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The editorial committee would like to acknowledge. That Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka (Ga-niyen-gé-haa-ga) Nation is recognized as the custodians on the lands and waters on which we gather. Tiohtiá:ke (jo-jya-gé)/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal Community.

Letter from the Editors:

The Department of Theological Studies is an admittedly small one, and too often the work that goes on here can seem somewhat clandestine. The students of this department study and write out of a passion for the subject of theology, hoping to make some sense of cosmological questions, ancient language, current trends, and to give some semblance of honour to the myriad of theologians who came before us. Theology is a humble pursuit, lonely at times, but infinitely worthwhile in the minds of those who study it. This journal is one of many ways we attempt to break out of hermitic selves and embrace theological traditions in a communal format. We owe so much to the professors, students, and affiliates of the Department of Theological Studies, and we thank them for their continued support. Thank you for reading, writing, and continuing to study the mysteries of life with such passion.

With our appreciation,

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The Iconoclastic Controversy in 8th and 9th Century Byzantium

Efstathios Fokas

THE ICONOCLASTIC CONTROVERSY was an event that dealt with the theological debate about whether sacred imagery was considered idolatrous in 8th and 9th century Byzantium. This sacred imagery came in the form of iconography, a Roman tradition that had been around for many centuries. At the height of the controversy in the mid-8th century, Iconoclasts were charged with the removal, and destruction of icons in all religious and secular spaces. Essentially, the entire debate was centered around the acceptance or prohibition of Jesus Christ being portrayed in sacred imagery. What this paper will attempt to offer, is an examination of the Iconoclastic controversy as a Christological debate about Christs' two natures, his relationship with God the Father, and why icons are crucial for Orthodox Christian spirituality. The first part of this paper will discuss iconography and image representation in the late Roman empire, and how it was adopted and adapted by early Christians. The second part consists of placing the controversy within a historical timeframe, by analyzing various political developments in 8th and 9th century Byzantium that played a fundamental role in the establishment of Iconoclasm. The historical background will be divided into two parts; the first covering from c.695 to 787, and the second from 787 to 843. The third part will be a discussion and interpretation of Iconoclast theology vis-à-vis

Iconophile theology, by examining the crucial differences between *latreia* (worship) and *proskynesis* (veneration).

Part 1 – Representing the Royal Image: An Ancient Roman Tradition

The basis of Christian iconography had its roots in the tradition of the "ruler cult" in the late Roman empire. With Christianity encompassing most of the Roman world in the late 3rd and early 4th century, this "ruler cult," was an important aspect of religious and political life, as it allowed the ruling class to implement a more stringent control on society. It also tested the loyalty of Roman citizens not only to the emperor, but to the traditional gods of the empire. All official images of the emperor were to be honoured with the burning of incense and the lighting of lamps, which, was the way to show respect and reverence.[1] Evidently, in order to display outright loyalty, the gods had to be worshipped as well, in both public and private settings. Pagan festivals were the ideal scenarios to display public religious devotion; statues of gods would be placed on altars, where adherents would approach, bow, and possibly offer some sort of sacrifice in honour of the god displayed.[2] In this way, it would seem, imperial officials would be able to judge who is truly loyal to the state. If respect had not been given to the emperor or gods accordingly, those involved were suspected of being Christians, and would be undoubtedly persecuted. In terms of imperial imagery and how it relates to Christian iconography, it was this aspect of respect and honour which laid the foundations of icons being crucial elements of spirituality and piety.

While the public sphere was mostly reserved for the agents of the state to police authority, the private sphere was arguably more important in terms of true religious devotion. Smaller statues or icons of the *Lares*, or "household gods," were worshipped in domestic shrines, usually attended to by women.[3] It is possible that some of these

[1] Judith Herrin. *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 98.
[2] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 99.
[3] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 99.

