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Awaiting Enlightenment

Jason Millward

Sculpture, 2016
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INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant cuneiform texts from the ancient world is *Enûma Eliš*.¹ It was discovered in the 19th century by Henry Austin and first published by George Smith. Composed during the Old Babylonian period and written by scribes involved in cultic leadership, the text narrates a myth about the rise of Marduk as head of the pantheon. In the myth, Apsû, the husband of the premortal goddess, Tiamat, is murdered for plotting rebellion against the pantheon. Angry that her husband has been killed, Tiamat prepares to destroy the current leadership and establish

her own order. When the pantheon hears of her plan, they attempt to thwart it, but fail. The pantheon then turns to Marduk for help, to which he agrees, but only if he is established as the supreme deity as recompense. Because Marduk uses the bodies of Tiamat and Apsû to create mankind and the world, scholars refer to this text as *The Babylonian Creation Myth*.

In Biblical Studies, *Enûma Eliš* influenced renewed discussion regarding the historicity and mythological aspects of the Hebrew Bible. Concluding her analysis on how the discovery of *Enûma Eliš* impacted scholarship through a comparative studies approach of Genesis 1, Joan Heuer DeLano offered a polished summary:

The comparative study, drawing as it did from comparative religion and anthropology, reached beyond the small group of scholars who engaged in the primary research. It impinged on biblical scholarship in its implicit questioning of Mosaic authorship. Its acceptance by biblical scholars afforded… a broader reception in biblical commentaries. These, in turn, made the primary research available to students, teachers, preachers, and other interested readers. Indeed, George Smith’s initial publication and enthusiasm regarding the discovery of the Babylonian creation tablets

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sparked a scholarly discussion which went well beyond the limits of Assyriological scholarship. Like a pebble cast into a stream, the content, speculation and methodology of the comparative study spread into wider scholarly circles.³

While scholars like George Smith, A. H. Sayce, and L. W. King drew parallels between Genesis 1 and *Enûma Eliš* before 1895, comparative study garnered the most attention through Hermann Gunkel’s *Schöpfung und Chaos* (1895).⁴ In his work, Gunkel utilized the ancient Near Eastern motif *Chaoskampf* while comparing Genesis 1 and *Enûma Eliš*. (*Chaoskampf* is a motif of “a cosmic battle with the powers of chaos” and “a combat between a patron god who is associated with order and


some sort of a power of chaos.”)⁵ Safwat Marzouk uses the term to designate “a loss of boundaries and to describe a state of disorder.”⁶ This understanding is misleading as it anachronistically defines oppositional figures as “agents of chaos” or “cosmic evil” rather than what Debra Ballentine has suggested as “agents of an alternative divine power structure,”⁷ a topic we will explore further as part of the methodological assumptions.

Gender also has been a major topic of interest among scholars regarding this myth. Tikva Frymer-Kensky’s *In the Wake of the Goddesses* thoroughly explores gender in the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible. In her diachronic approach to myth and history, she argues that the earliest Sumerian records provided royal women considerable power; however, due to unknown factors, goddesses became eclipsed in tandem with the public role of women. Frymer-Kensky asserts, “the end of the second millennium was a male’s world, above and below; and the

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⁶ Ibid., 16.
ancient goddesses have all but disappeared.”

More recently, Karin Sonik explored how the character Tiamat steps outside of social boundaries to become the monstrous antagonist. While these works have provided critical insight to portrayals of gender in Enūma Eliš, none utilize a comparative approach to examine how the literature reflects the gender and power dynamics in two related, albeit distinct, cultures in the ancient world. For instance, Frymer-Kensky explores Elohim in the Hebrew Bible, Tiamat, and various other Mesopotamian deities; however, she never attempts comparative analysis to unpack how gender and power were related in the communities behind the Priestly Creation Account (Genesis 1:1-2:4a; henceforth PCA) and Enūma Eliš. Likewise, Benjamin Foster’s work has also been important; however, he primarily provides narrative overview rather than in-depth analysis.

It is my hope that this paper will begin to fill a major lacuna in the scholarship on gender and power dynamics in Enūma Eliš and PCA by elucidating our understanding

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of ancient cultures. Utilizing Ballentine’s focus on alternative power structures and the work of prominent scholars such as Frymer-Kensky and Foster, we will compare the dynamics between gender and power in *Enūma Eliš* and the Priestly Creation Account (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) as found in the Genesis account within the Hebrew Bible.\(^\text{12}\) In doing so, I argue that the socio-political and religious atmospheres of each text will be further elucidated. Additionally, I hope to demonstrate that *Enūma Eliš* as liturgy encouraged a strong sense of patriarchal power over women, while PCA as liturgy encouraged an egalitarian view of gender and power.

Prior to analysis, there are three preliminary issues to deal with: terminology, methodological assumptions, and historical and literary relationship between the two accounts.

**TERMINOLOGY**

Because this paper is about gender and power dynamics, it is necessary to define the word gender. For this paper, “gender” refers to the biological distinction between males and females. There are, however, some nuances to address regarding this issue. First of all, eunuchs played

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\(^{12}\) Helen Kraus, *Gender Issues in Ancient and Reformation Translations of Genesis 1-4* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) explores gender in Genesis 1-4; however, she does not distinguish between the P and J sources in the Genesis creation accounts.
important political and social roles in the ancient Near East. They were still considered male, as can be extracted from the text, which refers to eunuchs with masculine pronouns. To apply modern gender constructs is anachronistic and misrepresents the text. Designation as a eunuch had more to do with social opportunities than any sort of personal identity and eunuchs were still considered male. Secondly, Martti Nissinen highlights an important third gender known in Mesopotamian literature as assinu, kurgarrû, and sinnišānu who were known in different roles such as “cross-dressing, ritual dance, healing, prophecy, and lament.” While this third gender or non-gender was active in Mesopotamian history, their justification for not conforming to cultural sexual ideals made them into “acceptable gender roles by way of manifestly violating them.” As defined by S. Crane, gender is “the exterior, social interpretation of sexual

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14 COS 2.132 §15, 2.117D, 2.118F, 2.118D, 2.119A, 1.159.75-79.
15 Martti Nissinen, “Are There Homosexuals in Mesopotamian Literature”, in Journal of the American Oriental Society 130.1 (2010), 73-77, carefully notes that “ancient written sources were not composed with the… idea of ‘sexuality’ in mind and do not categorize human gender and its manifestations accordingly.”
16 Ibid, 75.
17 Ibid, 76. See also Ilan Peled, Masculinities and Third Gender, Alter Orient und Altes Testament Band 435 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016), 32-34.
practices, specific to a particular society. Sexuality, broadly understood as the generation, expression, and organization of desire, is the ongoing behavior that informs gendered identities.” Ancient Mesopotamian gender and sexuality, therefore, ought to be viewed through their unique culture and society, namely with males, females, and the non-gender. In context of PCA and Enūma Eliš, though, the third gender never appears. Therefore, this study will utilize gender to reference males and females as two of three biological, gender, and social categories in ancient Mesopotamia.

The term “power” is the authority and ideological rule associated with kingship. Authority and ideological rule were often established through historiography in order to legitimize the king and his sponsoring deity. Within ancient Near Eastern literature, one primary tool for legitimation was establishment of a temple, an important aspect to both Enūma Eliš and PCA. Although Enūma Eliš is a mythological account, it

18 Harris, Gender and Aging In Mesopotamia, 142, citing S. Crane.
20 Regarding Enūma Eliš, see Tablet 6.70-75; Hugh W. Nibley, “Return to the Temple,” in Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 71-73, emphasizes focus on the lack of power by Marduk through
still fits under John Walton’s categorization of types of historiographical literature as legitimation, theological, polemical, and foundation history.\textsuperscript{21}

Essentially \textit{Enūma Eliš} legitimates Marduk’s leadership over the entire pantheon of Mesopotamian deities and the cosmos via mythological narrative and the establishment of a temple.\textsuperscript{22} Likewise, PCA is a foundational mythological narrative attesting to Elohim’s power over the cosmos and humanity. Although Elohim and Marduk are legitimized in

\textsuperscript{21} Walton, \textit{Ancient Near Eastern Though and the Old Testament}, 231, notes that “foundation narratives tend to be mythographical rather than historiographical.” So although \textit{Enūma Eliš} and the Priestly Creation Account are myths, they can be understood as legitimation historiography.

distinct ways, with distinct religious, political, and social contexts, they are both legitimized as king and primary deity through their respective mythographical foundational narratives and the establishment of a temple as the foundation and bond that holds together the cosmos.\textsuperscript{23} Historically these ideas were reinforced in society on a daily basis because temples played a central role in ancient societies.\textsuperscript{24} Although power is defined, what is the “myth” in which power is legitimized?

“Myth” is often understood in the sense of falsehood or error.\textsuperscript{25} Douglas Knight and Amy-Jill Levine offer a more balanced approach to defining myth: “[myth] means a story, usually set in the distant past when the normal rules of physics do not apply (i.e., that world is not our world), that offers a summary of a cultural worldview; it explains how life as we know it came to be; it expresses our hopes and fears. It is true, in the same way that a parable is true.”\textsuperscript{26} Likewise, Jan Assmann notes that “The

\textsuperscript{23} Walton, \textit{Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology}, 102.
theme of myth was not the essence of the deities, but rather … the essence of reality … Myths establish and enclose the area in which human actions and experiences can be oriented. The stories they tell about deities are supposed to bring to light the meaningful structure of reality.”

Assmann, Knight and Levine focus on the reality of myth as an expression of social, political, and religious situations and provide structure by which to understand them. What needs to be avoided is the tendency to assume myths are universally connected. J.G. Frazer argued for the “Urmyth,” namely that all myths build off of one original myth—he was the first to introduce this into scholarship. He also assumed that all mythology can be compared without question of time period or geographical location.

After analyzing various approaches to the myth and ritual theories, including Frazer’s, Catherine Bell aptly notes that her “analyses help demonstrate that attempts to understand ritual,” and thereby myth, “by focusing on its supposed “origins” can be highly misleading; on the other hand, they also suggest that a focus on underlying universal patterns common to cultures across space and time is likely to come undone by the

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details of history.” Therefore, we will not apply the Urmyth model and will consider the autonomous nature of different cultural myths to provide a broader understanding of each myth, whilst fully recognizing possible intercultural influences.

Myth reflects the assumptions about gender and how it relates to power within a historical context. In order to compare Enūma Eliš and PCA, there must be an established, historical relationship between the two mythological creation accounts. That relationship will be demonstrated after discussion of our methodological assumptions.

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

As Frymer-Kenskey demonstrates, by the period of composition of the Hebrew Bible, the feminine roles typified by goddesses in Sumerian and other early myths were now “performed by the One God of Israel.”

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29 Bell, Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions, 20. For example, Benjamin Foster, “Enūma Eliš as a Work of Literature”, 20-21, notes how in Enūma Eliš myth fails to fall into popular, generalized categories where the son murders his father and marries his mother. Thus, right off the bat Enūma Eliš does not fit into this popular construct and must be understood in its own terms.

30 Ballentine, The Conflict Myth, 31, comments, for example, that Enūma Eliš’s “divine legitimation of Babylon and the elevation of Babylon’s patron deity within the pantheon would fit within a broader effort of Nebuchadnezzar I to promote “nationalistic revival” within the Babylonian state.”

31 Frymer-Kenskey, In the Wake of the Goddesses, 14.

Baring and Cashford, reaching similar conclusions, emphasize the foundations of ancient Israelite religion:

The Levite priesthood of Israel constructed its doctrine of pure monotheism with the image of the sole Father God, King of kings and God of gods. No apparent trace of the goddess and her son-lover remained to challenge it, although in other cultures this myth continued to live, however obscurely. Doctrinally (but only doctrinally) the drama of the conflict with the goddess is finished: the supreme Father is One.33

Baring and Cashford do well in emphasizing the absence of an explicitly feminine role in ancient Israelite religion; however, the conclusion is problematic, for they fail to identify the extent to which the Levite Priesthood was actually representative of ancient Judahite religion. In reality, Judahite elite drove the idea of divine exclusiveness and “for most of the population…the existence of other deities and the propriety of their private worship were never very much in question.”34 The average Judahite did not adhere to the priestly school of thought. Thus the whole

of Judahite thought is not accurately represented in PCA.\textsuperscript{35} Arvid S. Kapelrud offers a similar conclusion: the author was likely a learned scribe, held some sort of important position in the Judaean community, and possibly participated in dialogue with Babylonians.\textsuperscript{36} Therefore, in analyzing PCA, the group represented is the Judahite elites who are part of the priestly school of thought. Likewise,\textit{Enûma Eliš} does not constitute the norm in Babylonian thought; rather, as W. G. Lambert notes, it “merely reflects the situation that it was popular in the period when the libraries were formed from which most Babylonian literature has reached us.”\textsuperscript{37} Augmenting Lambert’s statement,\textit{Enûma Eliš} likely reflects the literate and elite class of peoples. While the thoughts and roles of the elite in ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Israel enhance our understanding of the ancient world, we should be careful not to apply the analysis to the whole of each culture and society.


\textsuperscript{37} Lambert, \textit{Babylonian Creation Myths}, 464-465.
Secondly, we will not utilize *Chaoskampf* and understand Tiamat as an agent of Chaos; rather, we will use Ballentine’s approach to the conflict motif: competition between two power structures. Far too often, the conflict myth in *Enûma Eliš* is interpreted as an issue of Chaos versus Order with Tiamat as an agent of Chaos. Being an agent of Chaos, Tiamat becomes nothing more than one who breaks boundaries. To label Tiamat as an agent of Chaos anachronistically applies Greek and Roman traditions to the conceptual world of *Enûma Eliš*.\(^{38}\) In her article on gender in *Enûma Eliš*, Sonik categorizes Tiamat’s organization, in contrast to Marduk’s, as “chaos incarnate.”\(^{39}\) However, the conflict myth and struggle between gods and goddesses, alternatively, should be read as a struggle for divine power structure and acceptance of it among the pantheon. As Ballentine points out, for example, Kingu’s kingship and his possession of the Tablet of Destinies—a material, legal document declaring one’s rule over the universe—is the same device utilized by other gods, indicating that the issue relates to the acceptance of divine hierarchy and the power of the

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\(^{38}\) Contra Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 184-185, who utilizes Hesoid’s *Theogony* and Virgil’s *Aeneid* to draw out that chaos, opposite *cosmos*, “is more evident in the ancient Near East”. See Frymer Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 75, “Ti’amat is not an evil force;” Foster, “Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature,” 20, “our story is butchered by some experts on myth who claim that Tiamat is “chaos” so Marduk kills chaos to establish ‘order.’”

\(^{39}\) Sonik, “Gender Matters in *Enûma Eliš*”, 95.
deity. PCA will be read through a similar lens: it is not about Elohim defeating Chaos and establishing Order, but about legitimizing his power through the creation of mankind, his temple, and establishing order within the world. Having established functioning definitions and our methodological assumptions, we will proceed by demonstrating the historical and literary relationship between the two texts in order to justify their comparison.

**HISTORICAL AND LITERARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENŬMA ELIŠ AND THE PRIESTLY CREATION ACCOUNT**

Although the two pieces of literature under examination do not originate from the same cultural and geographical groups, there is compelling evidence that both accounts are connected literarily and historically. Kenton Sparks applies the mimetic phenomena to the priestly account based on the idea that “peripheral cultures … seek legitimacy by symbolically imitating the prestigious culture that dominates them.”

