothing more than to have a child, but ultimately died while giving birth. She is said to have lost her three beds to her sister; her marriage bed, her birthing bed, and her grave. In Jeremiah 31, Rachel is hailed as the archetype of the Jewish mother in that she cries over her children being oppressed by the Gentiles and associates her with the “maidens of Israel,” an image also associated with the Virgin Mary. Anthropologist Susan Starr writes that “Rachel is the personification of the vulnerability of Jewish women; she is the quintessential sufferer.” The characteristics of the biblical Rachel are inextricably bound to Rachel of Mainz, and thus embedded in Jewish understandings of womanhood and the gendered martyrdom of the First Crusades.

The figure of Rachel is associated with both Jacob and Esau, contributing further to the complexity of her role in understanding Jewish perceptions of both Jewish and Gentile women during the First Crusades. Jeremy Cohen argues that Rachel of Mainz is associated with Esau because, like the biblical Rachel, she forfeits her rights in the name of another and because, like Esau, she burst into sobbing fits. However, midrashim also associated Rachel of Mainz with Jacob because of her status as a mother suffering under Esau’s rule and because, like Jacob’s fear of Esau’s attack, Rachel was afraid of the Crusader’s attack.

30 Ibid.
31 Sered, 16.
32 Cohen, 116.
Further contributing to the duality of the figure Rachel is her relationship with Christianity. The maternal personification of the Church, Ecclesia, often appears in medieval art standing under the right arm of the crucified Jesus while the female personification of the Jewish people, Synagoga, stands under his left arm. In this depiction, Ecclesia represents the New Testament and tends to Jesus’ wounds by collecting his blood in a chalice. In both accounts of the sacrifice of Rachel of Mainz a chalice is mentioned, but Rachel is recorded as collecting her children’s blood in her sleeves instead. The text reads, “The mother stretched out her arms to receive their blood, and she received the blood in her sleeves instead of in the cultic chalice of blood.” Jeremy Cohen argues that the Jews writing the Chronicles knew of this association and rejected the chalice so as to reclaim the displaced figure of the synagogue. The symbolic similarities between Mistress Rachel weeping with her dead children in her lap and the Virgin Mary grieving over the death of her son holding his crucified body, as well as with the classical Virgin Hodegetria pose, was most likely deliberate. The ending of the “Mainz Anonymous” Chronicle likens Rachel with “that other righteous woman [who] died with her seven sons; of her it is written in Scripture [Psalm 113:9], ‘a happy mother of children.’” This is a reference to the story in Maccabees 2 in which a mother, instead of submitting to the persecution of King Antiochus, threw herself off a roof after sacrificing her seven sons as an act of martyrdom. There are many names associated with this woman, but Ashkenazic Jewry of the 11th and 12th centuries knew of her as Miriam bat Tanchum. Miriam is the Hebrew name for Mary.

Ultimately the “Mainz Anonymous” and Solomon bar Samson Chronicles identify Rachel as a figure representative of both Jewish and Christian traditions, proving the large extent to which medieval Jews were immersed in Christian culture even during times of violence. Additionally, equating Rachel of Mainz with Jacob shows the continued struggle between

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33 Ibid., 121.
34 Internet Sourcebook Project, 1997.
35 Cohen, 121.
36 Ibid., 124.
37 Internet Sourcebook Project, 1997.
38 Cohen, 119.
Jews and Christians to claim the title of the Chosen People, projecting the enemy onto each other. The Jewish co-optation of the imagery of the most important women in Christianity, Mary and the Holy Mother Church, also depict a more aggressive anti-Christian view held by Jews during a time of increased oppressive violence. Cohen concludes his analysis of Mistress Rachel with the argument that the Jews in 1096 lived in “the world in limbo” with the onset of the First Crusades, not knowing whether to submit to death and maintain their symbolic Jacob status or to convert to the religion of Esau. The duality and ambiguity of Mistress Rachel and the telling of her story as one of both martyrdom and survival, Esau and Jacob, and Judaism and Christianity allowed the Jews in 1096 to identify with each option. They reconciled with and justified both complacency and resistance. The telling of Rachel of Mainz’ martyrdom was also a plea for forgiveness and a defense of behavior. Employing the story of a Jewish heroine through Christian female iconography to defend Jewish behavior acknowledges and establishes the role of women martyrdom stories in the First Crusade Chronicles as a means of reconciliation with violent acts of martyrdom under Christian powers.

Another analytical approach towards understanding why the Jewish chroniclers of the Crusades emphasized the commitment of Jewish women to Kiddush Ha-shem, the holiness of their violent acts of self-sacrifice, as well as how this shaped their conceptions of Gentiles, stems from the economic position of women in 1096. During this time Jewish women were active members of society and often engaged in business interactions with Gentiles such as bargaining, suing them and being sued, travelling to courts of feudal laws, and negotiating with them. Women were also granted their husband’s property when they died. The Mishnah forbade women from interacting with Gentiles, especially Gentile men without their husband present, unless there was an economic endeavor at stake. An account from R Eliezer b. Nathan of Mainz’ book Evan ha-Ezer states, “… and certainly

39 Ibid, 129.
40 Ibid, 129.
41 Chazan 1987 p. 45
42 Grossman, Ma’asehha-Gezerotha-Yeshanot, 117.
43 Grossman, 118.
in these days when women are legal guardians and vendors and dealers and lenders and borrowers and they pay and collect and withdraw and deposit money, and if we say they cannot swear or affirm their business negotiations, then you will forsake these women and people will begin to avoid doing business with them.”

Ashkenazic culture placed a high level of importance on Jewish women maintaining their modesty and women were expected to show great devotion to the values of Judaism.

These ingrained values and sense of loyalty complicated women’s ability to intermingle with Gentiles in the eyes of the Ashkenazic patriarchy and was put to the test in their everyday interactions. Avraham Grossman argues that “They [Jewish society] thought that Jewish women in Ashkenaz ought to do everything within their power to protect their modesty and privacy, even under difficult conditions, should they fall into captivity in the hands of Gentiles…”

The characterizations of Jewish women in the Crusade Chronicles as particularly disgusted by Gentiles and as taking drastic measures to protect their children from Christianity may originate from the external expectations placed on Jewish women when interacting with Gentiles. This extra sense of caution towards Gentiles was not as deeply entrenched in Ashkenazi male culture because they were not held to the same expectations of modesty. This approach further elucidates why there were more impassioned responses to forced conversion by Jewish women than men.

The martyrdom and sacrificing of children by Jewish mothers recorded by Jewish chroniclers in the 12th century served to defend the mothers’ violent acts, promote a narrative of Jews taking an active stance against their oppressors, and maintain the status of Jewish women as pious. These descriptions also established a comparison with Christians by actively invoking Christian images of female piouness as an attempt to demasculinize the Crusaders in the eyes of the Jews. There existed an extreme detestation for Gentiles by Jewish women, but the nature of their favorable social position required these women and Jewish society as a whole to learn about them. The abnormality and social role ambiguity, of

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44 Eliezer b. Nathan (Ra’avan). *Sefer Even ha-Ezer*.
45 Grossman, 122.
1906 enabled Jewish women were able to commit traditionally masculine acts of violence. 12th Century chroniclers thus used these accounts of sacrificial actions to comprehend the violence around them, defend actions of the past, and instrumentalize female images as tools against Christians in the name of creating a more favorable historiography.