Lares may have been what Judith Herrin calls "pagan portraits," and were placed in various places around the home, where they would be venerated as if displayed in public.[4] They may have also been portrayed in different ways, and, could be fabricated in various styles: some had hinged side panels, while others had lids that fit over them, protecting the image from damage. Herrin believes that these "pagan portraits" are so similar to early Christian icons, that artists may have used images of the goddess Isis as a model for early depictions of the Theotokos, and those of Serapis or Zeus as examples for Christ.[5] Representations of ancient gods were usually in encaustic, a fabrication technique that entailed the slight burning of materials on the surface of the image, and one of the many examples of pagan methods adopted by Byzantine iconographers.[6]

Evidently, while some might be skeptical that pagan imagery would have never been used as a basis for early Christian iconographers, there are some examples that prove otherwise. Herrin mentions the miraculous story of an artist who had both hands withered while trying to depict Christ as Zeus.[7] It is impossible to know whether a story like this had any truth behind it. However, going forward, it outlined the importance of *how* sacred figures ought to be represented. Realistically, the differences between early Christian icons and "pagan portraits" may have not been so vast. The figures represented a dignified authority in a way which it addressed the viewer, with large eyes and usually in a frontal manner.[8] As such, these icons demanded attention, and devotees believed that somehow these sacred images provided communication with the divine. This idea was put forth by St. Basil of Caesarea (c.329–379), who analyzed the link between imperial imagery

[4] Ibid., 99 – With the burning of incense and lamps being lit in honour of the deity. Although, the level of spirituality may be slightly different in the private setting than in the public, it is highly likely that private devotion meant much more to adherents, as they felt they could communicate with the divine in a more personal way.
[5] Ibid., 99-100.
[6] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 104.
[7] Ibid., 100.
[8] Ibid., 101 – Although there may not be any evidence to prove that those "pagan portraits" were depicted in such a way, it may be one of the many features that early Christian iconographers adopted from late Antiquity.

and early Christian iconography: the respect and honour that was given to the image passed on to the prototype.[9] Therefore, these scared images worked as intercessors between the earthly and the heavenly, as prayers passed directly to the holy person depicted in the image. St. Basil's ideas would be revived by Iconophiles (Icon lovers) during the height of Byzantine Iconoclasm, to express the vitality of icon worship as an essential spiritual element to Orthodox Christians.

It is relatively clear by the examples given above, that early Christian iconographers based themselves on pagan methods and traditions. Ancient practices were reproduced when giving honour and respect to icons: they were kissed, incense was burned in front of them, and prayers were addressed to the holy figure portrayed.[10] It is understandable that these aspects stressed the most devout Christians – it seemed as if they were worshiping idols. However, in theological terms, this argument is much more complex, and will be explained in the latter stages of this paper. By the end of the 7th century, icons may have had other purposes, and not solely reserved for religious devotion; Herrin mentions the icon of the Theotokos being used as protective charm against enemy invaders.[11] However, the external pressures caused by Arab expansion made for political devastation, and drastic loss of territory in the fringes of the empire. Change needed to be implemented if there were to be any chances of survival, and these came in the form of the removal of sacred imagery, and a reassessment of religious beliefs by the time Leo III (r.717-741) ascended to the throne.

Part 2 – Political Developments and Iconoclasm, c.695-787

Before analyzing a vast array of historical events during this period, one thing must be said about the source material. One of the main contemporary sources – and the one that will be used for this section of the paper – is the *Chronicle* by Theophanes the Confessor. Theophanes lived in Byzantium from the mid 8th to the early 9th century,

[9] Ibid., 101 – Evidently, this aspect of Christian theology would be at the center of the debate concerning Iconoclasm in the 8th century.
[10] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 116.
[11] Ibid., 101.

where he was an active writer during both stages of Iconoclasm. As much as his work is of great historical value, it must be understood that his views are heavily biased, as he portrays the emperors Leo III, and Constantine V (r.741-775) as extremely evil men. In order to properly understand the political and theological undertones that paved the way for the destruction of the holy images, an objective interpretation (or an attempt at) of the source material must be put forth.

Political Instability, the Arab Siege of 717-18, and Early Icon Denunciation

The Byzantine Empire in the late 7th century was in complete disarray, and on the brink of destruction – to put it lightly. Between the years 695 and 717, an astonishing number of potentates claimed the throne; a testament to the fragmentation and internal instability of the empire.[12] In a time reminiscent of the Third Century Crisis, emperors vied for power and rose through the ranks of the army, deposing previous emperors with impunity and military coups.[13] This internal turmoil had caused the Byzantines to virtually ignore the Arab conquests, up until the armies of the Caliph had reached the gates of Constantinople. By the time Leo III had managed to negotiate his ascendancy to the imperial throne, his military expertise would now be put to the test, and he immediately prepared the city for a lengthy siege.[14] More importantly, and according to Herrin, one of the conditions upon which he was crowned, was to "not disturb the church."[15] This can mean a variety of different things; in simple terms, in meant that the values and institutions of the Church that had been in place since the early fathers were not to be altered or removed. Unfortunately, this would not end up being so.