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41 Sparks, “*Enûma Elish* and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism”, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 126, No. 4 (Winter, 2007), 625-648. See the classic
Considering the likelihood of Babylonian influence following the exile of Judean elites, his proposition for mimesis and literary influence is highly likely.\textsuperscript{42} Adding to the corpus of already existing scholarship about the similarities between Mesopotamian and Israelite rituals,\textsuperscript{43} Sparks extends the literary, and therefore historical, relationship between the two texts by exploring the priestly corpus and connecting it to \textit{Enūma Eliš} and the \textit{Akītu} rite. Specifically regarding PCA, a significant number of thematic similarities between the two texts further indicate their historical and literary relationship.\textsuperscript{44} While Sparks’s evidence is compelling, it is not

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\item[\textsuperscript{43}] Sparks, “Enūma Elish and Priestly Mimesis”, 634 n. 25, cites Baruch A. Levine, \textit{In the Presence of the Lord: A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel} (SJLA 5; Leiden: Brill, 1974); Jacob Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus I-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary} (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1067-70, 79-84; David P. Wright, \textit{The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature} (SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); James M. Fennelly, “The Persepolis Ritual”, in \textit{Biblical Archaeologist} (Summer, 1980), 140, even notes that a copy of Tablet 5 was copied for Assurbanipal’s library (c. 668-626 BCE) and one Tablet of the myth dates to 495 BCE during Persian Empire. He also notes that \textit{Enūma Eliš} likely influenced the Persian ritual at Persepolis, re-enforcing the history connection between PCA and \textit{Enūma Eliš}. Lambert, \textit{Babylonian Creation Myths}, 6, writes that one MSS dates to the Seleucid period, another indication that the author of PCA may have been aware of the myth.
\item[\textsuperscript{44}] Sparks, “Enūma Elish and Priestly Mimesis”, 631-632. For additional analysis of literary relationship between the two sources, see Babtunde Ogunlana, “Inspiration and
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compelling enough to argue that the priestly “agenda was not merely to imitate Enûma Elish; it was to imitate Mesopotamia in general.”

Essentially Sparks argues that the priestly author, the author who wrote PCA, wrote all of the priestly material as a polemic against Enûma Elish. Because the priestly writer existed in a common conceptual world as Enûma Eliš, cultural exchange, development, and appropriations should not be immediately considered polemical. We should not merely assume that the author of PCA was directly responding to Enûma Eliš. The priestly author should be permitted to maintain a voice with independent intentions and some ideological autonomy.

Although, Marduk’s historical city of Babylon was destroyed by Xerxes (485-465 BCE), studies demonstrate the continued existence of the cult of Marduk and the use of Enûma Eliš. As both texts existed within the same historical framework, we are justified to compare them. Therefore, historical and literary relationship between Enûma Eliš and PCA is reasonable, so long as we permit PCA to maintain some sense of


45 Sparks, “Enûma Elish and Priestly Mimesis”, 642.
autonomy in its literary, mythological, and ideological choices. Having established the historical and literary relationship between *Enûma Eliš* and PCA, we will explore the gender and power dynamics and then compare the dynamics within each text.

**ENûMA ELIŠ: GENDER AND POWER**

A basic assumption in *Enûma Eliš* is that deities are gendered. Each genealogical development at the beginning of the text is the result of some sort of divine sexual intercourse between a god and goddess; thus we see gender play a major role within *Enûma Eliš*. The question remains; what role does gender play within the text and how does it relate to power?

Through the text *a-me-lu* is used to denote human beings as opposed to deities and animals. *A-me-lu* is the masculine form for humankind. By referencing the term for humanity only in the masculine

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48 a-mi-lu: See *CAD*, A2, p. 49, in the sense of “in contrast to gods and animals”.
form, the author may subtly be conveying an idea that men are more powerful than women. To claim this, though, is highly conjectural, especially because a-me-lu may be used as a common term for humanity. Thus, it should not be considered significant for understanding Enûma Eliš’s overall gender and power dynamics. The following arguments are more substantial to the gender and power dynamics.

Goddesses do have authority and power in Enûma Eliš. Of Tiamat it is said “her commands were tremendous, not to be resisted” (1.145). The word “command” (te-re-tu-ša) relates to a decree “referring to the order of the cosmos,” emphasizing Tiamat’s perceived power.49 Additionally, she creates monsters to destroy the noisy pantheon and deems them gods (1.138). While the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary reads that Tiamat literally transforms the monsters into gods,50 Lambert’s translation depicts the transformation as less literal, they are made godlike, rather than into gods. Both translations, however, demonstrate extraordinary power on Tiamat’s part as she attempts to thwart the pantheon and establish a new power

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49 tērtu: See CAD, T, p.363, which translates it as “her decrees are weighty, they are irresistible”
50 Ilu: See CAD, I-J, p.91, where “(Tiamat) endowed (them) with radiance, (and thus) turned (them) into gods.”
structure.\textsuperscript{51} When Ea and Anu eventually attempt overthrowing Tiamat, they do so in fear of her power and strength (2.85-94, 2.104-118).

Following Tiamat’s defeat, Marduk commands humanity to bring food to the gods and goddesses, symbolizing the recognition of both genders (6.115-116). At least speaking generically, humanity is required to be pious unbiasedly towards both genders in the pantheon.\textsuperscript{52} In each of the previous examples, the female gender is demonstrated to hold power in some fashion; however, despite numerous expressions of women’s authority, the text also reveals that male deities tend to ridicule that authority.\textsuperscript{53}

In his article on \textit{Enûma Eliš} as literature, Benjamin Foster explores the instances of gender conflict. After Foster establishes that Tiamat is the only significant female character in the story arc, he notes that male gods mock her strength as secondary to themselves: “Though a woman’s

\textsuperscript{51} Being “godlike” versus a “god” does, though, nuance the extent to which each interpreter and poet understands Tiamat’s power. \textit{COS} 1.111 translates the phrase as “Causing them to bear auras like gods.”

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{ḥasāsu}: See \textit{CAD}, H, p. 122, “v.; (1) to think of a deity = to heed a deity, to be pious”.

\textsuperscript{53} See Foster, “Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature”, 20. Regarding the overall narrative of Tiamat, Sonik, “Gender Matters in \textit{Enûma Eliš}”, 93-94, notes that after Tiamat chooses to avenge her husband Apsû, she becomes an unnatural force who “ceases to play the role of a goddess, of a proper domestic female, and takes on the mantle of a monster”.
strength is very great, it is not equal to a man’s.”\textsuperscript{54} Ironically, these statements follow Ea and Anu’s failures to defeat Tiamat, demonstrating intent to overrule female power despite her clear supremacy, at least over Ea and Anu.

Second, Tiamat is presented as a passive deity prior to her attempt to destroy the pantheon. Rather than becoming angry, some children of Tiamat must stir her from her indifference regarding Apsû’s death:

When Apsû, your spouse, was killed,  
You did not go at his side, but sat quietly\textsuperscript{55} ...  
You gave no thought to Apsû, your spouse, ...  
And as for us, who cannot rest, you do not love us!  
Consider our burden, our eyes are hollow.  
Break the immovable yoke that we may sleep.  
Make battle, avenge them! ...  
Tiamat heard, the speech pleased her.  
She said, “Let us do now \textit{all you have advised}.”

(1.113-114, 117, 119-123, 125-126; italics added for emphasis)

In this passage, Tiamat’s children deride her inaction following Apsû’s death. She only acts under their advice. Tiamat’s depiction as an indifferent and passive character reflect words by Catherine Keller: when Tiamat “falls into psychic disarray ... the gods of the middle generation

\textsuperscript{54} Foster, “Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature”, 21. These words also occur in 2.116 and 2.92.

\textsuperscript{55} See qāliš: \textit{CAD}, Q, 59, “adv. ; silently, in silence” indicates her passivity in the situation.
guilt-trip her.”\textsuperscript{56} Evidently Tiamat is subject to manipulation via guilt-tripping, the author painting her as a caricature of women. Expanding on how Tiamat shifts from being an indifferent pacifist into a fearsome aggressor and monster, Sonik explains it as “the charge of her restive children, striking at the core of her identity as a civilized being, that she is a failure as both a wife and a mother.” As a result, Tiamat becomes an unnatural figure and no longer fits the feminine paradigm.\textsuperscript{57} Thus the caricature of women functions by depicting Tiamat as breaking the social boundaries of what is expected from females.

Third, when Tiamat is finally provoked and convinced to rouse a rebellion, she places Kingu as the king of the alternative power structure, providing him army leadership, making him the weapon bearer, and giving him a throne (1.148-152). As a matter of fact, the term for the lordship ascribed to Kingu by Tiamat is the same ascribed to Marduk, the primary difference being that Marduk’s lordship is explicitly unopposed.\textsuperscript{58} Rather than glorifying Tiamat for her power, Kingu is instead glorified as the

\textsuperscript{57} Sonik, “Gender Matters in \textit{Enūma Eliš},” 95.
\textsuperscript{58} See ēnūtu: \textit{CAD}, E, 180. Note Lambert’s translation that Marduk’s lordship was “superior and himself without rival” (6.106).
leader when she provides him the Tablet of Destinies (1.157). Following
the rebellion, Ea accuses Kingu of making war (6.21-34), not Tiamat.
Especially note 6.29-30: “Qingu is the one who instigates warfare, / Who
made Tiamat rebel and set battle in motion.”  Foster highlights this
passage, noting that “by no stretch of the imagination did Qingu “suborn
to Tiamat” because he does nothing in the story itself.” Placing
responsibility upon Kingu rather than Tiamat highlights an important
aspect of the ideology behind Enūma Eliš, namely that women should
remain in their perceived boundaries as proper domestic females. For this
reason, power is ascribed to Kingu rather than Tiamat and Marduk
condemns Tiamat as an “unnatural mother.”

In each instance discussed above, it is evident that, while Tiamat
has power, men clearly perceive her power as inferior. Rather than
permitting Tiamat to maintain lordship, the author establishes male
antagonists that eventually overthrow her. An alternative divine power

59 Describing the Tablets of Destiny, Fennelly, “The Persepolis Ritual”, 140, writes that
“the Tablets of Destiny are like two stones on which the sacred law is written” (140).
These tablets were representative that one controlled the destiny of the universe. Note the
similarities between the Tablets of Destiny and the tablets from Mount Sinai: “When God
finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him two tablets of the covenant,
tables of stone, written with the finger of God” (italics added for emphasis, NRSV,
Exodus 31:18).

60 Foster, “Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature”, 21.
61 Sonik, “Gender Matters in Enūma Eliš”, 95; Tablet 4.79-84.
structure, which Tiamat establishes, is overthrown by Marduk who sets up
his own divine power structure. His success is distinctly a male
accomplishment.62 Grounding these political dynamics in history through
the yearly akītu festival,63 Ballentine writes that it is “an example of how
the ideology of Enuma Elish, a particular Babylonian articulation of the
conflict topos, was used for political purposes and it offers a view of the
legitimizing connotations of the conflict topos in Babylonian traditions.”64
Within those political purposes, the gender and power dynamic
simultaneously become reinforced on a yearly basis. In agreement with
Keller, “the new masculine creation is performed as a satiric aggression
against the mother’s body, to be replayed annually at the festival of the
new year.”65 The satiric aggression to which Keller refers is how Tiamat’s
body becomes mutilated for the cosmos: “He split her into two like a dried
fish: / One half of her he set up and stretched out as the heavens. / He
stretched the skin and appointed a watch / With the instruction not to let
her waters escape” (4.136-140). Annual liturgical reproduction of Enûma

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62 Foster, “Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature, 22; See Sonik, “Gender Matters in
Enûma Eliš”, 95 who emphasizes the complete butchering of Tiamat the Mother Goddess
as material for establishing Order.
63 The akītu festival was a New Year festival in ancient Mesopotamia within which
Enuma Elish was recited. See “Akitu Ceremony”, Eric Orlin (ed.), The Routledge
64 Ballentine, The Conflict Myth, 38.
Eliš, thus, engrained even deeper into the minds of the viewers the power which men hold over women and, I argue, impacted the decline of the goddesses’ role in the ancient Near Eastern pantheon.66

PRIESTLY CREATION ACCOUNT: GENDER AND POWER

The Priestly Creation Account (Genesis 1:1-2:4a) is a myth about how God created the world in seven days. In classic and recent studies, the priestly creation is the beginning of what is considered the priestly Source, a hypothesized source for the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Unlike Genesis 2:4a-24, PCA does not include the account of Adam and Eve.

Before engaging with Genesis 1:1-2:4a, there are two preliminary issues to deal with: the relationship between Tiamat and tehom,67 and the role of man in the image (ṣēlēm) and likeness (ḏēmūṯ) of Elohim. First of all, Tiamat and tehom, the term in Genesis 1:2 used to reference the deep, are conceptually similar and have a cognate relationship.68 Tsumura

67 Recent and classic studies argue that tehom is a demythologized representation of Tiamat.
68 Walton, Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology, 145, 7;
argues that *tehom* should not be understood as demythologized⁶⁹ chaos to be defeated.⁷⁰ In a critique of Tsumura’s argument, Sparks notes that “nothing … precludes a Hebrew author using his own term, [*tehom*], in a polemic against the obviously related cognate term Tiamat.”⁷¹ Although Spark claims that Tsumura’s argument does not hold, he fails to provide compelling evidence for *tehom* as a polemic term. After all, *tehom* is used in many contexts to represent primeval water.⁷² These waters are used due to the ancient Near Eastern cognitive environment in which water was part of the pre-cosmic creation.⁷³ Therefore, the *tehom* in the Israelite portrayal “does not present the precreation state as negative or personal/personified; instead, it is a neutral, functionless ambiguity.”⁷⁴ Such a conclusion is important because it clarifies that, at least when we compare PCA and

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⁷¹ Sparks, “Enûma Elish and Priestly Mimesis”, 630.
Enûma Eliš, Tiamat and tehom should not be compared or examined in tandem for their gender and power dynamics.

Secondly, we need to determine the historical and cultural foundations of ṣēlēm and ḏ’mût, along with their literary function in Genesis 1. ṣēlēm is typically translated as “image” and ḏ’mût as “likeness.”75 In an older, yet valuable, article on the image of God, D. Clines writes: “the term ‘likeness’ is an assurance that man is an adequate and faithful representative of God on earth. … The image is to be understood not so much ontologically as existentially: it comes to expression not in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. This function is to represent God’s lordship to the lower orders of creation.”76 Randall Garr argues that image relates to procreative ability and likeness relates to a representative role.77 Regardless of the specific interpretation of the terms, the common denominator is that Elohim, to some extent, ordains humanity as rulers of the earth.78 First, though, it is

75 So, according to Genesis 1:26, “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (ESV).
important that we examine Yahweh’s gender as constructed and depicted within the Priestly Creation Account.

To understand the gender and power dynamics in PCA, we must first discuss the representation of Elohim within the text. Unlike in the gods in *Enûma Eliš*, Elohim is not represented as producing humanity or gods through sexual relations. With regard to his divinity, gender is, arguably, a less significant factor in how Elohim fulfills his role in the narrative of PCA. Although Elohim is linguistically presented as male and represented in masculine verbal forms, there is no conflict or sexual relations with a woman figure. Therefore, I argue that gender should not be overemphasized in our reading of Elohim’s actions. Kevin Harris has pointed out that Elohim is an androgynous divinity that could be represented as *he* or *she*.\textsuperscript{79} Therefore, while Elohim is represented in the masculine plural, Elohim may be more accurately depicted as genderless and possibly a-sexual.\textsuperscript{80} Pushing against this proposal, Baring and Cashford claim that the Hebrew culture inherited the idea of the supreme

\textsuperscript{175-178; Gordon Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15*, 33. This topic will be explored below.\textsuperscript{79} Kevin Harris, *Sex, Ideology and Religion: Representation of Women in the Bible* (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1984), 2-3.\textsuperscript{80} Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 98-99, supports this idea because she emphasizes how Elohim becomes the deity who is in control of all essential power, thereby removing the “powers in dynamic interrelationship,” powers sometimes marked by gender difference.
Father; however, this conclusion is weak and not compelling because the Hebrew Bible rarely refers to Yahweh, or Elohim, as father.\(^8^1\)

Genesis 1:27-28 also introduces an important gender and power dynamic within the text:

(27) So God created man in his own image,  
In the image of God he created him;  
Male and female he created them.

(28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen. 1:27-28 ESV)

There is one major feature regarding gender and power in this passage. Male and female are blessed together to perform equal tasks of ruling (\textit{radah}) and subduing (\textit{kavash}), terms associated with kingship and warfare.\(^8^2\) No remarks or ideas dividing between power and gender are present; rather, male and female are both considered humanity and both are given power.\(^8^3\) Essentially, their being made in the image and likeness

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\(^8^1\) Baring and Cashford, \textit{The Myth of the Goddess}, 298. See also C. L. Crouch, “Genesis 1:26-27 as a Statement of Humanity’s Divine Parentage”, in \textit{Journal of Theological Studies} vol. 6, no. 1 (April, 2010), 1-15, esp. 11, n. 24. Although Elohim is at moments identified as a father, it is almost always in a prophetic portions of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, he is never designated “father” as an official title as a deity.