The glorification of violent martyr narratives of 1096 by Jewish chroniclers further reinforced the idea of Christianity and Judaism as historical enemies. Christians viewed these acts of martyrdom as heinous even during the violent process of establishing Christian hegemony through the Crusades, which further “othered” the Jews in the Rhineland. Just as the Crusades contributed to a sense of religious fervor among Christians, through symbolic acts of dissent Jewish identity was intensified as well. This identity intensification made the Christian majority uncomfortable and contributed to the development of social tension, violence, and anti-Jewish tropes in the 13th century. However, the Jews continued to live in their attacked communities and the two groups continued to engage in business together. Additionally, there are very few accounts of Jewish violence and brutal martyrdom beyond the Jewish sources that come specifically from the Worms, Mainz, and Cologne communities of the Rhineland. Similar acts were not recorded as occurring in England, France, or any other part of Germany. The Jewish chroniclers were committed to recording the history of The First Crusades accurately, but there is no doubt that their accounts are still tendentious in order to contribute to a historiography that helped the Jews reconcile with their marginalization. The specific characterization of female martyrs aligned with both Jewish and Christian biblical images of admirable holy women which contradicted traditional archetypes of women as salacious and sinful.

The tumultuous violence of 1096, a time in which “all normal constraints were abandoned and that those normally considered harmless-the

\[46\] Chazan, 15.
\[47\] Ibid., 35.
\[48\] Ibid., 75.
\[49\] Ibid., 77.
\[50\] Ibid., 47.
elderly, women, and children—were not spared,” allowed Jewish women to emerge as active physical combatants against Christianity, a role assigned to men during times of social stasis. The Christians continued to demasculinize the status of the Jews through acts of military superiority, but the specific perceptions of Jewish women martyrs - specifically mothers - in Hebrew chronicles constructed a narrative of the First Crusades that defended these anomic actions, gave agency to the Jews and dissented against their demasculinized status.

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51 Ibid., 70.


Sacramental Institution or Instituted Sacrament: Holy Food

Jessica Gauthier

The debate surrounding what it means to drink Jesus’ blood and eat his flesh has existed since long before the first Easter Day. Throughout history, Christians have gone as far as torturing and killing one another over who holds the correct belief or “orthodox” understanding of the Sacrament.¹ Jesus’ followers seem unable to agree on the words that Scripture places in Christ’s own mouth: “my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”² In the following pages I will be discussing some of the primary understandings of the Lord’s Supper, also known as Holy Communion or the Eucharist. I will argue that transubstantiation is more compelling than memorialism, in which the Meal is understood as a symbolic act of remembrance.³ I will also briefly explore consubstantiation and Calvin’s erudite explanation of the Lord’s Supper, insofar as they both attempt to explain the presence of Christ in the Sacrament. To set this table, as it were, I offer a few personal stories.

² John 6:55, RSV
A young girl is about to partake of the Lord’s Supper for the first time. She knows that this is an institution of Jesus, done in remembrance of him. She has heard of transubstantiation and has an idea of what it means: she has read that these sorts of ideas are idolatrous and not really Christian. She was baptized in a Wesleyan Holiness denomination when she turned seven last year, in a tiny lake on the outskirts of town. This is a crucial moment for her, and she has a few verses committed to memory from the King James Version of the Bible just for the occasion:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.\(^4\)

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.\(^5\)

Her emotions shift between excitement, pride at having been deemed ready to take Communion by the elders of the church, and sheer terror. She takes the broken cracker into her trembling fingers and eats it. She lifts the cup to her lips and sips. Later that evening, she sobs into her blankets, examining herself. Was she truly righteous in eating the bread and drinking from the cup, or was there an element of unworthiness to her actions? There is no point even confessing, to God in prayer or to her parents or pastor, because, if she has committed an unforgiveable sin, it is too late for her now.

Four years later, the girl spends an evening with a friend who happens to be a Roman Catholic. The friend takes her to Saturday evening Mass, and her friend’s father, a stern but kind man, tells her that since she

\(^4\) Hebrews 6:4-6, KJV  
\(^5\) I Corinthians 11:27-29, KJV
is not Roman Catholic, she must not take Communion. However, she may go up for a blessing from the priest when the rest of the family approaches the altar. He shows her how to cross her arms; she does as he says and shares a beautiful and solemn moment with the family.

The girl, now in high school, riddled with angst and anger, attends a youth group in town. The leader orders pizza and soda, and as the teens cozy up in a basement lounge after a few hours of games, he tells them that this meal is the Lord’s Supper. It does not matter what the food or drink is, as long as they remember Jesus when they eat their pizza and drink their Coke. The girl goes numb and feels nauseated. She cannot understand the lackadaisical approach to a solemn ritual that still fills her with the confusion and distress of her childhood; the fear that she may incur eternal judgement for taking part in this ritual is deeply engraved in her psyche.

The girl is now in her late teens, attending university and playing piano for a crumbling Presbyterian church in the Maritimes. When the bread and wine are served to the tiny congregation, the girl quietly refuses to partake. After the service comes to an end, on the way back to their university town, the minister tells the young woman that next time, she should take part just to be polite. According to the minister, the members of the church do not understand her strange behaviour and will take offense.

One day, many years later, after having returned to Christianity by way of a congregation where she has discovered the beginnings of a new and vibrant faith, discerning her way forward as a future theologian and minister of the Gospel, she shares the Sacred Meal in an informal setting. While the bread and wine are being distributed, some crude jokes are exchanged about the cheap wine, about Christ’s blood, about the stale crackers, and about who gets to finish what is left in the cup. A queasy, aching ball begins to form in the pit of her stomach. At this point in her life, she has experienced some truly sacred moments at Christ’s table with Christians from many traditions, and the lack of respect at this particular table fills her with sadness.

These experiences all form parts of my own faith story and with this background informing my perspective, I attended a High Anglican sung evening Eucharist in Oxford three years ago. The verger was an octogenarian woman wearing a dark wool skirt, and when the time came, she went up to people, most of us tourists sitting near the choir, beckoning
with her hand towards the altar and saying, “Come! Come! You are welcome to come up!” I am well-travelled, and since the day my friend’s father first showed me what to do, I have not taken the host in any of the many Roman Catholic churches in Europe where I have attended mass, choosing, instead, to receive a blessing. But on this evening, at an Anglo-Catholic Cathedral, I was experiencing my first Mass, and I was welcome. Afterwards, I sat back down, and I wept. I was fed, healed, transformed. I had felt and tasted the Real Presence.

Thanks to that one lingering moment, I began to see all of my experiences of Holy Communion in a different, grace-filled light. Now, when I share the Lord’s supper with others who fail to appreciate the sacredness of the moment, I experience sadness, but not fear. When I am present for the Eucharist in Roman Catholic churches, I still experience some of the joy of that holy sacrament, even though I am not permitted to take part. However, I also experience a deep sadness because in that moment, I am acutely aware that I have been dismissed from Christ’s table. As I make my way towards the altar to be blessed, to be closer to the elements, and to silently share in worship, I am deeply sorry to be excluded.

Before continuing the conversation, let us remind ourselves of the power of the Sacrament for a believer. In his seminal introduction to Reformed Christian Theology, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, Daniel Migliore defines sacraments as the “embodiments of grace, enacted testimonies of the love of God in Jesus Christ.” 6 Jesuit Professor Emeritus of Catholic Theology Michael Fahey, in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, offers that sacraments are “both acts of Christ and acts of the church.” 7 Fahey also furthers Schillebeeckx’s idea that Jesus Christ “is a ‘sacrament’ of God’s encounter (*rencontre, ontmoeting*) with the human race.” 8 Calvin invokes Augustine’s views on the sacraments as

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8 Ibid., 269-270.
“a visible sign of a sacred thing, or a visible form of an invisible grace.”