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[12] Judith Herrin, "The Context of Iconoclast Reform," in *Iconoclasm*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Judith Herrin (Center for Byzantine Studies: University of Birmingham, 1975), 15 – Six emperors ruled the Byzantine Empire from 695 to 717.
[13] Ibid., 15; see also Herrin, *Byzantium*, 106-107.
[14] Ibid., 107.
[15] Ibid., 107.

According to Theophanes' *Chronicle*, by early September, the Arab fleet sailed up the Bosphorus Strait with 1,800 ships.[16] A couple of days later, some of the ships set out and made their way towards the imperial city, but were slowed down due to a lack of wind.[17] This was Leo's chance to destroy part of the enemy fleet; he did so with "divine help," and by using the "fire-bearing ships," as Theophanes indicated.[18] What followed next was the downfall of the Caliph's army. According to Theophanes, a series of calamitous, but favourable events, allowed the Byzantines to repel the Arab invaders; first, the harsh winter proved to be disastrous for animals that accompanied the siege, and second, aid from Tervel, the Bulgarian king, in decimating the Arab army camped further in-land, provided the Byzantines with a favourable victory over the Arab forces.[19] As such, this victory outlined the military experience that Leo possessed. Among the populace, it would seem, the emperor was perceived as having been divinely aided by the intercessions of the Theotokos, who would have never let the imperial city fall to the hands of heathens.[20] Throughout the next couple of years, Leo consolidated his rule over Constantinople, but had begun to do so in particularly unfavourable circumstances.[21]

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[16] *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 545 – Just like most contemporary Medieval sources, these numbers must be taken into consideration. Theophanes' account is incredibly biased, inflating the numbers to make victory seem impossible.

[17] Ibid., 545.

[18] Ibid., 545 – This is the famous "Greek fire."

[19] *Chronicle*, 546; see also Herrin, *Byzantium*, 107 – The Arab army had not been used to fighting in the winter months, and, as a result, they lost many horses, camels, and other important animals. Regarding the aid given by the Bulgarians, Theophanes mentions that some "well informed persons" stated that 22,000 Arabs were slaughtered by Bulgarian troops. Again, these "well informed persons" were not known, but the number was surely not 22,000. While an exact number cannot be given, the importance of the victory cannot be stressed enough, as the Byzantines were probably outnumbered by the numerically superior Arab forces.

[20] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 107.

[21] *Chronicle*, 550 – In fact, what had secured Leo's consolidation was the fact that the Arab fleet was "miraculously" destroyed by divine intervention in late 718, ending the possibility of Arab retaliation for the foreseeable future. Mango implies that this was more along the lines of some unusual boiling points in the

In 725/26, a massive volcanic eruption on the island of Thera caused great distress throughout the Byzantine world. Theophanes describes this event as Leo's perception of "God's wrath being in his favour," and from there, he "stirred up a more ruthless war on the venerable icons."[22] Herrin, probably basing her information from Theophanes' account, also describes Leo's interpretation of this eruption as divine retribution for the idolatrous worship of icons; the emperor, "filled with boorishness and complete ignorance," was advised to ban icons from all churches and public places.[23] It is relatively unclear if the eruption of Thera was the primary cause of Leo's banishment of icons, but Theophanes believed that the eruption was more like an omen, a sign of the disruption and religious instability to come.[24] While the volcanic eruption was certainly the more "supernatural" cause, there was another more realistic one. In 722/23, the Umayyad Caliph Yazid, began a state-wide destruction of Christian imagery throughout the entirety of his dominions; Theophanes believed that this was another important cause of Leo's hatred towards the holy icons because he was "Saracen-minded."[25] Theophanes' loyalties are clearly one-side, and as a monk, he did not understand the political intentions behind Leo's vehement war against holy imagery. Herrin believes that those intentions were purely in search of divine favour, and to secure Constantinople from any future invaders.[26] According to

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Aegean Sea - which would later cause some volcanic activity - rather than Leo possessing divine favour.

[22] *Chronicle*, 559.

[23] Ibid., 559; see also Herrin, *Byzantium*, 108.