\(^8^2\) On \textit{kavash}, see Josh 18:1, 2 Sam 8:11, 1 Chron 22:18, Micah 7:19; on \textit{radah} see Lev 25:43, Num 24:19, 1 Kings 4:24, Neh 9:28. See especially Joel 3:13 which in context of war preparation and utilizes the same verbal form.

\(^8^3\) Contra James Montgomery Boice, \textit{Genesis Volume I: Creation and Fall (Genesis 1-11)} (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 96-97, whose evangelical lens leads him to conclude.
of Elohim (Genesis 1:26) results in both genders equally being royal
representatives of divine authority and power.⁸⁴ Although 1:27b notes that
God created “him,” the pronoun functions as a term which encompasses
both genders.⁸⁵

Apparent through the minimal focus on gender and power issues in
PCA, the author’s cultural standards are fairly straightforward with regard
to gender and power: males and females are equally representative of God,
and God, although masculine by linguistic denotation, is depicted as
androgynous and asexual.

COMPARISON OF ENŪMA ELIŠ AND THE PRIESTLY
CREATION ACCOUNT

As demonstrated in the previous analysis, Enūma Eliš and PCA
reflect much about the socio-cultural context of their respective
communities. At moments, they portray similar ideas due to priestly

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that “man is to lead, protect, care for, cherish, act upon, and initiate. The woman is to
respond, receive, be acted upon, bear, nurture, follow”. Even as expository
commentary, absolutely nothing in the priestly creation account speaks to gender roles.
⁸⁴ Caterina Moro, “Dividing the Image of God”, eds. Lukasz Niesiolowski-Spano, Chiara
Peri, and Jim West, in Finding Myth and History in the Bible: Scholarship, Scholars and
Errors (Bristol: Equinox, 2016) 105, notes that “In the image of God” and “male and
female” parallel each other in order to emphasize that both genders are representatives of
the image of God.
⁸⁵ Kraus, Gender Issues in Ancient and Reformation Translations of Genesis 1-4, 19-20.
mimesis; however, they also reflect distinct cultural differences and appropriations of ancient Near Eastern topoi regarding gender and power.

First, both texts revolve around the kingship of a central figure and seek to legitimize their respective deities through different approaches. Marduk’s kingship is established through the divine combat topos. On the other hand, Elohim’s power is established through creation of the cosmos without conflict. He also already has masculine and feminine roles and does not need to overthrow any deity to attain them, with a number of scholars suggesting an androgynous representation of Elohim in Genesis 1:1-2:4a. Both accounts also reflect kings acting in traditionally masculine and feminine roles; however, PCA suggests an androgynous image of divinity while Enūma Eliš focuses on overthrowing females in order to attain feminine roles. A likely explanation is that although Enūma Eliš is present during the history of the Judean exile, it has historical roots that can be traced earlier than 1200 BCE. Therefore, by the time the author of PCA came in contact with Enūma Eliš, the cognitive environment and

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86 See “Historical and Literary Relationship” section.
how it approaches goddesses would have been very different than that in which Enûma Eliš was originally written.\footnote{Noting the long progression to a man-oriented society, Espak, \textit{The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology}, 66, writes that “the decline of the mother-goddess in Sumerian religion was probably a result of a long process of developments towards the more man-oriented society in general although the decline of her city must have also played a certain role”.
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Secondly, the creations of humanity in Enûma Eliš and PCA have distinct aims and represent gender and power differently. In one respect they are the same because both only briefly mention the creation of mankind. Enûma Eliš keeps the situation relatively simple: mankind, as opposed to animals, is supposed to serve the gods and goddesses. Humans do not play a significant role in the cosmos and neither human gender is provided with much power. PCA specifies male and female as humanity and their roles as ambassadors of Elohim. While both narratives converge in regard to the creation of humanity, PCA highlights males and females as integral to the created Order and provides both parties with power, not barring or speaking negatively about one or the other. Essentially, both narratives present the creation of humanity apart from any specific order of male power and female power; however, PCA specifies both genders as having authority and power as royal representatives. Without overemphasizing either narrative, it is evident that the communities behind
Enûma Eliš and PCA held similar conceptions regarding the importance of males and females to worshipping their respective deities. However, each text has different expectations: Enûma Eliš focuses on the importance of temple worship in its community and PCA focuses on the importance of humanity as royal representatives of Elohim in its community.

Third, Enûma Eliš and PCA use different existing cultural paradigms regarding gender and power for their communities. Enûma Eliš uses traditional ideas of femininity to develop Tiamat as the antagonist in the narrative and applies already existing societal ideas about femininity to the narrative, reinforcing certain ideas through yearly reenactment of the myth. The Priestly Creation Account does not ascribe socio-cultural expectations to males and females, as is evident in the gender egalitarian representation of males and females as royal images (Genesis 1:26-28) and Elohim’s seemingly androgynous representation. This is not to say that ancient Israel held no socio-cultural gender and power expectations; however, it does indicate that the author of PCA did not consider gender to be of the utmost importance in gender and power dynamics. One possible explanation, similar to the first conclusion, is that PCA’s representation of women in power occurs in a world with different ideas about gender because they had already developed a sense in which Elohim performed
masculine and feminine tasks, with no focus on one male deity replacing another male or female deity. In contrast, *Enūma Eliš* reflects a community in which gender power was visibly shifting and therefore the myth reflected gender and power as they were relevant to the audience. Foster cautions that it is going too far to assume the author feared or hated women; however, we should recognize the possibility that the distinctions between men and women were extremely important to the community from which the text was derived. The preceding evidence suggests that PCA was composed by a community where gender and power dynamics were not in question, while *Enūma Eliš* was composed during periods of shifting social dynamics relating to gender power.

Although the extent to which the texts represent their communities is debatable, it is clear that the communities behind *Enūma Eliš* and PCA each held unique conceptions of gender and power relations. Our understanding is complicated because *Enūma Eliš* represents an ancient text, which found its way to the period of the Judean exile. With the reinforcement of the *akītu* festival regarding male hegemony, it may be assumed that *Enūma Eliš* influenced greater segregation between males

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89 Foster, “Enuma Elish as a Work of Literature”, 22.
90 Samuel Meier, “Women and Communication in the Ancient Near East”, in Journal of the American Oriental Society 111 (1991), 544, suggests that this shift may be due to “orientation from female to male priority in institutionalized learning”.
and females, thereby reinforcing male hegemony. PCA likely influenced closer affiliation between males and females because certain ideas about gender were already well-developed by the time of its composition. While both texts portray women as wielding power, *Enûma Eliš* marginalizes the power and authority of women. PCA places women and men on the same plane of power. I argue that the community from which PCA derived likely had a more egalitarian understanding in regard to gender and power than the community behind *Enûma Eliš*.91

In conclusion, comparative literary analysis of *Enûma Eliš* and PCA accomplishes a few major tasks. First, it further elucidates the socio-cultural standards and expectations about gender and power behind the two texts. Consequently, we attain a more developed understanding of Mesopotamian and ancient Israelite society. Comparative analysis provides a greater framework by which to understand Mesopotamian culture and ancient Israelite culture by placing their ideas of gender and power side-by-side. Although this study did not cover the full breadth of

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91 Elizabeth Goldstein, *Impurity and gender in the Hebrew Bible: Ideological Intersections in the Books of Leviticus, Ezekiel, and Ezra* (University of Chicago Dissertation, 2010), 70, suggests that, regarding the priestly corpus as a whole, “men and women equally reflect a part of YHWH (Genesis 1), and yet their bodies and social roles must be sharply differentiated (Leviticus 15.)” In Goldstein’s analysis, the priestly author did not write against females; rather, because women generally had more contact with impure substance, they tended to have more cultic regulations. Simply put, the priestly material is not anti-women.
priestly material, it is programmatic in the sense that it offers a new avenue and approach to nuanced analysis of priestly material and *Enūma Eliš*. 
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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“CAN MUSIC SAVE YOUR MORTAL SOUL?”:
A BIBLIOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF ROCK AS RELIGION

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1960s, serious critical engagement with rock music was rare. Though the Beatles and the Rolling Stones had already taken America by storm, many sophisticateds wrote off rock as merely a facet of the counterculture’s mushrooming drug practices. Three authors, however, recognized that rock was not merely an ancillary music for the consumption of illicit substances, but produced effects which were in fact analogous to those of drugs themselves. Paul Williams, the founder of rock criticism and Crawdaddy! magazine, compared two songs from the Doors’ 1967 debut album. “‘The End’ is great to listen to when you’re high,” explained Paul, “but ‘Soul Kitchen’ will get you high, which is obviously much cruder and more important … [the song] is a catalyst with
potential for generating truth.”¹ A few months later, Albert Goldman, professor of English at Columbia University, wrote for the *New American Review* that, “like the effects of LSD, that of rocking things is to spotlight them in a field of high concentration and merge them with the spectator in a union that is almost mystical.”² Another English professor, Benjamin DeMott of Amherst College, utilized the same metaphor in a 1968 *New York Times Magazine* piece entitled “Rock as Salvation.” DeMott claimed: “Rock can possess quasireligious force. It leads me past my self [sic], beyond my separateness and difference into a world of continuous blinding sameness—and, for a bit, it stoneth me out of my mind.”³ Williams, Goldman, and DeMott understood that rock presented a vehicle for transcendence, an opportunity for contact with the sacred through sound.

These early rock commentators were among the first to recognize that rock was not merely another kind of music, but akin to religion for offering transcendental experiences. This essay explores what scholars, critics, and other authors since the early 1970s have written concerning

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what I call the “rock-religion phenomenon,” i.e. the religious constructions of rock music and the experiences of spirituality and contact with the numinous through rock music. I do not seek, as some of the works examined below have, to compare rock with a traditional religion. Rather, through introducing scholarship on the intersection of rock and religion, I hope to take the rock-religion phenomenon on its own terms, examining the aspects of the music and its reception that indicate that rock is different from other musical genres, that it represents and offers its listeners communion with the sacred.

This essay begins by exploring the select works which have recognized rock as comparable to religion. Though these books and essays remain more focused on analogizing rock and religion than

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4 Defining mainstream “rock” music is a difficult task. This essay uses “rock” and “rock and roll” interchangeably, though the latter is usually used exclusively to refer to the brand of rock produced from the mid-1950s until the early 1960s. My definition of rock is fairly narrow musically but broad culturally. Musically, I sought guitar-based music featuring drums and, most likely, a bass (or bass guitar), wherein music competed with the lyrics for central sound (unlike folk, where the lyrics frequently dominate). Culturally, many works include Rhythm and Blues artists (the most frequent [though largely outdated] genre classification for rock performed by an African American) as rock; I see no reason why any of the qualities I attribute to rock should not apply to R&B as well (or, indeed, to country music), especially considering these genres utilize similar performance styles and instrumentation. I have excluded rock genres that, by design, are outside the musical mainstream (punk rock, heavy metal), as well as genres which vary too far musically (rap/hip-hop). On race, rock, and questions of musical classification, see: Brian Ward, Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998) and Karl Hagstrom Miller, Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).
contextualizing the rock-religion phenomenon historically, they nonetheless provide a useful introduction to the phenomenon as well as possible means of examining it. Thereafter, this essay takes up studies that have examined the connections between rock and religion without directly analogizing the two. While the presence of such works may seem unsurprising, I illustrate that the nature of the study of the intersection of rock and religion is, in fact, unique when compared to the study of religion and popular culture more generally. I present a hypothesis regarding why rock has been treated differently by both scholars and fans and conclude with recommendations for further courses of study which would facilitate an understanding of the rock-religion phenomenon and its place in the history of twentieth-century American religion.

After Goldman and DeMott, sociologists in the 1970s became the first members of the academy to take up studying the connection between rock and religion. In a 1972 essay for *Sociological Inquiry*, William Shepherd analogized the function of religion and music in the age of the counterculture. Religion makes dogmatic truth claims, Shepherd illustrates, which were of primary importance for Catholics, Fundamentalists, and Liberal Protestants alike. Yet, for Western youth, religious experience had gained primary importance over dogmas. Thus,
music, which provided quasi-religious experiences without doctrinal truths, provides an apt metaphor for religion as practiced by youth. Shepherd utilizes the work of Emile Durkheim to strengthen his comparison, claiming that music, as religion per Durkheim, provides a “set of symbols, certain ritual practices, and production of social cohesion.”\(^5\) In a 1979 essay, sociologist Bernice Martin took a similar approach to Shepherd, also invoking Durkheim’s terminology of the “sacred.” She argues that rock provided access to the sacred but also, more importantly, a means of thinking about society via a “sacralization of the symbolism of disorder.”\(^6\) Though, surprisingly, Martin does not cite Shepherd’s essay, Shepherd’s work was clearly novel and contentious in the sociological community, with the following edition of *Sociological Inquiry* featuring responses to Shepherd by three noted sociologists, Robert Bellah, Rainer Baum, and Victor Lidz, as well as Shepherd’s reply to their comments.\(^7\)

While Martin and Shepherd rely on the work of Durkheim, music


critic Robert Pielke utilizes another religious thinker to present the rock-religion phenomenon. Borrowing the six components of religion as developed by Rudolf Otto in *The Idea of the Holy* (1917), Pielke reduces religiousness to these six categories and demonstrates how each applies to rock music, specifically a rock concert.⁸

In an oft-cited essay published in 1996 in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, David Chidester uses rock as a means of exploring the connections between religion and popular culture. Chidester compares rock with the Native American potlatch, claiming that “the potlatch … displays the complex symbolic and material interests that are inevitably interwoven in religion. Similar interests … can be located in rock ‘n’ roll.”⁹ Chidester’s work is primarily concerned with an expansive understanding of what constitutes religion and he employs the example of the Kingsmen’s “Louie, Louie” and its central line of “Let’s give it to ‘em, right now” to explore rock and religion as “practices of expenditure” for

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both believer and listener.\(^\text{10}\)

Instead of relying on a single philosopher of religion or associating a religious ritual with rock, Robin Sylvan employs a variety of scholarly voices in *Traces of the Spirit: The Religious Dimensions of Popular Music*. Sylvan’s work provides a new answer to the theory of the gradual secularization in the United States: “Religion and God are not dead, but very much alive and well and dancing to beat of popular music.”\(^\text{11}\) Sylvan seeks to understand “what kind of religion” popular music presents for American youth: “How does one characterize its experiences, practices, rituals, symbols, myths, beliefs, values, and social organization?”\(^\text{12}\) He addresses this question in four ethnographic chapters, each of which explores a music subculture in San Francisco, including “Deadheads,” fans of the Grateful Dead rock band.

Sylvan begins his study with an explanation of the connection between religion and music. In his first chapter, Sylvan demonstrates the inherent religious nature of music and therefore its “universal” application as a vehicle of spirituality.\(^\text{13}\) Sylvan explores the seven cognitive planes

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10 Chidester, “The Church of Baseball,” 757.
where he claims religion is manifest: physiological, psychological, sociocultural, semiological, virtual, ritual, and spiritual, and claims that music also functions for the listener on each level. Sylvan invokes the work of scholars of religion writing on music (Gerardus van der Leeuw, Rudolf Otto), musical scholars writing on religion (John Blacking, David McAllester), or multiples of each in his introduction of each of these categories. Thus, he compares the religious experience with that of listening to music, staking his comparison on a universal human phenomenon.

In his second chapter, Sylvan further explores music’s inherent spirituality, explicating the historical connection between the two. Sylvan claims that American popular music has its origins in West African drum-based possession practices wherein music and religion are inseparable. This music was brought to North America via the slave trade where it gradually evolved into rock and roll. According to Sylvan, despite the evolution of African-originated music away from its original expression, it nonetheless retained its intrinsic religious qualities. Thus, music has become the center of youth-dominated subcultures which “provide almost
everything for its adherents that a traditional religion would.”