The German-American protestant theologian, Paul Tillich, argues that “the sacramental is nothing else than some reality becoming the bearer of the Holy in a special way and under special circumstances.” The Sacraments are sometimes called “Sacred Mysteries” and my own experience of having been fed with this Holy Food has persuaded me that that it brings about real transformation and spiritual growth.

Furthermore, within his definition, Migliore offers a brief explanation of four particularly influential interpretations of what Christians believe happens during the Eucharistic Meal. The first pertains to the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation in which the elements of bread and wine are “transformed by the power of God into the substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ”; in other words, while the elements retain the qualities that make them identifiable as bread and wine, in substance, they become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Migliore then provides an explanation for the Lutheran doctrine of “sacramental unity,” which is usually referred to as consubstantiation. This doctrine is very similar to transubstantiation in that both teach of Christ’s Real Presence in the bread and wine. Due to the similarities between transubstantiation and consubstantiation, I suspect that I am not alone in struggling to understand the substantive differences between them. Migliore explains that the Roman Catholic doctrine on transubstantiation “presupposes Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophical concepts that are no longer familiar to most people.”


12 The Latin prefix “trans” means “across,” “beyond,” or “through,” while the prefix “con” means “with.” Each of these prefixes is combined with the medieval Latin verb *substantiare*; or as the Cambridge Dictionary describes it, “to show something to be true.”


14 Ibid., 301.
explains that, for Luther, transubstantiation, as it was being taught in the sixteenth century, was “an absurdity, an attempt to rationalize a mystery” because it relied on “Aristotle’s famous distinction between ‘substance’ and ‘accident’” affirming that “the accidents of the bread and wine” continued while their substance became the body and blood of Jesus Christ. McGrath’s point is that for Luther, “rationalizing [the Real Presence] using some scholastic subtlety” is unnecessary; all that is needed is to believe “that Christ really is present at the Eucharist.” However, Fahey does not refer to these ancient philosophical arguments to explain the Sacrament. Instead, he opens the door to ecumenical dialogue about Holy Communion by noting that the Reformers had reason to critique the “literalistic sense” in which many Christians of the sixteenth century understood the Real Presence, sometimes losing the sacramental characteristic of that reality. Augustine, who can be said to have introduced sacramental theology to the West, gave a sermon to believers before the consecrated elements in which he discussed how the bread can be “his body and the cup (or rather the contents of the cup) [can be] his blood” without making any reference to the aforementioned Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophical concepts about the manner in which the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Jesus. Furthermore, the language of the 1972 "Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine" by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission offers a way forward here:

The word transubstantiation is commonly used in the Roman Catholic Church to indicate that God acting in the Eucharist effects a change in the inner reality of the elements. The term should be seen as affirming the fact of Christ's presence and of the mysterious and radical change which takes place. In contemporary

16 Ibid., 172
Roman Catholic theology it is not understood as explaining how the change takes place.²⁰

Migliore also explains that some theologians have begun to look at the word “transubstantiation” in new ways, such as understanding it to mean “a transignification (a change of meaning) of bread and wine,” or “a transfinalization of the elements (a change of end or purpose).”²¹ According to Migliore, “the real intent” of the doctrine of transubstantiation “is actually to avoid magical views, even if its popular versions tend to come very close to this.”²² Transubstantiation can therefore be understood as conveying the grace of the sacrament through bread and wine. In transubstantiation, the basic meaning of these tangible elements is transcended and the communicant is taken beyond the profane into a sacred space wherein the bread and wine, as holy food, transform, nourish, and sustain the believer.

Third, Migliore discusses Calvin’s resistance to the ideas of both transubstantiation and consubstantiation on the basis that both “mechanically affix Christ to the elements.”²³ Unlike transubstantiation, where the elements become the actual body and blood of Christ, or consubstantiation, where Christ is to be found in, with, and under the elements, Calvin understands that “Christ joins us to himself by the grace and power of his Spirit”²⁴ when we consume the bread and the wine in faith. In Calvin’s interpretation, our faith is confirmed by the sacraments when we approach them with sufficient spiritual preparation. Christ is truly there, but only in a spiritual sense, as the bread and the wine remain bread and wine. Calvin rejected arguments in which the sacraments justified and conferred grace because he wanted to emphasize that salvation, ultimately, comes from Christ and not from any ritual.²⁵

²¹ Migliore, "Proclamation, Sacraments, and Ministry," 301.
²² Ibid.
²³ Ibid., 302.
²⁴ Ibid.
Finally, Migliore discusses the memorialist tradition, which refers to the Lord’s Supper as an ordinance rather than a sacrament, in which it would be understood as a purely symbolic act undertaken in obedience to the instructions and institution of Jesus in an intensely loyal remembering of Christ and his sacrifice. One might call this understanding of the Lord’s Supper “sacramental” rather than a “Sacrament.” Indeed, the Lord’s Supper *is* an act of memorial, according to Christian Scripture, where Jesus tells his disciples to “do this in remembrance of me.” However, we must be careful the ways in which we discuss the memorialist tradition. While I respect the desire to avoid a superstitious view of the sacraments, there is often the inclination when one refers to the Lord’s Supper as an act of memorial, to include the reductionist “mere” before the word “memorial.” Placing this limit on our understanding of Holy Communion incorrectly diminishes the experience, effect, and power of what is experienced in the Sacrament.

I have a certain level of sympathy for the Christians who espouse a memorialist perspective with regard to the sacraments and see the Lord’s Supper mostly as symbolic. One could make the criticism that understanding the Eucharist as a Sacrament might result in attempts to usurp God’s work but, then again, understanding it as a purely human ritual may result in attempts to deny God’s work. There is also a very real danger in adhering to ritual as though it were a magic spell; ascribing a transformation to human actions when this transformation is actually brought about by the Holy Spirit risks causing disillusionment when human frailties are brought to light. Calvin rebukes the superstition of those who tend to “ascribe to the sacraments a kind of secret virtue” and asks, “what is a sacrament received without faith, but most certain destruction to the Church?”

Without claiming to offer a sociological critique, I will make an observation that could be seen by some as supportive of Calvin’s claim. Québécois francophones of a certain age are almost all familiar with the comedy group “Rock et Belles Oreilles” (RBO), who made a widely

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26 Migliore, “Proclamation, Sacraments, and Ministry,” 304.
successful skit in the eighties called “Super-Jésus.” Mid-way into the skit, Jesus can be seen skiing down from the heavens on his cross in a super-hero costume, marketing his new BBQ chicken. He says, “Ceci est mon poulet, livré pour vous,” and, in doing so, he seemingly transforms Jesus’ words as delivered by Paul in I Corinthians 11:23 to great comedic acclaim.

I live in culturally Catholic but functionally secular Québec where there are many instances in which Catholic traditions and values are either not respected or are mocked, lending strength to Calvin’s warning. Some of the most popular curse words in La Belle Province have to do with the Mass. Translated from Québécois slang, the most preferred words are those which refer to the tabernacle, the chalice, the host, the sacrifice, and the sacrament. Furthermore, nowadays wafers can be purchased at convenience stores and grocery stores to snack on or to use for ironic deserts. In the fall, memes about pumpkin spice communion wafers ooze out of the social media underbelly. These examples of the gradual demolition of the Roman Catholic Church in Québec lend credence to Calvin’s prediction surrounding the risk of sacrament without faith.