[24] Ibid., 558 – In fact, Theophanes' account notes that 724 was the year in which Leo started his "pronouncement about the removal of venerable icons." What was the cause of this removal? It is impossible to know for sure, but it is highly likely that his military success over the Arab forces in 717/18 may have been the catalyst for the of outlawry of icons.

[25] Ibid., 555; and Herrin, *Byzantium*, 108 – Herrin here, bases her information of Theophanes' account, who is, without a doubt, incredibly biased in his portrayal of Leo as an evil man, influenced by false Arab teachings.

[26] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 108 – This ideology for the enforcement of Iconoclasm is somewhat confusing. If one sought divine favour, why destroy the images of the divine, which were created for religious devotion? Clearly, Leo did not understand the theological implications such actions would have, as these were customs of the church that had been around for many centuries.

Herrin, what Leo lacked in theological understanding, he made up for in military strategy and imperial administration.[27] By the end of Leo's reign – c.740/41 – Byzantium had regained its military strength, ceased Arab west-ward expansion, and supplanted any notion of internal strife by depositions and coup d'états for at least another 75 years. Apart from the removal of certain icons in the imperial palace, according to Herrin, there is little evidence of the destruction of sacred imagery.[28] In political terms, his reign was a success; in theological and religious terms, it was an utter disaster. His son and successor, Constantine V, would be much more ruthless in his Iconoclastic ideas.

The Civil War of 741-43, and the Iconoclast Council of 754

The source material for this event is quite confusing, as Theophanes' account is relatively unclear in terms of dating. Upon his ascension to the throne, Constantine V, just like his father Leo III, had to deal with a serious political issue that threatened the balance of the empire. This was in the form of a civil war between himself, and one of his army commanders, Artabasdos, commander of the Armenian *thema* (provincial army). According to Theophanes, Constantine had been on campaign against some Arab forces in Phrygia, when Artabasdos attacked him; he was defeated and forced to flee to the city of Amorion, where he sought refuge for a time, while Artabasdos proceeded to march on Constantinople where was proclaimed emperor.[29] Artabasdos' usurpation of the throne is notable for one main reason, the restoration of "the holy icons throughout the city."[30] Judging by the confusing details of Theophanes' account, the only reason why Artabasdos was accepted as emperor was because he was "orthodox and

[27] Herrin, "The Context of Iconoclastic Reform," 17.
[28] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 109.
[29] *Chronicle*, 575 – This part of the account is very confusing. Theophanes states that Constantine wanted to abduct Artabasdos' children and imprison them, which was the reason for his attacking the emperor. This, however, must be denoted as bias and embellishment, clearly outlining Theophanes' hatred for Constantine on a profound level. Mango expresses that the chronology related to the revolt of Artabasdos is severely problematic, and that Theophanes' account only covers part of the conflict.
[30] Ibid., 575.

a defender of the divine doctrine."[31] Was this restoration of the sacred icons a political ploy to secure legitimacy, or was he as devout as Theophanes claims he was? It is impossible to know for certain, but this was something that would have profound repercussions once Constantine managed to regain his throne. By September 743, Constantine regained control of the imperial city by using Artabasdos' son Niketas as a term for negotiation; Artabasdos attempted to flee the city, and was pursued by the forces of Constantine, where he was captured, blinded, and deposed.[32]

By 754, on the eve of the Iconoclast council, Theophanes declared that Constantine's attack on icons was the cause of many ills that were going on in and around the Byzantine world.[33] For the most part, Leo's iconoclasm had been proposed and very lightly implemented, but it was not until the meeting of the Council Hiereia in 754, that iconoclastic doctrine under Constantine had been formalized, and ready to be executed. The "illegal assembly of 338 bishops" denounced icon veneration as idolatry, citing scriptural texts, and claiming that proper Christian worship should be done without painted images.[34] The years that followed were extremely difficult for anyone who supported the cult of icon worship; monks, bishops, and priests who did not conform to iconoclasm were persecuted and put to death.[35] For at least 20 years, iconoclasm "flourished" virtually unchallenged in Byzantium; imperial foreign policy went hand in hand with iconoclastic doctrine, and the military successes that Constantine demonstrated over his enemies - mainly Arabs and Bulgars - he attributed to the removal