Sylvan, however, does not fully attempt to compare traditional
religion and musical subculture. This task is taken up by Rupert Till in
*Pop Cult: Religion and Popular Music.* Till, like Shepherd, emphasizes
that he does not claim popular music as a religion. Rather, *Pop Cult*
remains focused on the communal aspect of music, examining “whether
functions formerly served within society by religions are now being
addressed by cults of popular music.” Till’s work, while focused on what
pop cults offer their adherents, also handles how individuals have sought
from pop cults what was previously offered in traditional religions.

Though scholarship focusing singularly on rock music is scant,
each of these works by Shepherd, Martin, Chidester, and Pielke provides
useful material in analyzing the rock-religion phenomenon. They offer
insight into potential methodologies: comparing traditional religion—
either as an institution or a process of symbol creation—and rock

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15 Till seeks to reclaim the term “cult” from its negative associations, supporting Douglas
Cowan and David Bromley’s conclusion that the word “cult” is “a four letter word for
any religion someone doesn’t like.”
16 Rupert Till, *Pop Cult: Religion and Popular Music* (London, New York: Continuum,
2010), ix.
17 Douglas E. Cowan and David G. Bromley, *Cults and New Religions: A Brief History*
new religion (Sylvan and Pielke). So too, though they rely perhaps too heavily on an arbitrarily selected philosopher of religion, the authors’ theoretical explanations of the meaning of religion provide some guidelines to understand how rock suits these categories and helps facilitate understanding of religion outside the confines of traditional theologies. This broadened understanding allows for the study of the connection of music and religion.

Yet, these works ultimately fail to illustrate the kind of religion rock presents. If rock indeed has replaced traditional theologies as either a locus of community formation or a source of the sacred, why has it done so? Till implies that the ascendance of pop cults has as much to do with the decline of the church as with the rise of rock music. Yet, this claim rests on the teleological assumption that music would serve as the natural successor to traditional theologies despite the unprecedented nature of the rock-religion phenomenon until the postwar period. Why did rock become the chosen religion of youth? It is insufficient to claim, as Sylvan does, that the music possesses inherent religious qualities. The field of ethnomusicology rests on the premise that music is both created and heard in specific contexts; Sylvan, however, ignores any context of music
formation or reception.\textsuperscript{18}

Furthermore, studies of rock as compared with traditional religions deny the study of the rock-religion phenomenon on its own terms. Interest in how rock resembles established religions is of little value to increasing our understanding of rock or the religion of rock. Certainly, there are aspects of rock music which resemble practices of traditional religions. However, simplistic comparisons may exclude important aspects of the rock-religion phenomenon because it bears no similarity to any part of other religions.

The rock-religion phenomenon has not only been studied at the macro level, as other works have examined the blurred line between fandom and religion, comparing fan communities to religious groups. Studies of “Tramps” (Bruce Springsteen fans), “Parrotheads” (Jimmy Buffet enthusiasts), “Deadheads” (The Grateful Dead fans), and Led Zeppelin devotees have relied largely on ethnography to explore fan communities forged around specific musicians.\textsuperscript{19} These studies have

\textsuperscript{18} Sylvan, \textit{Traces of the Spirit}, 16, 54.

affirmed that these communities are not merely conglomerates of like-minded music lovers. Rather, many rock fans have, like Tramps in Linda Randall’s study, “created a community and a spiritual home for themselves.”

Fan communities are comparable to religious groups for their close-knit societies organized around a shared sense of the source of the sacred.

However, while these studies elucidate an important aspect of the rock-religion phenomenon, they improperly assume that the communal aspect of fandom is central to the religion of rock. Susan Fast, in her ethnographic study of the Led Zeppelin fans, concludes that there is “no sense that [the experience of spiritual ‘contact’ with the band’s music] is contingent upon being a part of the fan community.”

Similarly, two works on the religion of Elvis fandom, both subtitled “The Cult of the King,” demonstrate the personal, rather than communal, spiritual

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connections many fans have with Elvis. The existence of fan communities points to an important feature of the rock-religion phenomenon and these works may help lay the groundwork for future analysis. However, a broader study should not rely singularly on the conglomeration of case studies such as these, as they exclude potentially significant instances of the connection between fandom, music, and the sacred.

Furthermore, the ethnographic-based studies of fan communities do not examine the context in which these fan communities were formed and thereby miss an important opportunity to explore the origins of the rock-religion phenomenon. While Sylvan provides a brief history of Deadheads, we know very little about how, why, or even when fan communities developed; the authors fail to place fandom in socio-cultural, historical context. Certainly, this is attributable in part to the lack of acknowledgement of the rock-religion phenomenon by studies of twentieth-century American religion. Of works dealing with spirituality in America in the postwar period, for example, only Robert Wuthnow and Charles H. Lippy have recognized, and only briefly, that rock provided a

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vehicle for accessing the sacred. Nonetheless, studies of fandom which claim music communities as comparable to traditional religion or as new religions should ensure they consider the state of traditional religious communities at the time of the fan-community formation. As fandoms and adherence to traditional theologies are not mutually exclusive, an assessment of the juncture when “Springsteen fans” became Tramps would provide crucial insight into the quest for spirituality among American youths in the postwar period. Likewise, given that individuals are not merely fans, an interrogation of the process of the adoption of fandom as an aspect of identity would help explain both the status of traditional religious adherence in the mid-twentieth century as well as the religious nature of music fandom itself.

The lack of contextualization may be attributable to the fact that, with the exception of Sylvan, the authors of the works referenced above are themselves self-identified members of the fan communities they study.

Future work, conducted either on previously studied communities or unstudied fan subcultures such as KISS’s “KISS Army” or Aerosmith’s “Blue Army,” should be conducted either by outsiders to these communities or insiders willing to contextualize their fandom in a broader socio-cultural, religious context.

Nonetheless, these studies of fans prove valuable for their focus on rock’s audience. Most work that connects religion and rock focuses either on the lyrical content of the music or the biography of rock artists. One popular strategy has been an exegetical analysis of rock lyrics, elucidating religious themes or references in the work of one or multiple artists.\(^\text{24}\) This

attention to rock music represents one part of the burgeoning scholarly interest since the late 1990s in the intersection of religion and popular culture, and specifically the study of religious images in popular culture.25 These works of lyrical analysis reveal a connection between rock and religion, though they ultimately offer little more than lessons on the meaning of the lyrics themselves as well as the theology of individual rock musicians. The rock-religion phenomenon is not contingent on religious references in rock lyrics. In fact, rock critics have argued that rock deemphasizes lyrics to the point that their content may be immaterial to the rock experience. Noted music critic Greil Marcus has claimed that rock is at its best “when the guitar is fighting for space in the clatter while voices yelp and wail … the lyrics are blind baggage, and they emerge only

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in snatches.”

The other primary lens for investigating the rock-religion connection has been through biographies focused on the faith of rock musicians. This course of study remains related to celebrity culture, the “religion of our consumer society” according to Judy and Fred Vermorel, which has produced popular interest in the personal lives of movie stars, professional athletes, musicians, and others. Yet scholars and critics have taken up the study of the role of faith for rock musicians comparably more than they have for other celebrities. This fascination has spawned specific works on individual rockers as well as broad assessments of various rock stars’ intersection of faith and music, many of which have been published by evangelical presses.

One work that combines lyrical analysis with spiritual biography is Steve Turner’s *The Gospel According to the Beatles*. Turner narrates the

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role of religion in the life of each Beatle and illustrates how the band’s spirituality affected all of their music, not merely explicitly religious tracks such as “Let it Be.”

Turner’s work, published in 2006, was in fact the first of four books published by Westminster John Knox Press (JKP)—the academic and trade title of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation—to illustrate the spirituality of the music of a specific rock performer.

Turner’s work proves unique among the JKP titles, however, for its objective approach. *The Gospel According to Bruce Springsteen* (2008), *The Gospel According to U2* (2009), and *The Gospel According to Bob Dylan* (2011) illuminate the latent divinity of each artist’s body of work, exploring how their music brings forth the ‘good news’ for strengthening and affirming spiritual—mostly Christian—beliefs. The divergence in orientation of the first to the latter three books is unsurprising when we examine the biographies of the authors. Whereas Turner is an accomplished music critic, each of the other three authors is either an ordained religious leader (Jeffrey Symynkywicz, author of the Springsteen

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volume), a professor at a Christian university (Michael Gilmour, Dylan), or both (Greg Garrett, U2). These three works represent a host of examples of Christian authors illustrating the way popular culture and, specifically, rock music—even songs that make no reference to religion—can affirm Christian beliefs. Similar works have proliferated since the early-2000s, among them *The Gospel According to Rock* by a former Presbyterian pastor.  

Motivation for this scholarship is easy to divine. While Christian leaders were among rock’s chief opponents in the 1950s and 1960s, opposition to rock on religious grounds has largely disappeared since the early 1990s. These works, then, seek to claim mainstream rock music not as the Anti-Christ, but as decidedly Christian. Under the exegetical eye of these authors, nearly all rock music, when examined closely enough, can reveal something to us about faith. Rock music, like cinema, sports, or

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literary classics for other authors, presents a site for locating Christian values, evangelizing to youth, and strengthening Christian faith.\textsuperscript{33}

Yet, the singular focus of the study of the intersection of rock and religion remains striking. Why have no Christian authors attempted to write the “Gospel According to Miles Davis”? Alternatively, why have no music scholars examined the faith of jazz musicians?\textsuperscript{34} Granted, the presence of lyrics in rock facilitates the spiritual analysis of music in print form, which would prove difficult for instrumental jazz music. But why not study the spiritual applicability of folk music or the faith of a folk artist other than Bob Dylan (whose genre-bending allows him to also be categorized as a rock musician)? Perhaps rock produced around mid-century has an appeal for its enduring popularity and relative accessibility given many of the authors’ long tenure of fandom. Yet, why not a gospel according to “pop” music? While a 2013 musical at Columbia University


\textsuperscript{34} Robert Gelinas, a pastor and self-proclaimed “jazz theologian,” has written a text on the connection of Christian faith and jazz: \textit{Finding the Groove: Composing a Jazz-Shaped Faith} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009). However, unlike the rock texts cited above, Gelinas’ book utilizes jazz largely as a metaphor for how Christians can approach their faith; while he sees jazz as a means of strengthening his faith and connecting to the divine, his work contains no analysis of jazz or explanation of how the content of jazz music affirms or offers spiritual messages.
entitled *SPEARS: The Gospel According to Britney* told the story of Jesus through the music of Britney Spears, there has been no serious engagement of the spirituality of pop music.\(^{35}\) What accounts for the singular focus on rock?

The extensive studies of the faith of rock musicians and the phenomenon of Christian authors elucidating the religious applicability of rock music bear the same underlying assumption. Namely, that rock artists’ musical ability and the nature of the music they create provides them with a higher level of spirituality, that their talent facilitates contact with the divine. As Steve Turner writes, “There is something in the essence of rock ‘n’ roll that mirrors the religious search … rock ‘n’ roll stars appear … more open to religion [than other artists] … Is there something within music that makes musicians more attracted to the numinous?”\(^{36}\) The interest of the authors cited above demonstrate the belief that rock stars experience a phenomenon analogous to the Overview Effect. First proposed by Frank White in 1987, the Overview Effect hypothesis states that astronauts, following the experience of viewing the earth from outside of the atmosphere, undergo a psychological shift which


can often result in drastic changes in religious beliefs following their return to Earth.\textsuperscript{37} As the experience of seeing the Earth as a pale blue dot in the context of the vast, dark sky endows astronauts with increased perspective—many of them return with grandiose notions of the “brotherhood of humanity”—the underlying implication of the works cited above is that the making of rock music provides musicians with a similar growth in perspective on the divine or human spirituality.

Fan behavior has also indicated an understanding of rock stars’ experience of the Overview Effect. As the Beatles’ press officer complained to the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} in 1964, “It’s as if [the band] founded a new religion … Cripples threw away their sticks, sick people rushed up to the car as if a touch from one of the boys would make them well again.”\textsuperscript{38} Similarly, popular graffiti in London in the mid-1960s claimed, “[Eric] Clapton is God,” and some Elvis fans, like many Beatlemaniacs, believed the artist had a healing touch. Roy Shuker further illustrates that David Bowie, Marc Bolan, and Bon Jovi have served as

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\textsuperscript{37} Frank White, \textit{The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution} (Reston, VA: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 1998 [1987]).
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“religious touchstones” for their fans.39

Fan responses to rock music are different than those to other cultural productions, illustrating the implicitly understood singularity of the spirituality of rock music. Certainly, fans have celebrated certain movie stars and athletes, as they have for rock artists. However, there is not a comparable phenomenon of fans hoping for healing at the hands of their favorite movie star. So too, while both sports and cultural productions such as Star Trek have been studied as religions, these descriptions often focus on the construction and engagement with ritual. A rock and roll concert is certainly a ritual, but it also provides, as we shall see, a vehicle for transcendence. While the nature of music itself—compared to the cinema or sports—may facilitate this distinctive spirituality, folk music also featured a core group of celebrity performers and large concerts in the 1960s, though it engendered no comparable hysteria among its fans.

The sonic makeup of rock music provides the most probable explanation for the unique scholarly and critical interest in the faith of

rock stars as well as fans’ unprecedented approach to rock musicians as
messianic figures. As critic Paul Williams wrote in 1967, “the direct
appeal to the mind made by ‘folk’ [music] … cannot compare … with the
abilities of rock to move people’s muscles, bodies, caught up swaying and
moving … [it sinks] into your soul on a more-than cognitive level.”

The unique effects of rock music have also been observed by
sociomusicologist Simon Firth, who wrote in 1981 of rock as “primitive. It
uses a primitive understanding of how sound and rhythms—prelinguisitic
devices—have their emotional and physical effects.” However, the
musical qualities of rock are invariably lost in the writing about the music.
As the famous dictum states: “Writing about music is like dancing about
architecture.”

Thus, authors’ lack of reflexivity can be explained in part by the
lack of scholarly attention to rock music from the perspective of music
studies. Neither The Journal of the American Musicological Society
(founded in 1948) nor Ethnomusicology Review (1984) has ever published
an article pertaining exclusively to rock music, and the Journal of
Musicology has published only two since its inception in 1982.

40 Williams, “Rock is Rock,” 45.
Furthermore, musicologist Joseph Kerman writes that Cambridge University Press’ 1987 musicological anthology, *Music and Society*, broke the norm for its inclusion of rock music alongside classical composers.\(^{42}\)

Similarly, Allan Moore notes in his introduction to *Rock Music: The Primary Text* (1993) that his work remained largely unique for its musicological study of rock.\(^{43}\) Future work should utilize Charles Keil and Stephen Feld’s notion of listening as a “feelingful activity” when taking up rock music, which would allow for an examination of the music itself as well as the listening experience and its offering of spirituality.\(^{44}\)

Ethnomusicologists have examined the spirituality of the musical experience for various non-Western peoples. Such a study should be extended to rock fans, though it should not ignore the works of scholars who have illustrated the importance of consumer culture and technology in creating and proliferating rock and its sound.\(^{45}\) Scholarship on rock from a musicological perspective would allow for an understanding of rock’s

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unique cultural role as well as comprehension of the impetus for the rock-religion phenomenon.

A better understanding of the nature of rock music would also contribute to another under-studied aspect of the rock-religion phenomenon. Live performance has in many ways defined the rock experience in the United States. However, as Tim Quirk and Jason Toynbee note, surprisingly little has been written about it.\textsuperscript{46} Scholars and critics prove eager to analyze rock lyrics with a fine-tooth comb, but reticent to discuss the balance between staging and spontaneity which both Quirk and Steve Feffer see at the heart of live rock music.\textsuperscript{47} Various authors have, if only in passing, observed the transcendental nature of rock performance for the audience. Since the 1960s and 1970s scholars and critics have compared rock concerts with evangelical tent meetings or similar religious revivals, describing mass gatherings of like-minded believers traveling to witness a shared group of prophets.\textsuperscript{48} However, there


\textsuperscript{47} Quirk, “Going through the Motions,” 401; Steve H. Feffer, “‘An Opera Out on the Turnpike’: Rehearsing Spontaneity/Staging Authenticity in the Rock/Theatre of Bruce Springsteen” (paper presented at Glory Days: A Bruce Springsteen Symposium, September 9-11, 2005), copy provided by author via e-mail, September, 2013.

has been little scholarly analysis of rock concerts beyond the echoing of this metaphor. No scholars have attempted to explain at length why live performance facilitates transcendence or the ways concerts resemble old-time revivals beyond the presence of masses of people around a stage in an outdoor facility. Recent work has sought to move performances closer to the center of analysis of rock, but has not yet taken to a fuller examination of the connection of spiritual transcendence and performance. So too, no scholar has yet attempted to write the history of the rock concert, a study which could provide crucial insight into the nature of live rock performance.