At this point in our analysis thinking about how, for many, Catholic symbols have been degraded in Québec, it might be worthwhile to think about Tillich’s distinction between the sign and symbol. Tillich distinguishes between signs and symbols by noting that, while signs merely point to the signified, symbols participate in that which they symbolize. I appreciate Tillich’s affirmation that symbols open up “a level of reality for which non-symbolic speaking is inadequate” because it validates my own experience of Holy Communion.

I also appreciate Tillich’s discussion on the distinction between signs and symbols because it works to advance our understanding of why the Sacraments hold so much significance for believers. Ultimately,

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29 “This is my chicken, delivered for you” (my translation), spoofing the Words of Institution in the Mass.
30 Oreilles, Rock et Belles, "RBO Super-Jésus poulet BBQ." YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxVj2CXc-Q.
32 Ibid., 191.
though, I am uneasy with the limitations Tillich seems to place on symbols, attributing their power solely to the collective unconscious. He argues that “participation is not identity; [symbols] are not themselves the Holy. The wholly transcendent transcends every symbol of the Holy.”

My concern is that this argument may not leave enough space for an incarnational understanding of Jesus as the Holy Human who is also God. Tillich claims that human experience and the human mind are what determine the meaning of symbols and when the associations that render a symbol powerful are lost, the symbol dies and is impossible to retrieve.

Understanding the limitations and risks of prioritizing symbolism are especially useful for those who believe in transubstantiation because the doctrine is so closely intertwined with the symbols to which it refers. As Tillich himself says, “[All] idolatry is nothing else than the absolutizing of symbols of the Holy, and making them identical with the Holy itself.” I think Tillich is right to warn of the danger of a simplistic understanding of symbols, which is seemingly pervasive in contemporary culture; handled carelessly, the most sacred vehicle of grace can become a useless idol that hinders spiritual growth.

Perhaps I experience Tillich’s collective writing about symbols as a symbol in itself. As my faith journey continues, some of what I previously understood as participation in the Holy Supper has been lost because it points to the human rather than to the divine. This superseding focus on the human is also the basis for my complaint with seeing the holy meal as an ordinance, a memorial, and not a sacrament, especially when the word “mere” is simultaneously invoked or implied. This view has the potential to diminish the significance of the holy meal in the life of a faithful Christian community. The Eucharist can become a “mere” symbol, “only” an ordinance, or “just” a meal between human beings, which reduces its perceived value. Calvin rejects the arguments of those who claim the sacraments are “merely” signs by reminding us that they point us towards Him who is their Author, and that “mysteries would be frigid…

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34 Ibid.
were they not helps to our faith.”37 Following Augustine, Calvin also seeks to make a distinction between the sacrament as a means of grace and the actual grace received by those who take part in the sacrament when they do so faithfully and not, simply, mechanically.

Now, in order that you may have not a sign devoid of truth, but the thing with the sign, the Word which is included in it must be apprehended by faith. Thus, in so far as by means of the sacraments you will profit in the communion of Christ, will you derive advantage from them.38

For me, the greatest stumbling block is how Tillich speaks of the human experience of the Divine. In the context of Holy Communion, I believe his analysis corresponds to a rigidly memorialist perspective. I take issue with the ambiguity surrounding the way in which he writes about the potency of God at work in the world. Tillich’s postulations have been useful to me in developing my own theological conceptions, but nevertheless prompt the question of whether his theological articulations point to the Holy or away from it? Humanity itself might become the absolutized symbol of the Holy in this formulation of signs and symbols, adding a sense of emptiness to what was once meaningful religious and spiritual language. Attempting to understand the Lord’s Supper in these terms might also diminish the human experience of the numinous by seeing it as a human action rather than a means of Divine Grace.

Thinking back once again to some of my own experiences of Holy Communion, and to the mainstream mockery of the sacrament in Québec’s popular culture, it seems wise to distinguish between the means of grace and the actual grace. Conflating the two may result in the denial of both. For Calvin, “We must not suppose that there is some latent virtue inherent in the sacraments by which they, in themselves, confer the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon us, in the same way in which wine is drunk out of a cup.”39 Although the Reformed tradition emphasizes the spiritual presence of Christ for those who partake of the meal in faith, there seems to be a move

38 Ibid., IV.14.15.
away from understanding Holy Communion as a Mystery - a Sacrament instituted by Christ - to a human institution that responds to spiritual and psychological needs as they are currently understood. When those needs are believed to have changed, the institution changes, and a certain instability may follow.

Calvin could even be said to have a “sacramental ontology” when he speaks of God using ordinary creation so that “things which were formerly bare elements may become sacraments,”40 including the tree of life, the rainbow after Noah’s flood, Moses’ burning bush, and Gideon’s fleece. For Calvin, God can “stamp his creatures with his word” so that anything may become a sacrament, in a certain sense, if it serves the purpose of assisting and establishing faith.41 However, the sacraments as instituted by Christ are meant “to bring up his worshippers and servants in one faith, and the confession of one faith.”42 They are covenantal ceremonies, he says, by which Christ manifests himself more clearly to humanity.43

Christian Scripture, too, may help us find “holy ground” on which we can stand as we engage in ecumenical dialectic regarding the question of the Last Supper. In discussing the sacrament of Holy Communion, Calvin reminds us that “our ancestors … all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.”44 For Calvin, the sacrament of Holy Communion is not a physical meal, but a spiritual one. Paul, in I Corinthians 11:34, reinforces this understanding of the Lord’s Supper by reminding the Corinthians that they should eat at home and not come hungry to the feast.45

Other points of view can be drawn from Holy Scripture, as John 6:52-66 shows us in what René Kieffer, in The Oxford Bible Commentary,  

40 Ibid., IV.14.18.  
41 Ibid.  
42 Ibid., IV.14.19.  
43 Ibid., IV.14.22.  
44 I Corinthians 10:1-4, NRSV  
45 I Corinthians 11:34.
calls an “explicit statement on the Eucharist.” In this passage, Jesus says that one “who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (6:55). This notion confuses many of his disciples who stop following him (6:60) when they find Jesus’ words unpalatable. Especially for Judeans, this idea was particularly offensive because, in addition to the cannibalistic implications, consuming blood is forbidden by Jewish law. Adele Reinhartz’s article on John in the *Fortress Commentary on the Bible* claims that this language may “refer to consuming Jesus’ words and teachings,” rather than a literal consumption of his blood. Meanwhile, in an article on the Johannine Eucharist, New Testament scholar Oscar S. Brooks argues that “to eat Jesus’ flesh and drink his blood is none other than to accept his true humanity” and should therefore not be understood as an argument for transubstantiation. Even in Scripture, there is a flesh-spirit dichotomy in Jesus’ phrase, “it is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is of no avail” (6:63) that could support a Calvinist interpretation of the Holy Supper. Be that as it may, Calvin’s interpretation does not deny the Real Presence, only the physicality of that presence. Although I respect the position that, while not bodily present, “Christ is really present to faith,” for me it does not sufficiently embrace the Mystery of the Sacrament, because, like Luther, I find the separation of Christ’s body and blood from Christ’s spirit to be incomprehensible and this does not seem to be consistent with an incarnational understanding of Christ. Still, even if my understanding is not shared entirely by those with whom I share Holy Communion, the work is done (opus operatum) and I am fed.