[31] *Chronicle*, 575.
[32] Ibid., 581 – Here, Theophanes mentions that Niketas had been captured by Constantine in a city called Chrysopolis.
[33] Ibid., 585 – Theophanes describes a "pestilence" that started in Italy and Sicily, which rapidly spread to Constantinople was primarily due to the emperor's hatred of the sacred images.
[34] Ibid., 591; see also Herrin, *Byzantium*, 109-110 – The Iconoclast Council of 754 is something that will be discussed further in a later section.
[35] *Chronicle*, 607; Herrin, *Byzantium*, 110 – Theophanes claims that by 766, not only were icons banished, but also relics of saints, and anything that dealt with material worship. Supporters were exiled, had property confiscated, tortured, and put to death.

of icons.[36] Theophanes' account mentions something in the year 767 that is quite interesting. The "false Patriarch Niketas" had removed the paint and plastered the faces of certain images that were located in the "secretum" of the Patriarchate.[37] This indicates the extent to which iconoclasts detested the holy images, reminiscent of the image destruction program that went on in Ancient Rome, to remove the memory of disgraced or evil individuals, known as the *damnatio memoriae*.[38]

The Council of Nicaea II in 787, and the Restoration of Icons

Under the leadership of a certain Patriarch Tarasios, and Empress Irene, who was acting as regent for her son Constantine VI, a council was convened in Nicaea, to discuss the issue of iconoclasm.[39] Around 350 bishops were present at the council, where there were no new doctrines introduced but "maintained unshaken the doctrines of the holy and blessed fathers"; icon veneration was justifiable due to the evidence of miracle working.[40] As such, all iconoclast texts were destroyed, in hopes that this sort of "heresy" might never again plague the minds of Orthodox Byzantines. One thing that must be taken into consideration, however, are the intentions behind Irene's proposal for the renewal of icon-worship. It is highly likely that her intentions were not faith-based, and she understood that political legitimacy lied at the heart of the acceptance of icons.[41]

The historical events mentioned above played a pivotal role in the establishment of iconoclasm. While some events may have been the causes of iconoclasm (the Arab siege), others may be perceived as responses to iconoclast policy (the Artabasdos rebellion). All in all, it is

[36] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 110.
[37] *Chronicle*, 609. The "secretum" was a large, private room located in the outlying areas of the palace, used mostly for reading and contemplation.
[38] Jaś Elsner, "Iconoclasm as Discourse: From Antiquity to Byzantium." in *The Art Bulletin* 94, no. 3 (2012): 370.
[39] *Chronicle*, 636 – Theophanes, here, mentions that Tarasios had been reluctant to accept the episcopal see, due to all the religious instability, and constant "anathema" being thrown around by various iconoclast bishops.
[40] Ibid., 636; see Herrin, *Byzantium*, 111.
[41] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 111.

important to understand these events in a wider theological context, while properly analyzing both sides of the argument.

Part 3 – The Theological Discourse of Iconoclasts Against Iconophiles

The Differences Between *Latreia* and *Proskynesis*

The main bone of contention between Iconoclasts and Iconophiles was how veneration (*proskynesis*) and adoration or worship (*latreia*) would be defined comparatively. Most would not see any drastic differences between the two; however, in theological terms there are, and they must be properly analyzed in order to understand the seriousness of iconoclasm, and the threat it posed to religious unity in Byzantium.

The nuance lies between how both parties interpreted the Incarnation of Christ, and how this related to icon worship. Essentially, it would not be a proper analysis without primarily examining the *hypostasis* of God. When related to the Holy Trinity, it is defined as three distinct persons that share the same nature.[42] What must be understood, is that the Father is the ultimate source of this divinity, and that the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed from Him.[43] As such, the same can be applied when analyzing the character of Jesus, as he is one entity, with two distinct individual natures; one human and one divine.[44] Primarily, Monophysites do not agree with this aspect of Christ's *hypostasis*, and they only recognize the divine nature in Christ, whereas his human nature was nothing but a mere appearance.[45] What was concluded at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, would ultimately return in vigorous iconoclastic fervour about three centuries later; Chalcedon concluded that Christ was the divine person of the *Logos*, and He decided to acquire human nature.[46] This human nature was, therefore,

[42] Nicolas Prevelakis, "Iconography: Its historical, theological and philosophical background." *Ekistics* 70, no. 418/419 (2003): 48.
[43] Prevelakis, "Iconography," 48.
[44] Ibid., 48.
[45] Ibid., 48.
[46] Ibid., 48.

subjected and oriented by the divine one, because he had been proceeded from the Father.