The lack of critical study of live rock is particularly noteworthy given that live performance is a sphere wherein rock musicians have acknowledged that their musical skills endow them with spiritual


50 The only history of rock concerts this author has been able to locate is a single chapter of Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 207-224; an edited volume by Ian Inglis does progress through time via select case studies of important moments of popular music performance, but the aim of his volume is to examine the nature of public performance rather than its change over time, see: Ian Inglis (ed.), *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place and Time*, (Hampshire and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).
perspective or divine authority. Rock guitarist Jeff Beck has stated:

“Recording puts a barrier between the artist and the audience. I only get
the feeling I’m putting my true self across when performing live. If it’s a
good night on the road … and if the audience is dynamite, there’s a real
chance of my ‘going off’ into a state of altered consciousness.”  

Jimi Hendrix, too, spoke of the spirituality of live rock performance: “I can’t
express myself in easy conversation—the words don’t come out right. But
when I get up on stage—well that’s my whole life. That’s my religion. My
music is electric church music … I am electric religion.”

In order to
more fully understand the rock-religion phenomenon, studies which deal
primarily with rock artists should not focus on artists’ faith but on ways in
which they are able to utilize music as a conduit for spirituality, be it for
themselves or their fans. Similarly, as Beck acknowledges, the audience
plays an integral role in the artists’ experience during a live performance.
More attention should be paid from cultural, religious, and musicological
perspectives on how listeners access rock music. Many fans have reported
experiences of transcendence while listening to rock, and future studies

51 George Martin (ed.), Making Music (London: Pan, 1983), 143, quoted in: Ian Inglis,
“History, place and time: the possibility of the unexpected,” in Inglis (ed.), Performance
and Popular Music, xiv.
52 Harry Shaprio and Caesar Glebbeek, Jimi Hendrix: Electric Gypsy (New York: St.
Martin’s Press, 1990), 342.
should examine the transcendental qualities of both live and recorded music and how audience reception shapes religious experiences based on music.

In summation, there is much regarding the rock-religion phenomenon which has not been fully illuminated. The works cited above do not paint a sufficiently rich picture of rock as a lived religion. Martin, Sylvan, Chidester, Pielke, and others remain too grounded in theoretical and overly rigid comparisons to traditional religion and thereby ignore the actual nature of rock-religion for those who experience it. Even studies which take fans as their centerpiece fail to pin down the true character of rock-religion as they focus too heavily on community structure rather than the personal aspect of fandom. Similarly, the lack of scholarly attention on live rock performance and its history is indicative of our dearth of knowledge of the lived experience of the rock-religion phenomenon.

Explication of the socio-historical, cultural context in which the rock-religion phenomenon emerged would allow for an understanding of the true character of the religion of rock and the way its offerings of transcendence filled a void for its adherents. Historians of rock have amply noted that rock did not emerge in a vacuum, that the new musical form brought distinct changes to American society and culture in the
postwar period. This essay proposes two future courses of study in order to fully explain the rock-religion phenomenon and its lessons on religion in twentieth-century America. First, future work should explore why rock remains unique from other musical genres and other products of the cultural sphere, a distinction indicated by the actions of fans as well as the attention of scholars. A musicological discussion would provide an important step in this course of study. While rock music bore clear offerings of transcendence that had not been offered on the same scale in previous genres of popular music such as folk or jazz, rock music was nonetheless composed, performed, and listened to within a specific ethnomusicological context. Youth listening practices before the emergence of rock, for example, would provide crucial insight into how audience reception facilitated the transformation of rock into a genre with religious power.

Second, in order to understand the rock-religion phenomenon, future studies should illuminate not only the musical but also the religious climate into which rock emerged. Historians of religion should seek to explain the widespread emergence of the new religion of rock and its

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attraction of youthful devotees in the postwar period. What were rock fans finding in musical subcultures and in rock concerts that replaced or supplemented religious experiences in more traditional settings? Scholars of American religion debate whether America entered a period of ‘secularization’ in the twentieth century, but the exploration of rock as a religion and as offering religious experiences provides insight into the state of religious belief in the postwar period, the nature of contemporary quests for religious experience, and the relationship between culture and religion.
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BAHUCHARA MATA:
LIBERATOR, PROTECTOR AND MOTHER OF
HIJRAS IN GUJARAT

INTRODUCTION

The most prominent of myths surrounding the Hindu goddess Bahuchara Mata is that she belonged to the Charan caste, members of the Brahman class in Gujarat associated with divinity.¹ As the narrative proceeds, one day Bahuchara Mata and her sisters were travelling when a looter named Bapiya attacked their caravan. This was considered a heinous sin.² Bahuchara Mata cursed Bapiya with impotency and according to legend, self-immolated and cut off her own breasts. She vowed that the only way for the curse to be lifted was if Bapiya “worshiped Bahuchara Mata by

¹ For a detailed discussion on the Charans, please refer to:
dressing and acting like a woman.”³ There are distinct implications of this myth for how the image of the Goddess is constructed. The aspect of caste is particularly significant. The Charans—to which Bahuchara Mata belongs—are esteemed within the caste hierarchy. Charan women are often thought of as “divine” goddesses; apart from Bahuchara Mata, a range of other localized Charan Mother Goddess figures exist including Hinglaj Mata, Aavad Mata and Karni Mata.⁴

The *hijras*, on the other hand, are a marginalized social group within the Gujarati context. In fact, their position within the caste hierarchy itself is not clear. They have even been termed as a psuedo-caste.⁵ In India, *hijras* comprise what is legally recognized as the “third gender” and specifically refer to male-to-female transgender persons who identify as female, trans female, gender non-conforming, or simply, the third sex (i.e. neither male nor female).⁶ This subaltern community has chosen a distinctively

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³ Ibid.
⁵ For a detailed discussion on the place of Hijras in the caste system, please refer to: Belkin, Erica. “Creating Groups outside the caste system: the Devadasis and Hijras of India”, p. 70-71.
Brahmanical Goddess as their patron. It is interesting to note that many hijras do not find this to be problematic. In this essay, I argue that the worship of an upper caste, Brahmanical Goddess helps to include hijras within the larger Hindu social context from which they are already largely excluded. This means that the image of Bahuchara Mata is both conceived and represented differently between the hijra community and the Brahmanical context.

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE GODDESS

As a Sanskritic Goddess\(^7\) who is revered by a group on the fringes of society, it comes as no surprise that there are competing depictions of Bahuchara Mata. While there is a consistent depiction of Bahuchara holding a trishul (or trident) while seated on a rooster, this is where the similarities in her iconography end. In this section, I will explore the differences in these representations, and their implications for the hijras. Figures 1 and 2 represent two distinct versions of Bahuchara iconography, which is not surprising given their distinctive sources.

\(^7\) In this context, “Sanskritic Goddess” means a Hindu Goddess who is worshipped in Sanskritic hymns, and whose worship is often under the care of Brahman priests.
The first image is the type of iconography of Hindu deity found in calendar art that is commonplace throughout India. It was produced by ArcheStudio, which is an architecture and design studio. ArcheStudio is designing a Bahuchara Mata temple for a Hijra Utthan Kendra that would cater to the needs of the hijra experience. This ArcheStudio image depicts Bahuchara Mata as a distinctly feminine deity who carries a sword in her upper right hand, a book of scripture on the upper left, an open palm in the form of the abhay hasta mudra in her lower right, and a trishul in her lower left.

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There is a balance in this iconography between the violent (the sword), the trinities of creation, which depict preservation and destruction (the trishul), learning and knowledge (the Shri scripture), and blessing (the abhay hasta mudra). This representation has deep roots in her mythology. The sword, for instance, is the weapon used by Mata Bahuchara to excise her own breasts. Again, the trishul represents the balance between the principles of creation, preservation and destruction. When Bahuchara was attacked, the divine principle of balance was violated. The violation of the balance of the trinities was one of the impetuses for her seemingly brash reaction to Bapiya. This imagery, however, neglects the issue of gender and the transition to transgenderism, which each experienced — Bahuchara who literally and metaphorically excised her femininity and for Bapiya who was forced to take on the identity of a woman as an act of worship. This depiction of gender does not reflect who Bahuchara Mata is to the hijra community or how she is distinctly associated with their experience as conforming to neither male nor female stereotypes. The scripture in her hand reinforces Bahuchara’s legitimacy as belonging to the Charan caste, and places her strictly within the Brahmanical framework. This portrayal of
her might seem to be an attempt to Sanskritize\(^\text{10}\) this Goddess, but we should not presume that the hijras would reject this attempt. It is important to recognize that the pseudo-divine status of the Charan community meant that Bahuchara’s curse was legitimimized by virtue of her being a Charan and not, in fact, because she was a Goddess.

While Sanskritization might mean an erasure to Bahuchara Mata’s mythological identity, there is the distinct possibility that it may provide legitimacy for the hijra community as well. A parallel can be seen here in the incorporation of Kali into the mainstream, which occurs through the lens of Sanskritization as a gradual progression from “the peripheries of settled culture, where she was probably a tribal deity who answered pragmatic concerns, to the center of a popular urban and rural cult, where her priests are Brahman and her sphere of operation transcendental.”\(^\text{11}\) While the origins of Bahuchara Mata remain unclear, an argument could certainly be

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\(^{10}\) In this context, attempts to Sanskritize the Goddess follow the definition introduced by M.N. Srinivas. The transformation of Bahuchara Mata from a hijra Goddess into a mainstream deity follows how a “low or middle Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently twice-born caste”. For more details, please refer to: Srinivas, M. N. "A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization." The Far Eastern Quarterly 15, no. 4 (1956): 481. doi:10.2307/2941919.

made that the Sanskritization of Bahuchara mirrors the process that Kali went through. As a mainstream Gujarati Goddess whose priests are Brahmin at the popular temples, she continues to answer the “pragmatic concerns” of the hijras. This was directly addressed in email correspondence with Maneka Chaturthi, a member of the hijra community who has been a devotee of Bahuchara since her initiation at the age of seventeen. As Chaturthi explained,

Any attempts to incorporate Bahuchara Mata into the larger Hindu framework are to be celebrated. I underwent castration believing in the religious imperative that it had for me, and for my position as a hijra. People say hijras are so irritating, they beg, they don’t work. They don’t sympathize with us. If they see Bahuchara Mata as a hijra Goddess who is also a Hindu Goddess to be revered, they will sympathize with us more.\(^\text{12}\)

Just like the incorporation of Kali into the Sanskritic tradition resulted in greater acceptance for overtly violent aspects of the tradition, Chaturthi hopes that the incorporation of Bahuchara Mata into mainstream discourse will result in greater acceptance for her as well. But does Sanskritization create a more balanced image of the Goddess—one that incorporates both its origins and the Brahmanical tradition—or does it create

\(^{12}\text{See Appendix II for the Hindi transcription of the interview.}\)
two separate images of the Goddess, in which one is clearly more accepted than the other?

In order to answer this question, it is important to consider hijra representations of Bahuchara Mata. The fact that these representations are not as readily accessible as calendar art or photographs of temple idols speaks volumes about the probable outcome of Sanskritization. The more “sanitized” version of Bahuchara Mata surfaces in a simple Google Image search for instance, rather than the earthier image in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Bahuchara Mata, a version of the Mother Goddess, is the special object of devotion for the hijras (Photograph by Serena Nanda). Gender Diversity, cross-cultural variations, 32.

Serena Nanda’s photograph of a hijra Bahuchara Mata is a major departure from the representation by ArcheStudio. One of the most striking features is the fact that the rooster is much bigger than the Goddess herself.
Rarely are *vahanas* depicted as larger than the Hindu deity (with the notable exception of Vishnu’s *vahana* Garuda). This serves to accentuate the serene innocence that the rooster espouses, versus the more violent sword and *trishul* imagery that is prominent in the first figure. It may be that the first image was an attempt by the artist to place Bahuchara within the framework of Maha Shakti, as we would see in a representation of Durga or Kali (refer to appendix I for an image of Durga). The *hijra* depiction, on the other hand, is not as much concerned with placing her within the Shakta narrative, as it is with claiming legitimacy for its own gender positioning. British colonial accounts claimed that the *hijras* also worship Bahuchara Mata with a *yoni* instead of a rooster as her vehicle. According to a late nineteenth century British colonial account by F.A.H. Elliot, this use of a conventional symbol for the vagina points to a desire among *hijras* to reclaim their femininity.\(^{13}\) I disagree with this idea that the *hijras* would like to reclaim a distinctively feminine position (since that would threaten their own inherent identity as non-binary), although the use of the vagina as a symbol could be interpreted as a desire to claim a sort of “monopoly”, as it were, over

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fertility. This being said, there are no other accounts that I am aware of that depict the hijras as worshipping Bahuchara Mata with a yoni as her vehicle. However, whether this is a result of Sanskritization of the Goddess’s vahana into a more “acceptable” animal, or a colonial orientalist imagery that may have misrepresented the vehicle remains unclear.

While Bahuchara Mata holds the sword, trishul and scripture as in the first figure, in this image she is depicted as holding a five-edged leaf of the mango tree in place of the abhay hasta mudra. The mango leaf is often used with vermillion in the sindoor ceremony during marriages. Incidentally, one of the major social functions of the hijras is to dance during and after Hindu marriage ceremonies. Because they are themselves excluded from marriage themselves, hijras are believed to have the power to bless newly married couples with a happy and fertile married life. While the abhay hasta mudra of Figure 1 is often seen in depictions of Hindu deities (see Figure 4 in the appendix, which is a representation of Durga), the depiction of a societal role as with the hijra Bahuchara Mata is not as common. Perhaps this is because the hijra depiction is aimed at

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emphasizing the “hijra-ness” of Bahuchara Mata, while the Sanskrit depiction is focused on locating her within the larger Shakta framework.

Makhana Chootto, an uncastrated hijra who lives within the temple complex of the Sri Bahucharji Temple in Rajkot, Rajasthan echoes this sentiment.

When I was in the [hijra] village on the outskirts of the district, I never saw Bahuchara Mata as Durga or Kali. I saw her as my own goddess, a hijra goddess. Even though she looks like Durga here, she is still the same Bahuchara—we hijras already have her blessings so we do not need the abhay hasta mudra that you people require.16

Chootto makes the claim that the Brahmanical representation of Bahuchara is necessary for “you people,” (or the lay person who is not a hijra) because they have not been accorded the blessings of the Devi that the hijras already received. It is for this reason that the Sanskrit representation comprises a more general abhay hasta mudra that would be applicable to all worshippers, while the hijra representation comprises a socially specific, ritualistically important mango leaf that carries particular significance for the hijras. Hijras play an important social role in commemorating marriages, even though they are themselves impotent and by definition lie outside of that domestic sphere. Why is it that a social

16 See appendix II for transcription of the full interview in Hindi.
group that intrinsically does not participate in the very same social institution it blesses, has the ability to be an important aspect of it? I would argue that it has to do with Bahuchara Mata’s unique positioning as a Goddess who achieved deification through self-sacrifice.¹⁷

MYTHS AND INTERVENTIONS IN THE LIVES OF HIJRAS

The worship of Bahuchara Mata plays an important role in the initiation, sustenance and even the livelihood of the hijras. There is a clear link between Bahuchara deification through self-sacrifice and the devotion of the hijras who self-castrate. After all, the transition from one gendered state to another in each respective case is significant. In Bahuchara Mata’s case, she sacrifices her femininity (her breasts) while in the hijras’ case there is a transition from the male to the third sex (which sometimes involves physical castration of male genitalia). The mirroring of the lives of Bahuchara and those of the hijras is key to understanding the active role that Bahuchara plays in the lives of her devotees. For instance, hijras believe that they were ordained to worship Bahuchara Mata in changing

¹⁷ This is a peculiar positioning for a Hindu Goddess since Bahuchara Mata was not a Goddess until she had undergone the transformation of cutting of her breasts by sacrificing herself.
their sex or else face the consequence of impotency in their next seven lives.\(^\text{18}\)

What does it mean for *hijras* to worship a Goddess whose power to bless is simultaneously celebrated with her curse? This paradox is based on the myth of Prince Jetho who was impotent. In this narrative, Bahuchara singles out Prince Jetho and commands him to worship her through taking upon himself the identity of a woman by way of castration. There are two major implications of this myth for the relationship that *hijras* share with Bahuchara Mata. First, the origin of the devotion was not out of the voluntary *shraddha* or faith, but because obedience resulted in seven life times of potency. Secondly, Bahuchara’s insistence that Jetho chop off his own genitals and dress as a woman is her way of rescuing him from the restrictive masculinity rooted in his impotency. This transition to the male is inherently violent—including, of course, the physical act of castration itself.