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51 The Latin phrase *opus operatum* ("the work wrought") is used to express the idea that grace is imparted by means of the sacraments without taking the administrator of those sacraments into account.
Interestingly, though Jesus references his blood at the last supper in Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, and Luke 22:20, the Lord’s Supper is never instituted in the Gospel of John. Instead, in John 13:1-20 where one would expect to find mentions of the Lord’s Supper, is the story of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. For Reinhartz, “the Eucharist plays no part in the Johannine account of the Last Supper.” Brooks, however, suggests that the “forceful presentation of the humiliated, human, servant, Jesus at the very place where the reader expected to find the institution of the eucharist” emphasizes the necessity of accepting Jesus’ full humanity as well as his divinity. Perhaps only one who “abides in Jesus” and “knows the truth” can know what it is to feed on the flesh and blood of Jesus.

I have no intention of denying individuals their experience of the sacred, but I want to ensure that my fellow Christians who enact the holy meal without a conception of the Real Presence do not deprive themselves of a direct experience of God’s transformative grace from their Celebration by thinking of it as a ritual in which they, rather than God, are the primary actors. In my own experience, the Lord’s Supper can be a Sacrament even when some of those celebrating it may not understand it in such a way. I believe that this understanding is consistent with Augustine’s position against the Donatist heresy, which held that “the spiritual qualities of the priest” could render sacraments invalid. Augustine, and later the Church, argued that Christ was the real minister and so the validity of sacraments was not affected by the status of the one presiding because, as McGrath puts it, “the grounds of their validity do not rest in him.”

As Fahey notes, the return to patristics and biblical hermeneutics provides rich and fertile new ways of understanding the Lord’s Supper. In The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering, Alikin describes how Paul, Ignatius and Justin Martyr all interpret the elements of the eucharistic meal.

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55 McGrath, Reformation Thought, 169.
56 McGrath, Reformation Thought, 169.
as being truly the body and blood of Jesus, instituted as a sacrament by Christ himself.\textsuperscript{58} Ireneaus is “a witness to the strongly held belief that the ‘eucharisized’ bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ.”\textsuperscript{59} Cyril of Jerusalem makes reference to Jesus turning water into wine for the Wedding at Cana, and encourages Christians not to “judge the issue on the matter of taste, but on the basis of faith,” \textsuperscript{60} knowing that in the eating and drinking we are taking Christ’s body and blood into our own bodies and blood and, in doing so, we are participating in the divine nature.\textsuperscript{61} John Crysostom and Augustine both offer a social explanation by stating that “the body of Christ is not only what lies on the altar, it is also the body of the faithful.”\textsuperscript{62}

Jesus was scourged, beaten and humiliated on the cross, and the Church as the Body of Christ is wounded by the schisms that ensue when we refuse to engage in thoughtful, ecumenical conversation. These divisions seem most poignant at that Table where Jesus offers his own broken body.\textsuperscript{63} Even for those who lovingly and gracefully disagree with one another about whether the word “transubstantiation” is adequate or accurate in describing what happens at the Holy Feast, the ecumenical importance of this conversation cannot be overstated. As a believer, I find comfort and guidance in the words of the psalmist to express the profound experience of grace when I approach the altar and there is a shared sense of communion, mystery, devotion and thanksgiving: “O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.”\textsuperscript{64} “Transubstantiation” is a way of saying that, for believers, the bread and the wine make Mystery into a tangible reality. When I sit at His table, Christ feeds me with his own Body and Blood, and through these elements, I am shown the truth of His grace. However, through eucharistic hospitality, Christians with diverse understandings may come to understand

\textsuperscript{59} Wiles and Santer, Documents in Early Christian Thought, 172.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 189.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 188.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 173.
\textsuperscript{63} I Corinthians 11:24
\textsuperscript{64} Psalm 34:8, NRSV.
that the Lord’s Supper is a table where we will only be fed if we come as Christ’s guests.

Bibliography


The Boy Who Lived (and Loved): An Analysis of the Biblical Themes of Life After Death and Love in *Harry Potter*

Suzanne Bonsfils

Not many literary works have defined today’s generation to the same extent as the *Harry Potter* series. Starting from the publication of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* in 1997, all the way to the subsequent commercial success of what has now become the best-selling book series of all time, and ending with the establishment of a universal brand (notably magnified by the adaptation of the original seven books into an eight-part film series), J.K. Rowling has created a fictional universe unlike any other. In spite of the novels’ international triumph, their association to witchcraft ultimately led to their condemnation by a significant part of the Christian population. Both isolated individuals such as “conservative Christian parents [who] have led vigorous crusades to have the books banned from schools and libraries,” and Christian authorities like the Vatican’s official newspaper L’Osservatore Romano.

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Romano\(^3\) have opposed the *Harry Potter* series. For a long time, Rowling herself did not address the Christian themes of her books, for fear that emphasizing the importance of said themes would get in the way for the “people who just wanted the story.”\(^4\) However, in the same article, Rowling admitted to the religious themes present in her novels, adding that regardless of her own faith—given the fact that she is a member of the Church of Scotland—the idea of “life after death” is “something [she] wrestle[s] with a lot,” which explains its prominence in the books. In this essay, I will discuss how, although Rowling's books are seen by many in the Christian community as advocating paganism, it is through the eschatological structure Rowling builds in her novels, wherein the pursuit of immortality is seen as "evil" that she establishes the following morality, similar to the one established in the Bible: that only love is capable of conquering death. I will begin by studying the concept of life after death by associating it, along with other conceptions, with the Biblical tradition of resurrection. After examining the overarching power of love in the novels, I will conclude with a reflection on Rowling’s possible motivations for using these two traditions.

*The Concept of Life After Death*

The concept of life after death is one of the central tenets of the Potter books. In Rowling’s universe, life and death are not seen as binary terms. As Killinger remarks, though “there is little agreement about what it might entail […] among Christians, there is only the insistence that life after death exists.”\(^5\) Similarly, “[t]here is no speculation in the Potter novels about where people go after death or what their afterlife experiences are like.”\(^6\) However, “the dead […] continue to manifest essentially the same


\(^6\) Ibid, 142.
personalities they had in life.”” What links life and death, and ultimately survives in the transition between the two is the soul, a term openly used in the books, such as when discussing the dementors “sucking out [someone’s] soul through [their] mouth.” Splitting the soul, as Voldemort has done with his horcruxes, or simply taking it away from a person is considered by many as a fate worse than death. Indeed, Remus Lupin indicates to Harry that the Dementor’s Kiss is “much worse” than being killed. The idea of the soul is, of course, a tenet of Christian spirituality. As Neal mentions, Jesus affirms its existence (e.g. Mark 8:36), and even transmits that very same idea found in Harry Potter of only “fear[ing] him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” The soul is therefore integral to one’s identity in Harry Potter, and with it, Rowling strays from the modern scientific idea of consciousness and into spiritual, Biblical territory. Its existence is crucial to the understanding of judgment in the afterlife as “the righteous [will go away] into eternal life” versus “eternal punishment.”

Due to this conception of the soul, life after death is present throughout the book in many forms. There are even “interaction[s] between the living and the dead” with “spectral presences” such as ghosts, goblins and poltergeists. Similarly, one of the deathly hallows of the seventh novel—the Resurrection Stone—allows its user to bring back loved ones. However, a “veil” exists between the dead and the living and the former’s presence on earth as a result of the Stone’s power is seen as a temporary sufferance. Both instances of life after death are presented as either self-

7 Ibid.
12 Matthew 25:46.
13 Killinger, God, the Devil, and Harry Potter, 128.
inflicted punishment, such as the ghost the Bloody Baron who “wears his chains as an act of penitence,” or the result of cowardice, such as in the case of the Ghost of Gryffindor, Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington or simply, as is the case with the Stone, unnatural. Consequently, immortality is seen as being abnormal.