How does this relate to the banishment of images, and the implementing of iconoclasm throughout Byzantium? To begin, both Leo III and Constantine V were of Syrian origin, and probably had different cultural upbringings than previous emperors. In theological terms, if they believed that the humanity of Christ was not real, then it was impossible to depict Him in holy imagery.[47] This argument, was transferred to the iconoclast interpretation of the differences between *latreia* and *proskynesis*, which was outlined in their profession of faith at the Iconoclast Council of 754 in Hiereia. Iconoclasts observed that the notion of an image was "consubstantial to the prototype"; by this logic, it would mean that iconophiles were idolatrous, because they were "wood-worshipers."[48] As such, iconoclasts condemned the iconophiles as blasphemers and idolaters, because they believed that painted "images of God" must be identical with the divine model.[49] Therefore, iconophiles worshiped a false god and an idol, because the images of Jesus imitated God.[50] Iconoclasts proposed that the only true image of Christ is the Eucharist, which was quickly rebuked by iconophiles as "truth itself" and not simply an image of Christ or God.[51] What the iconoclasts lacked, was a critical understanding of the process of *proskynesis* (veneration), which was the honour and respect that was given to an icon of a holy figure. There is a clear distinction between the two: images and likenesses were venerated, while *latreia* (adoration or worship), was reserved for God alone.[52] St. John of Damascus mentions this in a very plain and simple manner; "the image is one thing, and the thing depicted is another…an image of a man, even if it

[47] Ibid., 49.
[48] John Meyendorff. *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975), 182; see also Ambrosios Giakalis. *Images of the Divine: The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council*. (Leiden, New York, and Koln: E.J. Brill, 1994), 94.
[49] Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, 183.
[50] Ibid., 183.
[51] Ibid., 183.
[52] Ibid., 183.

is a likeness of his bodily form, cannot contain his mental powers."[53] He also describes images as a "source of profit, help, and salvation for all" and that an image is devised so that one may "advance in knowledge."[54] Thus, when related to Christ, or the image of Christ depicted on an icon, Orthodox devotees bow down in reverence before it so that they can express their devotion to the Lord himself.[55] Thus, it is because Jesus is God incarnate, and He lived and dwelled on earth with us humans, it was fully permissible to offer adoration to His icon. The *Logos* could not have been portrayed in an image or likeness, but, because Jesus is the Incarnation of the *Logos*, iconophiles deemed it acceptable.[56] These subtle distinctions were increasingly important in the grand scheme of things. The importance of the icons cannot be stressed enough, for when a prayer is done in front of them, the prayer passes through the icon to become a direct reverence to the holy figure depicted.[57]

The quarrel between Iconoclasts and Iconophiles was primarily a Christological debate, however, Iconoclasts used ancient documentation and examples from the Old Testament to legitimize their argument. In the most basic sense, Iconoclasts believed that the cult of the icons was considered idolatry, and constantly referred to the Biblical passage from Exodus 20: 4-5, which states: "Thou shalt not make any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth…"[58] Another important one, found in Leviticus 26: 1, which states: "You shall make not idols, nor graven images, neither rear up a standing

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[53] St. John of Damascus. *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*. Trans. David Anderson (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 74.

[54] Ibid., 74.

[55] John Anthony McGuckin. *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 355.

[56] Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*, 184.

[57] McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, 356 – indeed, this was an idea originally proposed by St. Basil of Caesarea.

[58] Alain Besançon. *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*. Trans. Jane Marie Todd. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 63 – Although this Biblical passage can be found in any Bible, Besançon's example was used.

image, neither shall you set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down to it…"[59] God prohibited the Israelites from creating and worshipping anything that was not Him, but he also prohibited them from adopting the gods of a foreign nation, either by conquest or by assimilation.[60] Instead, foreign deities and likenesses of false gods were to be destroyed, "graven images of their gods" burned with fire, and their "sacred pillars" and altars broken.[61] As such, idolatry was a very serious sin, and Iconoclasts could not argue against what God and scripture strictly said not to do. However, how did Iconoclasts manage to link idolatry with the icons? Besançon claims that in ancient times, there existed certain "theologians of paganism," who argued that the gods inhabited the statues that were created in their likeness through their *pneuma* (soul or spirit), and that this made them venerable and beneficent.[62] In this way, the justification for iconoclasts to believe that an idol was an "abomination," was surely how they made the link to the holy images.[63]