It is also important to note that fear was a major motivation for Jetho to chop off his genitals. After all, if he refused, he would be cursed to live as an impotent for seven lifetimes. How does this fear translate into the lives of the *hijra*? Bahuchara offers them complete protection in exchange for

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submission, but does so by capitalizing on their fear. Interestingly, it is in the contrasting relationship that the *hijras* share with Bahuchara Mata that they gain legitimacy in social functions (which will be explored shortly). As Serena Nanda holds, “this dual nature of the goddess provides the powerful symbolic and psychological context in which the *hijras* become culturally meaningful as an alternative sex/gender.”19 This peculiar relationship—where Bahuchara’s protection is contingent on devotion—creates different modalities of worship, particularly as it relates to castration. One of the interviewees mentioned earlier, Maneka Chaturthi, believes that castration is important not only for recognition as a *hijra*, but also for a constant reminder of the special protection that Bahuchara Mata accords to her as a member of the *hijra* community. She explained,

I underwent castration not so that they would recognize me as a woman, or even so that they would think of me as a *hijra*. After all, there are many uncastrated *hijras*. I was castrated to remind myself of Mata’s desire to be worshipped. If she could chop off her own breasts, she can give me the strength to live my life.20

For Chaturthi, the act of castration itself is critical in remembering the myth that surrounds Prince Jetho. It is therefore more of a spiritual, rather than a social choice that is made by *hijras*. Interestingly, a similar

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20 See appendix II for transcription of the full interview in Hindi.
opinion is voiced by those *hijras* that chose to not undergo castration.

Vaishali Raode, a Pune-based Marathi writer who is also a *hijra*, writes,

“Though the world believes that a castrated *hijra* alone is a real *hijra*, we do not endorse this. I am not castrated. I did not opt for it and my guru did not pressure me into it. Most of my *chelas*\(^{21}\) are also uncastrated like me”\(^{22}\)

Again, while this underscores the spiritual importance of castration within the cult of the Goddess, it does not seem to be necessary for someone to undergo it in order to be considered a *hijra* by society. It is, in fact, to remind them of the story of Bahuchara Mata that *hijras* like Chaturthi choose castration, while those like Raode believe that castration has nothing to do with being a “real *hijra.*” Both narratives, although divergent, maintain a strong belief in Bahuchara Mata’s story.\(^{23}\)

As Lawrence Cohen notes, “being a *hijra* seems rooted both in this narrative of having always been *hijra* and in a continual reenactment of the

\(^{21}\) One of the most important *hijra* social institutions is the guru-chela relationship. The chela’s role is that of an obedient student. Roade is a guru, and has many *chela hijras* under her care. For more details, please refer to:


\(^{22}\) “Lakshmi’s Story” *World Without Borders* http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/lakshmis-story#ixzz47058W1xU

\(^{23}\) I had emailed Vaishali Raode, and got a response in which she categorically stated that “I do believe that Bahuchara Mata is our special goddess. She does not call for castration, but asks for *hijras* to dress up and worship her as women. She does not care about your genitalia, but about your shraddha.”
moment of becoming—the gesture of castration."\textsuperscript{24} What are the implications of emasculation, which results in gender ambiguity? The answer to this lies in the ritualistic blessings that Bahuchara Mata places on hijras during and after castration.\textsuperscript{25} It is not surprising therefore that Bahuchara’s blessings are imperative for the ceremony to take place—after all, “[the hijras’] impotence, emasculation, and commitment to sexual abstinence combine to create a vehicle for Bahuchara Mata’s powers, an anomaly whereby she and her sexually mutilated acolytes confer fertility and other blessings on mortal humans.”\textsuperscript{26}

The fact that hijra castration is carried out in the name of the Goddess means that the ritual unites the hijra with the Goddess, transforming her into a bhagat (a devotee) in a process called nirvana.\textsuperscript{27} Being a bhagat means that hijras can now claim potency through the Goddess. In this vein, it is important to remember that hijras are thought of


as being capable of blessing or cursing—a core aspect of Bahuchara mythology, she curses Bapiya, but blesses Jetho. Bahuchara provides the *hijras* with the medium through which they can earn their livelihood—the ability of the *hijras* to bless weddings, births and other occasions of festivity, and the threat of their possible curses ensures their participation in such occasions.

The core of *hijra* identity is not merely located in the act of Bahuchara’s transformation, although it is certainly an important aspect. For instance, *hijra* also claim power “through Shiva’s ritual sacrifice of the phallus.”

The physical sacrifice of male genitalia during the process of castration mirrors the castration of the Hindu god Shiva (seeing that Shiva had been denied his role in creating the world). This has a major implication for the symbolism associated with the phallus itself—it being a symbol of universal fertility. It is fitting, perhaps, that the *hijras* would identify with a symbol of fertility, as they no longer physically embody the symbol itself.

Drawing on the narrative of Bahuchara Mata enables the *hijras* to bless and curse. In this way, they take part in ceremonies associated with fertility—

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28 Nanda, Serena. *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations*. 1999, p. 31
weddings and birth—while never receiving the personal blessing of fertility themselves.

In conclusion, the manner in which *hijras* interact with their Goddess in personal, social and ritualistic spaces means that it is not just a lack of masculinity that shape their identity. The particular “operation [of castration and/or biological sex transformation] is explicitly identified with the *hijras’* devotions to Bahuchara Mata, who is particularly associated with male transvestism and transgenderism.”¹⁰ These interactions with Bahuchara that exist on a spiritual and personal level for the *hijras* (while providing legitimacy to their social context), also mean a distinct form of worship of the Goddess.

**BECHARAJI, THE TEMPLE TOWN OF BAHUCHARA MATA**

Bahuchara Mata is an important Goddess in the Gujarat region in general and has numerous temples dedicated to her worship across the state. In this section, I will explore the manner in which Bahuchara Mata is

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worshipped as a version of the “Indian Mother Goddess”\textsuperscript{31} in temple rituals, while retaining many of her unique \textit{hijra} associations. One of the most important temples dedicated to Bahuchara Mata is located in the temple town of Becharaji. Becharaji is also associated with many myths of Bahuchara Mata, including that of a lake where one dip can transform a person’s gender. Prerna Laxmi Chaudhary, a \textit{hijra} devotee who has lived near the temple grounds for around two decades, shared his thoughts about the legend of the lake:

Of course, not everyone who bathes in the lake becomes a \textit{hijra}. You become a \textit{hijra} when you have true faith in serving Bahuchara Mata. Most of the devotees here are infertile women or men who want to have children. They are not mediums of the Goddess like we are. When a \textit{hijra} bathes in the lake, she has already been castrated, or become a \textit{bhagat} through true devotion. The temple is important for us, but more important is the appropriate worship of the Goddess herself through devotion.\textsuperscript{32}

Chaudhary insists that being a \textit{hijra} provides a special connection with Bahuchara Mata that other devotees cannot hope to achieve. There are two annual fairs at the temple where over 100,000 \textit{hijras} gather. They

\textsuperscript{32} See appendix II for interview
also have separate guesthouses near the temple.\textsuperscript{33} There seems to be ambivalence among the general public as to the relationship that the \textit{hijras} share with Bahuchara Mata. In a video interview with locals, one man explained that one of the reasons why boys’ hair is shaved off at the age of five is so that the Goddess “does not ask for the penis.”\textsuperscript{34} In this same video, we find the transformation of \textit{hijras} apparent.\textsuperscript{35} Given the difficult social, economic and even legal hurdles that \textit{hijras} might deal with, it is not surprising that it is undesirable to become one. However, it is \textit{because} of these hurdles that they have come to privilege a special relationship with Bahuchara Mata.

While the locals might not wish to become \textit{hijras} themselves, they have come to admire the unique position that the \textit{hijras} occupy at Becharaji. What does this emphasis on the power of \textit{hijras} to bless (or conversely, to curse) mean for their social status in Becharaji, even as a marginalized social group? According to a local quoted by Hans Plomb, “the \textit{hijras} are the richest people around here. They own huge properties


\textsuperscript{34} “Blessed by A Eunuch in Bahucharaji Temple, Gujarat”, see 2:45 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ME9KzuJ1KrY

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, see 1:16
and nobody dares refuse them anything because it is known that a *hijra* can bless or curse. This particular account might be a little exaggerated, given that all five *hijras* who I interviewed did not own any property of their own, but instead lived in guesthouses near the temple. That being said, this account does underscore the importance that the *hijras* are given at Becharaji by the local populace.

It is interesting to note that while *hijras* are heavily involved in the intricacies of the public worship of Bahuchara Mata at Becharaji, the priests within the temples are all upper caste Brahmin men. A cursory glance at the website of the main Becharaji temple reveals the dominance of Brahmins in worshipping Bahuchara Mata. In a phone conversation with Parvathi Tripathi, a *hijra* who has been living in the temple complex for the better part of a decade, it became clear that she recognizes the worship of Bahuchara Mata by Brahmin priests as advantageous to the *hijras*’ community. She explained, “This is good for us. Why not? Now everyone knows Bahuchara Mata as the transgender goddess of Gujarat. They still come to Becharaji for our blessings as well.” It seems that worship of Bahuchara Mata by Brahmin

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38 See Appendix II for interview.
priests provides legitimacy to *hijras* that they both recognize and appreciate. According to Lalitha Kumari, another member of the community who is Tripathi’s *chela*, this legitimacy is not just social or religious, but also legal.\(^39\)

**BAHUCHARA MATA AND LEGAL RIGHTS OF THE HIJARA COMMUNITY**

On April 15, 2014, the Supreme Court of India officially recognized the *hijras* as a legal third gender. The Court quoted a variety of sources in its reasoning, including Hindu, Jain, and Muslim traditions, and foreign verdicts on transgender rights. Bahuchara Mata’s absence was conspicuous in the verdict; however, there were multiple references to well known male deities such as Ram and Aravan.\(^40\) Ram and Aravan retain their cisgender identities as heterosexual men who are supported by the *hijras* as it relates to their respective mythologies. On the other hand, Bahuchara Mata is a deity who undergoes a transformation that mirrors that of the *hijras*. Does this subtle difference exhibit a bias in understanding the experience of the *hijra* community by blatantly

\(^39\) Ibid

\(^40\) Judgment of the *National Legal Services Authority vs. Union of India* in the Supreme Court of India. April 15, 2014 http://supremecourtofindia.nic.in/outtoday/wc40012.pdf
ignoring their primary goddess (who is also a mainstream Gujarati goddess)? After all, even Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been documented doing aarti at the Becharaji Temple.\(^{41}\) I suspect that the reason for this omission may be the specific Gujarati context of the goddess, rather than her close association with the hijra experience. It was surprising to me that many of the members of the community that I interviewed did not find the omission of Bahuchara Mata problematic at all. Shalini Singh, another chela of Tripathi, explained this to me:

> The Supreme Court judgment opened up a new door for us. Of course, there is much to be done still. But today, I can go and ask for an identification card, a ration card. I can sit for examinations, become a doctor or engineer. I am legally allowed to do so. If they had acknowledged Bahuchara Mata, it would have been good. But I am happy with my legal rights, and I do not care otherwise. Bahuchara Mata would be happy for us, she would not care either.\(^{42}\)

Many of the hijras I spoke to echoed Singh’s sentiments. While the worship of Bahuchara Mata is important for their social and religious context, it is ironic that the hijras’ relationship with deities like Ram and Aravan were taken to legitimize their legal rights.

**CONCLUSION**

\(^{41}\) “Shree Karni Mata – Deshnok”, 2009  
https://deviputra.wordpress.com/2009/03/24/bahuchara-mata/  
\(^{42}\) See appendix II for interview
The role that Bahuchara Mata plays in the life of the *hijra* is manifold. She is their source of initiation into being a *hijra* and sustains their lifestyle while continuing to live as one. While her worship at Becharaji takes place in what could be described as Brahmanization, the *hijras* themselves do not seem to mind this. In this paper, I found the lack of research on Bahuchara Mata to be challenging, fascinating and troubling at the same time. I found many of my assumptions about Sanskritization, marginalization and the *hijra* experience itself being challenged through the course of this research. What does it mean to be a transgender devotee of a Goddess who is worshipped in the mainstream Gujarati context? Who decides who the “real” Bahuchara is? These questions are especially relevant in the current debate surrounding LGBTQ rights in India. There is a desire to find indigenous stories, myths and legends that can validate LGBTQ experiences in non-Western terms. Bahuchara Mata’s stories, and the importance given to *hijras* in her worship in Becharaji could be important references in the fight for equal rights.
APENDIX I (IMAGES)

Figure 3 A picture of the murti of Bahuchara Mata at Shree Bahucharji Temple in Rajkot
http://bahucharajitemple.org

Figure 4 A typical calendar at representation of Durga
http://adishakti.org/meeting_his_messengers/shri_durga.htm
APPENDIX II (INTERVIEWS)

Interview with Maneka Chaturthi

प्रश्न: ब्राह्मणों द्वारा बहुचरा माता के पूजन के बारे में आपका क्यों ख्याल है?

उत्तर: मेरे हिसाब से बड़े हिंदू ढांचे में बहुचरा माता को शामिल करना एक बहुत खुशी की बात है। जब मैंने बिधिया कराया, मुझे मलुम था कि वो धार्मिक क रूप से अधिवास था, और साथ ही साथ, मेरे एक हिंजड़े होने के नाते भी। लोग कहते हैं कि हिंजड़े उन्हें इलाज और परिवार कर सकते हैं, बीमार रखते हैं, वे नैतिक अधिकता है। मैं आधम हमारे साथ सहायता के लिए थी। अगर लोग बहुचरा माता जैसी हिंजड़ा देवी को एक अद्वैत हिंदू, देवी माते, तो वे हमें बेहतर समझते हैं।

प्रश्न: बिधिया को लेकर आपका क्यों ख्याल है? क्या बहुचरा माता आपकी बिधिया वाती हैं?

उत्तर: मैंने बिधिया इस लिये नहीं कराई की आदमी मुझे एक औरत के रूप में पहचान या यह की वो मुझे के बिंदु के रूप में देख। आदिकर्म, बहुत सारे हिंजड़े ने बिधिया नहीं कराई है। मैं बिधिया इस लिये कराई ताकि मैं अपने आप को माता की इच्छा के बारे में याद दिलाती रह सके। यदि वह अपने खुद के स्तन खाता सकता है, तो वह जीवन जीने के लिए शक्ति भी दे सकता है।

Interview with Makhana Chootto

प्रश्न: हिंजड़े और ब्राह्मण बहुचरा माता को अलग-अलग रूपों में वादशाहते हैं?

उत्तर: जब मैं इतिहास के बाहरी इलाके में गांव में थी, मैंने कभी भी दुगुग या काली माता के रूप में बहुचरा माता देखा। मैंने उन्हें अपने आप की देवी, एक हिंजड़ा देवी के रूप में देखा। हालांकि वह दुगुग की तरह यहाँ लग रही है, वह अभी भी एक ही बहुचरा ही है - हम हिंजड़ों पर उनका आशीर्वाद पहले से ही है तो...
आप लोगों की तरह हमें अभय हस्त मुद्रा की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

Interview with Prema Laxmi Chaudhary
प्रश्न: झील का क्या महत्व है?