It is on the grounds of this reality that the system of morality identifiable in the novels is built. Apart from what Cherret considers to be “obvious biblical symbols,” such as the use of Christian bestiary with Jesus representing the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” (the animal of House Gryffindor) and Satan being called the “ancient serpent” (the animal of House Slytherin), Voldemort, more so than his followers is presented as being evil because of his unrelenting quest for immortality. Tumminio mentions Voldemort possibly being a figure of the anti-Christ, notably through his own resurrection in the fourth book. While Jesus gives his flesh to his disciples in the Last Supper, Voldemort takes his servant’s flesh (Wormtail’s hand) in order to rise again. He is also capable of killing his own followers, as he did without hesitation when he believed Snape possessed the Elder Wand. In the same vein, Voldemort can also be seen as wicked because he challenges a certain hierarchy. Through his refusal of the inevitability of death, Voldemort constantly attempts to distinguish himself from the rest of humanity, and, from a Biblical point of view, he represents beings who see themselves as a God-like figures referred to as "false messiahs and false prophets," Voldemort’s overt, relentless ambition and consequent lack of humility both mark his doom. In contrast, there are multiple parallels to be made between Harry and Jesus. Both are the objects of special births, both are victims of “wicked attempt[s] to exterminate them” and both are “wounded heroes,” Harry with his scar remaining from his first confrontation with Voldemort and Jesus with the marks the nails left

15 Ibid, 496.
17 Revelation 5:5.
18 Revelation 12:9.
20 Rowling, Deathly Hallows, 715.
22 Killinger, God, the Devil, and Harry Potter, 16.
on his hands. These parallels, and many others, portray Harry as a figure of Christ. Yet perhaps the most important similarity between the two can be related to their common resurrection. Harry’s repeated survival after multiple battles with Voldemort at the end of each book is seen by Killinger as an “eschatological achievement, equal to a resurrection.” Subsequent novels in the series will of course confirm this theory, as an actual resurrection takes place in the seventh book. As Jesus does, Harry willingly dies and comes back from the dead, appearing to his “friends and disciples.”

Yet, if immortality is presented as unnatural, how is it that Harry, like Christ, is resurrected? What makes him capable of going against the natural order of things?

The Power of Love

Harry’s “unnatural” resurrection (as it is neither temporary, unlike that given by the Stone, or felt as a permanent condemnation, like the ghosts’ existence) is one of the final clues indicating the overall moral of the story as told by Dumbledore who, in Voldemort’s words, “claimed [love] conquered death.” Indeed, similar to the Bible, love is presented in the series as the virtuous path in opposition not only to hate, but to destruction as well. Love as a source of unity is amplified throughout the novel by Dumbledore’s speech after Voldemort’s reappearance in the fourth novel wherein he affirms “we are only as strong as we are united.” Neal makes a parallel between this idea of community and Jesus’ “call for unity” in Mark 12, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Moreover, the importance of community concerns not only wizards and witches, but also non-magical Muggles, as wizards are encouraged to protect them from evil by Kingsley

23 Ibid, 153.
24 Killinger, God, the Devil, and Harry Potter, 156.
26 Rowling, Deathly Hallows, 739.
27 Rowling, Goblet of Fire, 723.
29 Mark 12:30-31.
Shacklebolt on the pirate radio program Potterwatch in the seventh novel: “Every human life is worth the same, and worth saving.”  

Love’s power is not only presented as a way to achieve unity, but also as the path to forgiveness. In conversation with Peter, Jesus presents forgiveness as an imperative. Similarly, the Lord Himself clearly says “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.” In the books, though there are various examples of forgiveness (such as Lily’s forgiveness of James’ past immaturity, or Harry’s forgiveness of Ron’s initial lack of support during the Triwizard Tournament), at the core of this idea lies Dumbledore. He is presented as both the forgiver, through his forgiving of Hagrid following his expulsion from Hogwarts in his second year, and the forgiven. Indeed, Dumbledore has sinned in the past, most notably with his plan to rule over muggles, and his limitless ambition which caused him to disregard the well-being of his younger brother and sister as revealed in the seventh book. Though he never forgives himself, his salvation is shown by Harry’s ultimate forgiveness of his actions both through their exchange at King’s Cross at the moment of Harry’s death, and through his naming his youngest son after him. As well, love is seen as bringing salvation when it comes to the character of Severus Snape. While Snape belongs to Slytherin House, his Patronus, that is to say the reflection of his soul, is a doe, reflecting his love for Harry’s mother Lily. His love for her, which, in Neal’s words, “[subjugates] his own loathing of Harry” is what causes him to ultimately make good choices in spite of his problematic past, and leads Harry to forgive him in the same way that he forgave Dumbledore. Comparatively, Voldemort once again appears as the anti-Christ; confronted by the Death Eaters who left him thirteen years before, he clearly affirms “I do not forgive.”

It is through love’s various potentialities demonstrated in the story that Rowling provides the reader with an all-embracing moral. Indeed, love

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30 Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 357.
31 Matthew, 18:21.
32 Isaiah 43.
33 Killinger, *God, the Devil, and Harry Potter*, 178.
35 Ibid.
is presented as the ultimate source of power, such as when Harry struggles to create a corporeal Patronus with a happy memory of the first time he flew on a broom in the third book, but instead succeeds with a loving memory of his parents.\(^{37}\) Love’s status as the ultimate source of power is also illustrated by the final fight between Molly Weasley and Bellatrix in the seventh book. Mrs. Weasley is made powerful by her love for her children, and through the grief brought on by Fred’s death, Molly is able to defeat Bellatrix, a highly skilled witch.\(^{38}\) In a similar fashion, Harry’s body rejects Voldemort successfully at the end of the fifth book, and it is not because he is a stronger man or represents the Lord himself as does Jesus, but rather because through the love he has given and in turn received, he is able to drive out someone with more magical experience.\(^{39}\) Many Biblical stories hold the same premise of physically weaker or younger characters who, through faith, beat others more powerful than themselves (e.g. David against Goliath in 1 Samuel 17). Whether love is a representation of God itself, or a manifestation of his loving power, one thing is clear: it is through this love, and this love only, that Harry is able to defeat Voldemort in the fifth novel, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.*\(^{40}\)

It has therefore been established that Harry’s righteous nature, similarly to numerous characters in the series, comes from his ability to love. However, through Lily’s sacrifice, love only protected Harry; it did not enable him to defeat Voldemort, as the term protection solely entails survival. What truly defines Harry as a Christ figure in comparison with the other righteous characters in the series seems to be his “readiness to risk everything on behalf of others.”\(^{41}\) Hermione even takes note of what she calls his “saving-people-thing.”\(^{42}\) Likewise, Neal asserts, “Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost.”\(^{43}\) Consequently, it can be said that Harry defeated Voldemort through sacrificial love; this is where the two Biblical

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38 Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, Chapter 36.
40 Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix*, 897.
41 Killinger, *God, the Devil, and Harry Potter*, 80.
42 Rowling, *Order of the Phoenix*, 733.
traditions of life after death and love meet. Such a meeting is embodied in
the third book by another Dumbledore quote: “You think the dead we loved
ever truly leave us? […] Your father is alive in you, Harry.” Killinger
interprets this passage solely as proof that the novels put forward the
characters’ presence as persisting in the living world even after their death.
This statement could be taken a step further, however, as love becomes the
only source of power capable of immortalizing an individual. It is through
Harry’s love for his father that James lives on. This comment can be
extended to other characters that live on through their namesakes. The love
held by George for Fred, for example, leads him to immortalize him in a way
by naming his son after him. The idea of life after death is once again
represented, but this time, it is done through love.