Iconoclasts also analyzed the works of various Church fathers. One of these, Eusebius of Caesarea - who lived in the early 4th century – was asked about an icon of Christ by Constantia, the sister of Constantine I.[64] He replies by saying, the true "icon of the glory of Christ cannot be painted in lifeless colours and lines."[65] Christ's divine status cannot be represented in the form of an icon, because when he "transformed the form of the Servant into the glory of him who is Master and God, he ceased to be man, and was only God."[66] This

[59] Ibid., 64.
[60] Ibid., 65.
[61] Besançon, *The Forbidden Image*, 65 – The Biblical passage is from Exodus 34: 12-14.
[62] Besançon, *The Forbidden Image*, 66.
[63] Ibid., 65 – Besançon here, gives a couple of definitions of what the word "idol" translates to in Hebrew. While "abomination" is relative, "lie" and "nothingness" are interesting ones.
[64] Ambrosios Giakalis. *Images of the Divine: The Theology of Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council*. (Leiden, New York, and Koln: E.J. Brill, 1994), 25.
[65] Giakalis, *Theology of Icons*, 26.
[66] Ibid., 26.

confusing dialogue between two people offers an important insight to the sort of theological doctrine that Iconoclasts believed in.

Another Church father cited quite often by iconoclasts is Epiphanios, and here, Father Ambrosios Giakalis quotes a passage from one of his works called *Testament* where he reminds us to "not set up icons in churches…but always have God in your hearts through remembrance. Do not even have icons in private houses. For it is not permissible for the Christian to let his eyes wander or indulge in reveries."[67] This is an interesting passage, and one that Iconophiles could counter very easily. Iconophiles were aware of the traditions of the Church, and the ones that were conferred by the holy Church fathers. "They," (the fathers) Giakalis quotes, "were glad to see icons in the sacred churches. And they built sacred churches and decorated them with paintings…"[68] These traditions were passed down from generation to generation, and one aspect of these traditions was the "production of pictorial representations."[69] For iconophiles, it was difficult to give up something that was dear to them, especially something that is mean to bring you closer to God.

Part 4 – Icon Resurgence, and the Second Phase of Iconoclasm, 787-843

As icons were re-introduced into the ecclesiastical and secular spheres, this victory over the iconoclasts would be short-lived. Empress Irene ruled as regent for her son, but when he came of age, she had him blinded, deemed unfit to rule, and took up the throne for herself.[70] This was a disappointing way in which she ended her time in imperial office, eventually being overthrown in 802 by the head treasurer Nikephoros (r. 802-810).[71] After Nikephoros had assumed power, it seemed as if history had been repeating itself, as he and his successor Michael I (r.

[67] Ibid., 26.
[68] Giakalis, *Theology of Icons*, 30.
[69] Ibid., 30.
[70] Cyril Mango, "Historical Introduction," in *Iconoclasm*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Judith Herrin (Center for Byzantine Studies: University of Birmingham, 1975), 5.
[71] Ibid., 5.

811-813), lacked the military prowess to repel consistent attacks from foreign invaders.[72] They were both soundly defeated, and the empire seemed to be heading for a downward spiral once again. Michael's successor, Leo V, decided to play the iconoclasm card once more. Just like previous iconoclast emperors, it is relatively unclear if he was a stark adherent, or, simply adopted it because it aided previous military successes. In 814, while outside the imperial city's walls in preparation for a siege, the Bulgarian king Krum, unexpectedly died – this was the sign Leo was looking for, and he did not hesitate to enforce iconoclasm one again. In 815, he convened a council at Hagia Sophia church, where iconoclasm would be reintroduced as an official imperial policy.[73] Leo V emulated his great predecessor, Constantine V, and, just as it was before, the perception of iconoclasm being associated with military success had made a remarkable comeback.