उत्तर: बेशक, हर कोई जो झील में नहाता हिजरा नहीं हो जाता है। जब आप एक हिजरा हो तुम बहुचर माता की सेवा में सच्चा विश्वास किया है। श्रद्धालु यहां के अधिकांश बांध मिहालों या पुरुषों के लिए जो बच्चे हैं करना चाहते हैं। उन्होंने देवी के माध्यम में की तरह हम कर रहे हैं नहीं कर रहे हैं। एक हिजरा झील में नहाता है, वह पहले से ही बिषय कर दिया गया है, या सच्ची स्थिति के माध्यम से एक भगत हो जाते हैं। मंदिर हमारे लिए महत्वपूर्ण है, लेकिन अधिक महत्वपूर्ण स्थिति के माध्यम से देवी खुद की उचित पूजा है।

Interview with Parvathi Tripathi

प्रश्न: क्या ब्राह्मणों द्वारा माँ का पूजन गलत है?

उत्तर: यह हमारे लिए अच्छा है। क्यों? बहुचर माता एक हिजरा देवी के नाम से पता है। सब हमारे आशीर्वाद के लिये भी आते हैं।

Interview with Shalini Singh

प्रश्न: सुप्रीम कोटर के फैसले में बहुचर माता का कोई निश्चित नहीं था। इस पर आप की क्या राय है?

उत्तर: सुप्रीम कोटर के फैसले ने हमारे लिए एक नया दावा खोल दिया। बेशक, वहाँ अभी भी लिखा जा करने के लिए काफी है। लेकिन आज मैं जाने के लिए और एक पहचान काफी, राशन काफी के लिए पूछ सकते हैं। मैं परिक्षाओं के लिए बैठते हैं, एक डॉक्टर या इंजीनियर बन सकता है। मैं कानूनी तौर पर हमें ऐसा करने की अनुमति दी है। अगर वे बहुचर माता को स्वीकार किया था, यह अच्छा हो गया होता। लेकिन मैं अपने कानूनी अधिकारों के साथ खुश हूँ और मैं नहीं तो कोई
परवाह नहीं है। बहुचर माता हमारे लिए खुशी होगी, वह या
तो परवाह नहीं होती।
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In *Hartford Puritanism*, Baird Tipson masterfully contextualizes the theology, hermeneutics, and preaching of prominent seventeenth-century Puritan Thomas Hooker and his colleague Samuel Stone. Tipson, a longtime university administrator and current adjunct professor of religion at Gettysburg College, dedicates *Hartford Puritanism* to probing the “divine anger” and “dread” seen throughout Hooker’s preaching and writings as a minister in England and America (2). In the process of assembling this erudite biography of Hooker, Tipson reveals an impressive grasp on theological history from fourth-century debates between Augustine and Pelagius to the positions of Hooker’s Cambridge mentor William Perkins. With such an expansive knowledge of Christian theology and tradition at his disposal, Tipson makes a significant contribution by
effectively historicizing the “extreme Augustinianism” and “terrifying God” of Hooker.

According to Tipson, we must approach the theology and preaching of Hooker with an understanding that his view of God was “ultimately shaped by the imagination” of Augustine, mediated by his teacher William Perkins (92). This “imagination” led Hooker to articulate certain core Augustinian theological principles to his congregations, including mankind’s inherent sin-nature wrought by the Fall, the inability to earn salvation, the need for God to prepare the faithful to receive His grace, and predestination (97). While this foundation was not necessarily unique to Hooker, it was critical to the development of his God. Hooker’s emphasis on human brokenness and depravity, particularly developed through an “extreme” Perkinsian Augustinianism, held an important association with fear. For Hooker, authentic faith and relationship with God was synonymous with terror and fear (249). In short, this was not the “neighborly God,” a latitudinarian ruler who acted from a distance, but a God who, in order to rightly enforce His will and sovereignty upon His creation, liberally injected fear into the faithful and mightily condemned those He saw fit (249).
William Perkins, a leading sixteenth-century English Puritan, mediated Augustinian theology for Hooker. Tipson not only notes this, but deftly traces the development of Perkins's theology by explicating his reverence of Augustine and Theodore Beza, detailing Perkins's “bitter denunciations” of fifteenth and sixteenth-century “Pelagian” Jesuits, such as Gabriel Biel and Luis de Molina, and highlighting the challenges he faced with sixteenth-century freewill proponent Jacobus Arminius (148, 169). In illustrating such a detailed theological history, Tipson better portrays the Perkinsian “theology that shocked many contemporaries by its unrelenting insistence on divine sovereignty,” and thus informed the work of Hooker (147). Importantly, Tipson’s theological genealogy of Perkins, and thus Hooker, prohibits the reader from simply glossing over Hooker’s “terrifying” God or lazily attributing it to a form of caffeinated Calvinism.

Much of the same in-depth historicizing is seen with Tipson’s treatment of Hooker’s hermeneutical approach. The teachings of Peter Ramus, the sixteenth-century French philosopher, according to Tipson, informed Hooker’s interpretation of the Bible and “the entire natural world” (196). Hooker’s theology revolved around the Ramist “rule,” which “taught the investigator to analyze any subject by breaking it down
into its component parts” (203). By adopting this intellectual tool, Hooker understood the Bible, congregants, and the natural world in a logically deductible way. Hooker’s Ramism dictated that the world was a simple binary governed by God’s perfect and discernible laws. This, Tipson says, gave Hooker insight “into the mind of God” and the ability to “understand the nature of his decree to elect and to reprobate” (216). It allowed the godly minister to intellectualize his faith while reinforcing God’s sovereignty and mankind’s depravity.

Hooker’s extreme Augustinianism and Ramist hermeneutics are tied together with Tipson’s chapter on the minister’s preaching style. Particularly, this section sheds light on the philosophy of the Puritan pulpit and what the sermon’s purpose was. Drawing on a wealth of orations and English sermon historiography, Tipson details that “God used the medium of the preached word to soften or harden the hearts of” congregants (221). More specifically, the message preached in the early seventeenth century intended to engulf the listener in a world of spiritual immediacy and imminent judgment from God. This context gives the reader more understanding of Hooker’s style. Though other divines, Tipson points out, found Hooker’s preaching to be merely “‘railing’ and ‘bawling,’” he found emotional explication of God’s coming terror would effectively
rattle the present sinner and sober the dozing elect (232). Such an approach emphasized Hooker’s Augustinian polarization of the elect and reprobate and Ramist logical binary. Hooker’s preaching was the place where his theological, intellectual, and hermeneutical principles amalgamated.

Tipson’s *Hartford Puritanism* is, by any standard, an incredible theological history. His mission of helping the reader “come away with a deeper understanding of Hooker … in the overall development of Protestant Christianity” is not only accomplished, but surpassed (398). One must consider, however, the purpose of including Samuel Stone in this work at all. Tipson notes Stone’s role as a colleague and pastoral peer of Hooker in Connecticut, but it is unclear how Stone impacted, if at all, Hooker’s theological development. The book will go through sizeable chunks without meaningful mentions of Stone, only to sparingly and unexpectedly touch on his similarities with Hooker on certain topics. Also, though he rightly cites it in the beginning, Tipson might have referenced Janice Knight’s *Puritan Orthodoxies: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1994) more seriously. Though at times a too-tidy binary, Knight’s Puritan history of the “Intellectual Fathers,” or mainline orthodoxy led by William Ames, and
“Spiritual Brethren,” the foil “group” headed by Richard Sibbes, effectively contextualizes the theology of succeeding Puritans in America. A heartier relationship with Knight’s text could have benefited Tipson by positioning Hooker’s stances among the larger debates of other prominent divines, such as John Winthrop, Thomas Shepherd, John Cotton, and John Davenport.

Regardless of any due criticism, *Hartford Puritanism* is a must-read for students and scholars of trans-Atlantic Puritanism and American religious history. Tipson’s impressive command of Christian tradition and theological history results in an exceptional biography of an important, international religious leader.

Tucker Adkins

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The last substantial English commentary on the *Epistle to Diognetus* was published in 1943. Since that time, several articles and valuable French and German commentaries have been published. In this volume, Clayton Jefford, professor of scripture at Saint Meinrad Seminary
& School of Theology, contributes to Oxford University Press’s series, Oxford Apostolic Fathers, by providing disparate analyses, expert translation, and insightful commentary. His task is made more difficult by the fact that commentaries on Diognetus are, to a certain extent, speculative; no extant manuscript exists, with interpretations primarily drawn from transcriptions. Thus, throughout his analysis, Jefford consistently illustrates the illusive and speculative nature of scholarly interpretation.

The book is divided into three sections: introduction, translation, and commentary. After briefly reviewing the history of scholarship, Jefford problematizes the issues of literary integrity and composition history. He argues that chapters eleven and twelve of Diognetus were likely late additions to the first ten chapters of the text, as is evident by the separate and distinct literary styles and thematic elements. Jefford also argues that the asyndetic style of chapter five and six, and chapter seven through ten indicates that certain textual traditions were initially transmitted orally (41). To explain the development from an oral tradition to textual composition, he proposes three major stages in Diognetus’ historical development: (1) oral recitation (chapters. 1-10), (2) written autograph and evolution of the autograph (expansions within chapters. 1-
10), and (3) additional chapters (chapters 11-12) accompanied by further editorial modifications (expansions within chapters 1-10). According to Jefford, *Diognetus* exhibits the influence of Pauline thought and Logos Christology, which was initially transmitted orally and later edited within an Alexandrian context (125-126). While scholars have rigorously debated the subject, his reasoning is not only convincing, but also valuable in offering a new lens of interpretation.

On the other hand, Jefford wholly neglects to address the possible influence of early Gnosticism. For example, *Diognetus* 7:2 refers to the Son of God as ‘the Demiurge,’ which is an important concept found in early Christian Gnosticism and Plato’s *Timaeus*. (See Thomas Gaston, “The Influence of Platonism on the Early Apologists”, in *Heythrop Journal* (2009), 573-580.) I feel that the book could have been strengthened by this inclusion.

Aside from this minor critique, Jefford’s nuanced and meticulous analysis is an excellent contribution to studies on early Christian literature. While the book does not focus on reconstructing early Christian history, his conclusions will certainly influence how scholars approach the subject. This volume will advance the study of *Diognetus* and other apologetic literature. As a reference book, students will find the text useful as it
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proves to be an excellent introduction to an often-marginalized piece of early Christian literature. Overall this volume is an important and praiseworthy addition to the studies of Diognetus, the Apostolic Fathers, and early Christianity.

William Brown
University of Chicago


Matthew Bowman is an Associate Professor of History at Henderson State University, and *The Urban Pulpit* is derived from his doctoral thesis at Georgetown University. In *The Urban Pulpit*, Bowman claims “liberal and fundamentalist evangelicalism were two divergent methods of laying stake to a common evangelical heritage” (10). Fundamentalist and liberal evangelicals ultimately disagreed over how human societies could be transformed, which reflected both their stylistic and theological differences. Bowman’s thesis relies on his understanding that both “liberalism and fundamentalism were religious responses to the urban experience,” (14) and to detail and nuance his claims he specifically
focuses on how both movements attained prominence in New York City from the 1880s to the 1920s.

The changing cultural landscape of New York City threatened the dominant evangelical life of the urban city. As Bowman depicts, “the unholy trinity of urbanization, immigration, and industrialization” (15) challenged the, arguably imagined, evangelical cultural dominance. Initially, evangelicals were unsure of how to face these changes and they responded by retreating northward, away from the challenging new developments. They sold their houses and churches largely to the entertainment industry and to immigrants, and moved to quiet residential neighborhoods further north in the city. However, it quickly became clear that avoiding these challenges would not be an option. The immoral forces the evangelicals were fleeing—entertainment and industry—as well as the immigrants who did not share their faith—Catholics and Jews—followed as they moved north. Evangelical leaders realized that the rituals of evangelical faith, which included preaching, scripture, and the rites of revival, would have to be reimagined and contextualized in ways relevant for the new generation of urban evangelicals. It was the different approaches to reimagining the rituals of evangelical faith in response to
the demands of the changing urban environment that led to the split in evangelicalism that Bowman describes throughout this work.

Bowman outlines the differences that led to the split in evangelicalism in a number of ways. He provides historical background for the religious and societal milieu of New York City, and goes into detail regarding the *cathedralizing* of the built environment of the city. Bowman continues by discussing the diversity in preaching styles of the major Baptist and Presbyterian pulpits, analyzing theories about language and the concept of scripture as God’s Word in a modern context, as seen in the debates over the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible. He characterizes the liberal evangelical commitment to social justice and reform as a direct expression and outgrowth of Christian conversion, narrates the attempt to institute a distinct liberal evangelical curriculum at the Union School of Religion, and describes John Roach Straton as the main example of the emerging fundamentalist style of preaching that embraced prophetic and confrontational means. Bowman concludes by telling the story of Harry Emerson Fosdick and his failing efforts to develop and maintain liberal evangelicalism at the Riverside Church in New York City.
Bowman asserts, “the problems evangelicals faced in New York were shared nationwide” (14). However, the focus of Bowman’s narrative on New York is so exclusive that events elsewhere seem unimportant, even if these events were directly impacting those in New York (e.g., the number of revivalist preachers ending their tours in New York). If the reader understands that Bowman’s work is an attempt to support his thesis through describing in detail how the evangelical split played out in New York rather than prescribing this process for all major North American cities at the time, this is not an issue. Bowman’s thesis would benefit by more explicitly stating that the Urban Pulpit serves as a case study of the larger trends in evangelicalism.

This book should be of great interest not only to religious historians, but also to those seeking to understand the cultural history of the American city. Bowman’s work is essential to anyone interested in the scholarship on American religious history, and it should challenge others to continue engaging in the burgeoning study and scholarship on the topic of American Protestantism. Bowman believes that this historical account still speaks “to the troubled state of evangelicalism in America, and reminds us, urgently, that it is strongest when it imagines itself diverse” (293). While this claim is not well developed in the book, it should serve
as a catalyst for others who are interested to continue to explore this claim. If Bowman’s thesis regarding the divergence in evangelical beliefs as a response to the changing urban environment is accurate, as he clearly articulates it is for New York, it would be interesting to see other researchers and scholars engage in similar historical studies for other cities (e.g., San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc.) Under comparison to such research, would Bowman’s thesis hold true for these other urban centers during the same time period?

Brady Kal Cox
Abilene Christian University


The well-known American Shaker establishments of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky; Mount Lebanon, New York; Canterbury, New Hampshire; and Hancock, Massachusetts are widely familiar to students and scholars of Shakerism. Indeed, the history and cultural uniqueness of these great religious settlements have been exhaustively documented by historians of American religion. Nevertheless, there remain several Shaker communities—now splendidly preserved historic sites—that continue to
reside outside the scope of academic scrutiny. Despite the factors contributing to this scant scholarly attention, fresh curiosity has turned to one such settlement: White Water, Ohio. In *The Shakers of White Water, Ohio, 1823-1916*, editors James R. Innis, Jr., and Thomas Sakmyster, alongside contributing historians, have compiled a collection of essays elucidating the history of this long-overlooked Shaker establishment.

Innis and Sakmyster’s preface anticipates a question likely lingering in readers’ minds: why the belated scholarly attention? One explanatory clue is the 1907 conflagration that engulfed White Water’s archive of historical deeds and documents; historians have since conjectured over the biographical lacunae that have rendered the village’s historical narrative incomplete. To finally rectify these historical inaccuracies, this volume’s contributors piece together White Water’s record by drawing on a rich set of primary sources, including periodical literature, letters, and Shaker memoirs. *The Shakers of White Water* is divided into eight thematic chapters: History, Spiritualism, Children, Women, Agriculture and Industry, Music, Land, and Buildings and Topography. Chapters are supplemented by individual appendices containing photographs, prints, musical scores, community rosters, demographic charts, poetry, and maps. While each section offers rare
historical information on the White Water community, two particularly absorbing chapters deserve special notice in the limited space of this review: “A History of White Water Shaker Village” and “Agriculture and Industry.”