In addition, and to answer my earlier question (what makes Harry
capable of going against the natural inevitability of lasting death?), it is
precisely because of Harry’s acceptance of his own death, in contrast to
Voldemort’s fear of it, that he is able to be resurrected. As Dumbledore
points out in King’s Cross, “the true master [of death] accepts that he must
die,” and Harry accepts his death precisely because of the love he has for
his friends. Love, and sacrificial love in particular, is therefore the only
power capable of conquering death. Jesus goes through a similar process of
acceptance during the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. While Harry
“[chooses] to allow Voldemort to kill him” and walks into the Forbidden
Forest, Jesus spends his last night on earth praying, recognizing that “[t]he
hour has come” and subsequently “set[s] his face to go to Jerusalem.” Harry’s sacrifice for his friends and loved ones echoes the “sacrifice of the
one who loved us so much that he willingly died in our place” according to

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45 Killinger, *God, the Devil, and Harry Potter*, 80.
47 Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, Chapters 34 & 35.
50 Mark 14:41.
Neal, and the nature of this sacrificial love is exactly what allows for him to come back as Jesus did.

**Rowling's Potential Motivations**

The question of why Rowling would use the two Biblical traditions of love and life after death is a complicated one. The first aspect of Rowling’s reasoning that can be analyzed is her personal background. Rowling spoke of her religious influences during an interview with Oprah: “There is a lot of Christian imagery in the book. […] That’s an allusion to the belief system I grew up in.” At the same time, Rowling admitted in an interview on the Richard and Judy Show that her mother’s death from multiple sclerosis in 1990 “informed [the sense of loss]” and consequently, the theme of death in her novels. As Kissinger remarks, death is treated as a “harsh reality” in the Potter universe. This realism seems to stem from Rowling’s personal experience with grief. Moreover, Rowling has also admitted to certain metaphors in her novels, such as dementors serving as an illustration of depression, which she struggled with for many years. Consequently, Apostolides and Meylahn’s argument that Rowling “used the values of the Gospel that she had grown up with, and still follows, to work her way through her ultimate journey” seems logical.

Rowling’s use of Biblical traditions might also be seen as a way to cement the story in a belief system that is familiar to a large number of readers. In her article, Tumminio mentions that in the evolution of the Christian faith: adolescents today are more keen to see God as an “abstract concept” rather than a personified being like Aslan in C.S. Lewis’ *Chronicles*

52 Ibid., 3432.
53 Ibid., 3110.
56 Killinger, *God, the Devil, and Harry Potter*, 129.
of Narnia.\textsuperscript{58} What might have worked in the 1950s might not work in 1996, the year Rowling spent drafting up Harry’s story from beginning to end. Moreover, the concept of God today is constantly confronted by obstacles in the face of recent technological advances. By avoiding the outright representation of the Lord, Rowling is perhaps attempting to refocus her Biblical message on what matters to her: driving people to aspire, like her, to “use [their] power for good not evil.”\textsuperscript{59} In the same train of thought, Apostolides and Meylahn suggest that Rowling’s obvious use of the Christ discourse is a reaction to Western society’s “dominant discourse of consumerism and materialism.”\textsuperscript{60} The idea that, through these Gospel traditions, the Harry Potter series “challenges the adolescents to choose between seeking identity in materialism or rather in friendship and fellowship and sacrificial love” is supported by the preceding analysis of these traditions, but also, among other things, by the lack of mobile phones in the wizarding world, as well as the fact that Muggle technology cannot be used within the grounds of Hogwarts.\textsuperscript{61}

Finally, Rowling’s use of Biblical traditions indicates the wish to communicate a certain political message as well as a social commentary on modern society. Rowling has admitted that the stigma surrounding werewolves in the series serves as a metaphor for the communities affected by “illnesses that carry a stigma, like HIV and AIDS.”\textsuperscript{62} As her audience includes a large number of members from the LGBT community, Rowling’s comments move to include a whole population often ostracized by the Christian and Jewish communities. The fact that these stories contain ideas of love erasing social, ethnic and identity differences between people is also


\textsuperscript{60} Apostolides and Meylahn, “The lived theology of the Harry Potter series,” 6.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.


demonstrated by the opposition to Voldemort’s racist ideology concerning Muggleborns. Paul the Apostle's renowned declaration, “[y]ou are all one in Jesus Christ”\textsuperscript{63} is consequently mirrored in Rowling’s numerous statements concerning these social metaphors.

I have tried to show that the first Biblical tradition of life after death in the Potter books ultimately lays the foundation for the second, more significant one: love as the only thing capable of conquering death. Though Rowling seems to use the concepts of the soul and resurrection in part to establish Harry as a Christ figure, the main aspect that confirms the Harry Potter series’ compatibility with the Christian ideals described in the Bible is its prevailing moral concerning love. This is also what makes the difference in terms of the characters. Psalm 143 states “no one living is righteous before [God].” Similarly, as Neal reminds us, no one in the Potter universe is perfect, and there is therefore no easy line to draw between good and evil.\textsuperscript{64} What makes characters either good or bad is both their ability to love (which Voldemort does not have, because he was born under the influence of a love potion) \textit{and} their choice to love. Overall, confronted by these spiritual themes, witchcraft and magic become more fictional tools than anything else, while the abstract concept of love is the real source of power in this magical universe. Moreover, Rowling detaches herself from certain Christian traditions by bringing forward a more modern theology, based on the acceptance of the differences in others. In its system of morality, as explained so well by Dumbledore, the Harry Potter series does more than just emphasize the importance of choice, it promotes the overarching virtue of love versus hate, fear, and ignorance, thereby shaping future generations.

\textsuperscript{63} Galatians, 3:28.

\textsuperscript{64} Neal, \textit{The Gospel According to Harry Potter}, 2329.
Bibliography


Whether you are a Lama meditating in a Tibetan monastery or a student studying in a Western metropolis, one thing is certain: we will die one day. Accordingly, it is in our nature to be curious about the afterlife. One Tibetan Buddhist text, the *Bardo Thödol*, or the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, as it is incarnated and known in the West, provides us with a fascinating narrative about our journey through death and afterlife. The full title translates as “Liberation in the Intermediate State Through Hearing,” with “bardo” referring to this state or gap that we experience between death and our next rebirth. In the following pages, I will first explain the birth of the original *Bardo Thödol*; then, the Book incarnations in the West with regards to two prominent translations, or rather, interpretations; and finally, how these two interpretations brought about the Book’s rise to popularity and legacy under the Western spotlight.