Founded in 1823, roughly twenty-five miles northwest of Cincinnati, White Water was the last Shaker community to be established in what was then considered the great American West. At that time, sixteen other Shaker communities flourished throughout the United States. The Shakers, formally known as the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, had erected their first settlement in 1774 outside of Albany, New York, and after several decades of turbulent persecution, emerged as a prosperous religious minority. The society had advanced south to Kentucky, then as far as Florida, and progressed westward into Indiana and Ohio, where there emerged the Union, North Union, and White Water villages. White Water all but conformed to the trajectory of events that typically inspired the founding of other Shaker villages. The 1820s marked the gradual decline of the United Society’s era of expansion, as its itinerant missionary program fell into quiescence. Without the influence of Shaker missionary circuits or peripatetic evangelists, a local band of settlers who “wished to learn more of the
Shaker faith” initiated the establishment of a new Shaker community—a spiritual yearning alone had inspired White Water’s first log cabins to dot the fringes of the American West (13).

Most interesting, Innis and Sakmyster’s chapter, “A History of White Water Shaker Village,” chronicles compelling historical instances that suggest the political ethos of White Water was, at times, at stark odds with the United Society’s doctrine. There are numerous examples of White Water’s tendency to sidestep the rules and injunctions issued by the Central Ministry, the United Society’s government. In 1841 and 1842, for instance, the Central Ministry proscribed consumption of tobacco, tea, coffee, “ardent spirits,” and, most contentiously, pork. White Water, however, housed both a brewery (a transient operation) and maintained a lucrative swine enterprise. Dutiful obeisance to these mandates at White Water was short-lived; by 1850, use of these commodities and swine production resumed, the latter being a longstanding staple food source. White Water’s community largely disregarded another pillar of Shaker doctrine during the Civil War. While pacifism was a cardinal principle of Shakerism, many White Water Believers openly championed Union war efforts. Innis and Sakmyster document that White Water regularly provided farm produce to Cincinnati’s Sanitary Commission, an
organization that cared for Union casualties. Demonstrations of public charity notwithstanding, a decided pro-Union spirit pervaded the community: “The Believers of White Water tried in various ways to demonstrate that, despite their refusal to submit to the draft, they were in fact loyal to the Union and had deep concern for the soldiers wounded in combat” (49). Indeed, there was a prevailing disregard for maintaining the Shaker posture of hushed pacifism. In July 1863, shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg, White Water hosted a public Independence Day fête featuring Shaker song, dance, and prayer to honor Union soldiers. Innis and Sakmyster write, “No celebration of this kind is known to have taken place at any other Shaker village during the Civil War” (49). Such instances point to a distinct tone of frontier independence and patriotism that shaped White Water’s perspectives on national affairs. This is not to say White Water Believers were restive agitators, but rather more apt to voice that certain Shaker principles were, at times, incompatible with the political exigencies of the era.

Political sentiments aside, White Water believers enjoyed considerable industrial success. They tilled fertile farmland, manufactured iconic Shaker commodities, such as brooms and bonnets; and lucratively peddled the famed Shaker garden seeds. Several agricultural and industrial
ventures, however, distinguished White Water from its counterparts. Chapter 4, “Agriculture and Industry,” uncovers industries unique to White Water, particularly malt beer brewing, silkworm cultivation, and fish farming. Innis and Sakmyster document that the log brewery was one of White Water’s first structures and even welcomed the general public for a brief period; the weekly beer production rate yielded fourteen barrels (197). White Water’s silkworm enterprise flourished in the village’s two log cabins and garden shed; Shakers garnered a yearly production rate of fifty pounds, valued at $275 (198). Not only was raw silk sold in bulk, White Water believers spun silk for clothing and handkerchiefs. Most peculiar was White Water’s fish farming venture launched in the early 1880s. What began as a ten-fish, six-acre expanse of interconnected ponds, turned into an enterprise replete with an estimated forty thousand German carp by 1884 (201). The annual fish farming revenue hovered around $350. Following the Civil War, as the United States plunged inexorably into industrialization, formerly profitable Shaker industries dwindled. White Water Shakers struggled to compete with mass-produced commodities, but in turning to these unconventional industries, the community was able to adapt to a rapidly evolving economy. Importantly, the chapter undermines the common historical oversimplification that
Shakers were only callous-handed farmers, carpenters, and itinerant merchants. Though White Water believers occupied these roles, they skillfully (and successfully) experimented with novel industries not generally known to have had a place in Shaker history.

If the book has a fault, it lies in its frustrating omission of an index. Although the appendices provide valuable supplemental information, the book’s exclusion of a comprehensive index inconveniences readers. Despite this flaw, the essays of The Shakers of White Water collectively succeed in rescuing White Water from historical obscurity. Every chapter eloquently emphasizes White Water’s singularity, uncovering the idiosyncrasies, both peculiar and provocative, that rendered the community a truly unique Shaker establishment. That is, in reading the essays, one discerns that although Shaker communities comprised a larger religious institution, settlements were individual microcosms defined by their own intellectual and industrial triumphs. True, Shakers were grounded in a deeply shared theology, but the United Society was by no means a one-dimensional, homogenous sect—and White Water was no small contributor to achieving this diversity.

Sebastian Galbo
Dartmouth College

The 25th Anniversary edition of Randall Balmer’s *Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory* emerges at an important moment in American religious history, when scholars are questioning the centrality of the New Christian Right. Insisting that the scholarship is lopsided, historians are now calling for a more expansive study on American evangelicalism.

Balmer’s work, then, is perhaps more relevant today than it was twenty-five years ago. While Balmer was one of the first to argue that scholars should take evangelicals seriously; he explains in the preface to this fifth edition that his more specific aim was to show that evangelicalism could not be reduced to what Americans saw on their televisions: the religious right or televangelism. Rather, the evangelical subculture is deeply rich and diverse. Embarking on a journey across the United States, Balmer knits together the stories of fascinating and very different evangelicals, fundamentalists, and charismatics in his classic travelogue, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*. Featuring chapters on Jesus freaks in California, futurist pentecostals, healers, Christian bookstores,
youth camps, colleges and universities, just to name a few, this work helps to diversify and complicate the study of American evangelicalism.

As Balmer explains in his new preface, his work was one of the first historical ethnographies and that it provided a unique perspective, as the book was as much a personal venture as it was a professional one. Balmer was raised fundamentalist, but left the movement in his early adulthood—coinciding with the rise of the religious right—which according to Balmer, had grown much too political. Returning to the evangelical subculture years later, Balmer was delighted to become reacquainted with the evangelical faith he remembered from his youth. While his curiosity and compassion for his unique subjects are laudable, Balmer detracts from the quality of his research as he affronts the religious beliefs and practices with which he disagrees. His bias becomes increasingly pronounced, especially in chapters added in the later editions. Despite this, the later chapters are not entirely without merit. In fact, they examine at varying levels, essential topics in the study of American evangelicalism, such as: Jimmy Swaggart, Christian rock music, Thomas Kinkade and Christian art, and megachurches.

The 25th Anniversary edition adds yet another important topic: Latino Evangelicals. But again, Balmer’s ethnographic history is lacking.
I’m not sure what the reader is supposed to take away from Balmer’s evaluation of what he referred to as “the Murmuring Moment,” which he observed at the New Life Covenant Church in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago. Balmer writes, it “has become so predictable that it seems contrived to me, even coercive. It’s as though the worship leaders are saying, ‘Now folks, twenty minutes into the service, we’re going to speak in tongues’” (342). I also find it more distracting than helpful that Balmer organizes his entire chapter around his own normative political positions, expressing hope that “The rise of Latino Evangelicalism suggests that evangelical political activism may be coming of age” (349) and that the subculture may be “moving away from the hard-right policies to reclaim the mantle of nineteenth-century evangelicalism, which, like traditional Catholic social teaching, invariably took the part of those on the margins of society, those Jesus called ‘the least of these’” (350).

In terms of audience, as reviewer Timothy Weber said of the first edition, readers will judge Balmer’s book “on the basis of whether they
can find people like themselves in it.” Balmer explains in his new preface that he has been grateful to hear from so many readers over the years who have expressed appreciation “for telling ‘their’ stories, [and] for understanding them.” These readers who identified with the people Balmer met along his journey will be pleased to learn that the 25th Anniversary edition includes updates on a number of the beloved figures and movements from the earlier chapters, in a new afterword.

Some readers of this journal, however, will not find themselves represented here, as the entire intermountain west region is all but absent in this work. Moreover, Balmer’s bias extends to Mormons. In his chapter “Episcopal Indians,” Balmer laments the fact that the mainline denominations lost interest in Indian missions, giving way to “the well financed Mormons, who condemn native religions and lure many of the best students off the reservation to be educated in Mormon schools” (223). Balmer also draws on evangelical scholars in Oregon to explain the tragic state of the subculture, which they believe to be secularized, rationalized, much too focused on morality instead of grace, and thus, no longer unique. “We’re no better than the Mormons,” Balmer quotes one of the scholars

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1 Timothy Weber, review of Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America, by Randall Balmer Church History, 62, no. 1 (1993), 156.
saying, “in fact, in terms of morality, we’re not as good as the Mormons. The Mormons outdo us. If that’s what the gospel is all about, then they’re to be emulated. But they don’t understand the gospel, either. We think we do” (274).

All in all, Balmer’s work is significant. The early chapters of the first edition are worth reading for an extensive understanding of American evangelicalism, and if the reader is willing to overlook Balmer’s opinions, a great deal can be learned about other important and related topics.

Megan Leverage
Florida State University


Nigel Biggar is currently Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology and Director of the MacDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics, and Public Life at the University of Oxford. His main objective in Defence of War is to argue that war can be morally just, culminating in chapter seven, which analyze the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Biggar argues that the invasion was justified, even if in hindsight, alternative courses of action would have provided more preferable results.
In chapter one, Biggar argues against the ideal of Christian pacifism that has persisted and grown in recent years. He focuses on arguments made by Stanley Hauerwas, John Howard Yoder, and Richard Hays, but concludes that their positions are flawed because they do not consider the many facets of violence and anger and whether these concepts are compatible with love and forgiveness. He defends his position in chapter two, offering empirical evidence of soldiers from six different theatres of war, spanning almost a century. He concludes that soldiers rarely took pride in their kills, nor did they feel a sense of satisfaction from killing the enemy. This, Biggar argues, demonstrates that emotions such as anger and hatred are usually tempered and restrained; the enemy is respected and treated with compassion.

I find Biggar’s third chapter somewhat problematic. He argues that soldiers should not intend to kill their enemies, but ought to do so with reluctance rather than want. While this is idealistic and in line with the Christian view of calculated restraint, my view is that any reluctance on the battlefield could cause increased loss of life, rather than neutralising the enemy without hesitation. Biggar does argue his point well and makes a good case from the point of view of a moral theologian, but the reality may be quite different.
Chapter four addresses proportionality, drawing on the example of the Somme, where 622,221 Allied soldiers were killed. Biggar discusses whether the significant loss of life can be justified in the sense of what amounted to an advancement of a mere six miles, or in the sense of its larger role in the war. He concludes that both world wars were justified for the greater good and the terms reached at the end of each war.

The tone shifts in chapter five. Biggar spends much of the chapter analyzing the work of David Rodin and others including Hugo Grotius, Thomas Aquinas, and Augustine. He considers the legalities of war, justifications for killing, issues of national defence, the use of war as a means of law enforcement, and civil conflicts such as the troubles in Northern Ireland, while debating the impact of Christian morality on law since the Middle Ages.

Chapter six looks at Kosovo in 1999 and the legal status of NATO’s intervention under international law, the UN Charter, and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Biggar argues that although NATO’s actions could be interpreted as illegal, they can still be considered morally right. Events in Kosovo and subsequent conflicts have raised a number of questions and discussions between international legal experts: while some interventions may be considered illegal on paper, they may be deemed
legal due to mitigating circumstances, and more frequently are considered morally right, even if not legitimized by the UN Security Council.

Biggar concludes this chapter by stating that a global government would be ideal for the enforcement of international law. However, he concedes that it is unlikely to happen due to diversity of global opinion. Even within the European Union (EU), cracks have been appearing for some time. Recent terrorist attacks threaten to fracture the EU further. Following the attacks in Paris in November 2015, some countries within the Schengen Zone have reintroduced border control and Britain voted to leave the EU in a June 2016 referendum.

Chapter seven examines the moral complexities of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and applies Biggar’s just war theory to determine if the Anglo-American invasion was warranted. Biggar analyzes Saddam Hussein’s regime, the implied threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the political spin from both Washington and London regarding WMD, including retrospective accusations that Tony Blair misled Parliament, and that US officials forged documents in order to exaggerate the perceived threat. Here Biggar reaches his crescendo: can the invasion of Iraq be justified? The unfounded level of threat from WMD weakens the case for the war being just. However, the aim of a regime change and
ending the atrocities caused by Hussein was successful, and therefore, arguably, the war can be justified.

The complexities of war make it impossible to know if the sacrifice will be worth the gain. Many arguments are made in hindsight, but we must analyze situations as we see them. While these points will continue to be debated, I agree with Biggar’s argument that war can be justified and that pacifism ought to be justified too. In recent years, mobs, militia, and terrorist groups rather than established governments have increasingly instigated conflict.

Biggar has an in-depth knowledge of the subject and has carried out meticulous research utilizing a large number of sources. His contribution to the field is significant and his book is potentially the best argument in defense of war written in recent years. The title of the book could have benefited from some reference to the Christian moral, ethical, and theological stance adopted in the text, however.

The text is accessible to anyone with an interest in the topic, and although the author states that it is not intended to be a textbook, I do see it having a place in the classroom.

Philippa Juliet Meek

University of South Florida

Bart D. Ehrman, the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies, and his colleague Zlatko Plese, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and specialist in Gnosticism at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, are co-editors and translators of *The Other Gospels: Accounts from Jesus Outside of the New Testament*. *The Other Gospels* is an edited edition of Ehrman and Plese’s earlier work, *The Apocryphal Gospels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), omitting some literature appearing in the earlier work. Both are collections of the extra-canonical (i.e. apocryphal) gospels used in early orthodox and heretical expressions of Christianity. The additions to this book include the Discourse upon the Cross and a new translation of The Gospel of the Savior, a fragmentary gospel from the second or third century. *Unlike The Apocryphal Gospels*, which include both the original language (Greek, Latin, Coptic, or Syriac) and an English translation, *The Other Gospels* only includes the English translation.

While *The Other Gospels* is intended for the novice, Ehrman and Plese have included a fairly extensive collection of apocryphal works.
Many of the gospels, such as the Gospel of Nicodemus (a fourth century text also known as the Acts of Pilate), are rarely available in English (Ehrman and Plese, xii). Ehrman and Plese also include helpful introductions that contextualize each document. These introductions often include: a brief description of how the work was discovered or became known, the provenance of the work, and a brief bibliography. While the bibliography is useful, it does tend to exclude important research.

This volume has many exceptional features. For persons unacquainted with the apocryphal works, the introduction provides a relatively thorough introduction to apocryphal texts and specifically those included within this volume. Ehrman and Plese have largely avoided the pitfall of using academic jargon. As a result, the book is very accessible, even readers with a basic knowledge of early Christianity can profit from Ehrman and Plese’s tome. Overall, I found the text translations to be clear and concise, following the manuscript evidence available.

Despite its strengths, the book does have a few notable flaws. There are some important apocryphal works missing from the book. For example, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, a second century text about the effect of the Apostle Paul on Thecla, a virgin, is not included. This is particularly important, as scholars have argued that the canonical Acts of
the Apostles that is included in this publication is partially dependent on the Acts of Paul and Thecla. Moreover, it seems odd that Ehrman and Plese included the Diatesseron, a 2nd century attempt by Tatian, an early theologian, to harmonize the four gospel accounts. The Diatesseron has been the focus of a number of scholarly works. However, some academics have debated whether or not the book is truly apocryphal. The authors have also neglected to include a few essential secondary resources within their bibliographies. For example, the work of the late Helmut Koester, who was an outspoken proponent of the Gospel of Peter’s antiquity, is absent. Finally, the authors have chosen not to include an overarching bibliography at the back of the book.

This is a phenomenal volume and is highly recommend. It cogently summarizes the extra-canonical gospels as well as a clear, concise introduction and eminently readable translations. Regardless of how controversial Ehrman has been, this is some of his best work. I would encourage those who find this tome useful to also look into Ehrman’s *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* and *Lost Christianities*. *The Other Gospels* is an excellent addition to the layman and academic’s library.

Paul Stein

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