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The *Bardo Thödol* was born in the eighth century as a *terma*, meaning “treasure text.”² Its “father,” Padmasambhava, the “Lotus-born,” intentionally hid the text in “stones, lakes, pillars and in the minds of future generation,” because he believed that Tibetans were unready to uncover its profound teachings until, it is said, the right moment came.³ Incidentally, it would come six hundred years later, when Karma Lingpa revealed the *Bardo Thödol* in the fourteenth century. Lingpa allegedly discovered the text on Mt. Gandapar following a dream he had in which he was given a coded map to the hidden location.⁴ Lingpa, the treasure revealer, or tertön, deciphered the hidden away “secrets of Enlightened living and life after death” written in the secret dākinī language, which only he could decipher.⁵ Henceforth, the *Bardo Thödol* became an esoteric element in Tibetan death rituals. It would be recited for forty-nine days after a person’s death to guide the deceased through the interval between one’s death and rebirth. Its esoteric secrecy was veiled until the 1920s, when it was incarnated in the West as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

The title *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, as it is known in the West today, was given by Walter Evans-Wentz. He co-translated the *Bardo Thödol* with the local Lama Dawa Samdup and published the Book with Oxford University Press in 1927.⁶ This was the Book’s first incarnation in the West, and is arguably the best-known version of the Book; its influence was so far-reaching (selling more than 525,000 copies in English since publication), that it became the progenitor of later versions.⁷ Some scholars call this version the “product of a chance meeting between [Tibetans] and a latter-day eccentric.”⁸ Here, Evans-Wentz is seen as an eccentric not only because of his theosophist practices – or, in other words, the worldview based on mystical insights – but also for being a Westerner to enter what

³ Ibid., 47.
⁴ Ibid., 49.
⁵ Ibid., 85.
⁸ Ibid., 47.
was then perceived as a mysterious kingdom. Indeed, in his own preface, he claimed for himself both the “authority of Eastern religion (through his Tibetan journey) and Western science (through his Oxford degree).” His mission was to gather scientific data that will one day lead “all sects of religion to see the Essence of Religion,” by which he meant theosophy.

The Book’s second incarnation in the West became the *Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1964), by Harvard psychologists Timothy Leary and Ralph Metzner. The language of this version was “updated and Americanized,” but the core message remained, which was revealed in an interview with Metzner:

We stripped away [Tibetan] Buddhist iconographic references [to find out] the core message, [that is]: be conscious, don’t be frightened by the frightening visions nor be seduced by the beautiful visions, but remember that they are all but constructions of your mind.

In other words, it is illusion, or visions in the world of samsara which they discuss here. Leary’s version of the *Bardo Thödol* essentially transposed “the various stages of death, the intermediate state, and rebirth described in *Bardo* [onto an] acid trip.” Consequently, Leary saw the text “not as explanation of the process by which the spirit of the dead is reborn,” rather, as instruction on “how to calm down” when drug effects fade. Undoubtedly, Leary’s interpretation of this apparent semblance between the Tibetan death experience and the psychedelic drug experience is wildly different from the traditional way in which rebirth is understood in Tibetan

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9 Ibid., 47.  
10 Ibid., 65.  
11 Ibid., 65.  
14 Ibid., 74.
Buddhism. Nonetheless, Leary’s version demonstrates the versatility of meaning of the Book.

In some ways, it is unsurprising to see Evans-Wentz and Leary interpreting the Book as transpositions of theosophy and a paradigmatic “acid trip.” After all, they have had little contact with the practices of ordinary Tibetans. Neither interpreter was born into the lineage that naturally bestows authenticity, but had to derive this authenticity from other sources. Despite their different interpretations, the biggest achievement of the two incarnations of the Book is that they brought the treasure text under the spotlight of 20th century Western society. Moreover, with the publication of each edition, the Book somehow emphasized a different purpose that the *Bardo Thödol* had been meant to serve. This process of reincarnated discovery reveals the thematic diversity, relevance and multifunctionality of the Book. However, despite the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*'s rising prominence in the West, the Book was unheard of among traditional Tibetan scholars until 1959.

Now, turning to the trajectory of the Book: exactly how did it become so popular and leave its legacy in the West, specifically in the English-speaking world? The West was in the midst of recovery from the aftermath of World War I when Evans-Wentz first published the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. The timing of its publication coincidentally met with this “resurgence of spiritualism after the First World War, and a renewed interest in knowing the fate of the dead.” The fact that Evans-Wentz gave the Book a title similar to the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* (another immensely popular spiritual book at the time) attracted publicity and saw a rise in its sales. Like its Egyptian “alternative,” the Tibetan Book saw death initiation as fundamentally different from that of Western Christianity. In Christianity, initiation is a preparation for death, while in the *Bardo Thödol*, initiation is a preparation for rebirth. Alternatively, death is not

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15 Ibid., 83.
16 Ibid., 83.
18 Ibid., 49.
19 Ibid., 48.
20 Ibid., 48.
the end but the beginning; or, in Arjia Rinpoche’s words: “This life is important, but not as important as the next life.” The latter point perhaps further resonated with, and provided consolation to, those Westerners who had lost their loved ones in WWI. Regardless, Evans-Wentz’s version of the Book has since become the most influential in the Bardo Thödol’s history of incarnation; so influential, in fact, his version was referenced to a greater degree by later versions than the original Bardo Thödol. In this way, Evans-Wentz’s version of the Book could be seen as the father of all future versions.

Leary and Metzner’s interpretation of the Book was published in 1964, a time when many young people, or “hippies,” started to revolt against social norms. One way to manifest their rebellious, countercultural attitude was with the extensive use of psychedelic drugs such as LSD. Leary believed the experiences in the Book could be induced through the use of psychedelic drugs. Accordingly, the authors decontextualized the Book from its traditional use as a mortuary text so as to appeal to those psychedelic drug-using “hippies.” Leary’s co-editor Metzner said in a 2013 interview, “To this day, we still get letters from people thanking us for having written the Book, because it prepared people for considering psychedelic experience as a possibly spiritual experience.” Although death and psychedelic experience are quite different, the latter experience is, as evident with the popularity of Leary and Metzner’s interpretation of the Book, perhaps the closest feeling one can have to death; or so it seemed to those drug-taking hippies.

Today, as I browse through different versions of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, I find these versions filled with clashing voices, comments and

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23 Ibid., 47.
notes from various so-called authorities on the subject. In a way, these Western editors could have impurified the text’s incarnation through their attempt to overinterpret or perhaps even misconstrue its original meaning. Indeed, the Bardo Thödol, as a doctrine of death and rebirth, seems to have existed unrecorded at first. By the time it had been written down, “corruptions inevitably crept into the text, such that it cannot be accurate in all details.” Plus, knowledge of the book had been esoteric for centuries, meaning that its content remained inscrutable even for those who saw it. For these two reasons, the Bardo Thödol would have been very susceptible to the influence of the popular or exoteric view.” Similarly, its content may have been reduced or misread over time. Without a doubt, Evans-Wentz and Leary’s interpretations also contribute to these dynamics. Still, one could equally argue that it was necessary for the discoverer of the text to translate it in such a way as to make it meaningful for its time.

The Bardo Thödol, or the Tibetan Book of the Dead, as it is incarnated and known in the West, is a fascinating narrative about our journey through death and the afterlife. To me, the Book’s journey of incarnation and reinterpretations by the West are perhaps even more intriguing than its content. When Evans-Wentz and Leary transposed the text into a theosophical reading and a paradigmatic “acid trip,” their goal was, above all, to introduce the Book to Western eyes. Still, when the authors tried to appeal to a Western audience and make it meaningful for

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25 This browsing experience led to my finding one fascinating translation of the Book by F. Fremantle and C. Trungpa that was owned by a co-signer of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights before he donated it to McGill.
29 In his alternative interpretation, Evans-Wentz believes that the essentials of the Bardo Thödol are Pre-Buddhist in origin. It is interesting to see in a copy of the Book kindly lent to me by Professor Braitstein that she wrote beside these lines from some 20 years ago: “Wow – some old story of ‘real’ teachings of the Book were being corrupted by Buddhists.”
its time, it too becomes their inevitable fate to overinterpret or perhaps even misconstrue the original meaning of the Bardo Thödol.

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