Leo's iconoclastic measures were not as stringent as previous emperors; penalties were less harsh, but iconophiles were still pushed to the underground, being kept relevant by the determination and fortitude of Theodore the Studite, who constantly pushed for their reinstallation in the public sphere.[74] However successful – or less successful – his iconoclastic policies were, Leo would not live to see them flourish, as he was assassinated by one of his army commanders in 820, the future Michael II (r. 820-829). It appears, that the revival of iconoclasm may have started and ended with Leo V, as both his successors, Michael II and Theophilos (r. 829-842), were deemed to have been moderate iconoclasts; Mango described the application of the emperors' policy in the provinces as lax, and persecution fairly limited.[75] It is safe to say that by the early to mid-9th century, iconoclasm was losing support, and virtually confined to Constantinople.[76] After Theophilos died in 842, his widow Theodora looked for reconciliation,

[72] Ibid., 5. Only this time, it was not Arabs attacking, but Bulgarians.

[73] Mango, "Historical Introduction," 5.

[74] Ibid., 5.

[75] Ibid., 5-6.

[76] Ibid., 6 – Mango claims that iconophiles did not even have to venture more than 20 miles outside of Constantinople in search of refuge.

as well as a potential compromise between the two parties.[77] In 843, iconoclasm formally ended, and the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" was immortalized in iconography, and the church marked a return to conventional Orthodox practices.[78] And, so ended more than a century of religious turmoil over a vital doctrine that had been implemented in Orthodox Churches for a very long time. Herrin mentions that by 866, some time after the controversy had subsided, religious imagery in the apse at Hagia Sophia, which had been destroyed by iconoclasts, returned; this was in the form of an enthroned Theotokos with the child Jesus.[79] Thus, iconoclasm proved to be so detrimental to religious society in Byzantium, that Patriarch Photios in the late 9th century would continue to denounce it, in fear of it making some miraculous return.[80] However, it must be understood that iconoclasm was not only caused by the fear of icons being very similar to old pagan representations of gods. It was an answer to the threat of potential extinction from external forces which caused Byzantines to turn against their holy images.

Conclusion

While it is relatively clear that the Iconoclastic controversy was much more than just a theological misinterpretation, it was, without a doubt, a serious threat to the religious unity of the Byzantine empire. In the end, Iconophiles were victorious because of their persistence, and because their end goal was to express *how*, and *why* icons were permissible in Christian worship. Iconoclasts, on the other hand, were primarily concerned with the *when*, and this, ultimately, did not permit them to see the importance of iconography in a wider theological, and spiritual context. God's incarnation in the form of Jesus Christ, and his time as a man on the earth, gave Orthodox Christians the evidence they needed to depict Christ in icon form. The legacy of pagan representations was something that early Christian iconographers used as examples. These provided a basis for image representation,

[77] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 112 – Herrin confirms that Theodora's alliance was with some prominent court members, who aided her in the reversion of iconoclasm.
[78] Herrin, *Byzantium*, 112.
[79] Ibid., 113.
[80] Ibid., 116.

understanding that the images were simply a subsidiary of the prototype. Whether Monophysitism had a larger part to play in the controversy remains to be seen, but it must be pointed out, that both Leo III and Constantine V had Monophysite tendencies. However, the instability throughout the empire in the forms of succession crises, and the external pressures from Arab conquests certainly helped legitimize iconoclasm as an imperial policy.

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Qui trop embrasse mal étreint : étude de l'approche Drewermannienne sur la question du mal

Guylaine Lemay

LES TENTATIVES D'AMARRER la psychanalyse à la théologie n'évoquent pas toujours des souvenirs heureux, tant pour le théologien que pour le psychanalyste. En effet, le théologien n'est pas sans dénoncer, entre autres, le réductionnisme et la subjectivité de la lecture du psychanalyste, alors que ce dernier fait parfois fi des méthodes du premier afin de mettre l'accent sur l'écoute particulière qui est la sienne. Derrière ces échanges se dissimule toutefois la possibilité d'une rencontre entre deux discours.

Quelques auteurs ont réfléchi à cette rencontre; certains ont tenté de la mettre en pratique. Eugen Drewermann est l'un d'eux. Son œuvre impose que l'on s'y arrête, ne serait-ce que parce qu'il y propose un important discours méthodologique qui n'est pas sans souligner, dans l'efficacité accrue de leur interdépendance, la motivation essentielle derrière la liaison entre la psychanalyse et la théologie. Qui plus est, reconnaissant l'importance pour les théologiens d'engager le dialogue avec leurs contemporains, à la fois pour éviter l'isolement et la disparition de la théologie académique moderne, mais aussi afin d'inscrire la recherche théologique dans la quête commune de la vérité

(Lyden 2007, 209), il importe d'évaluer la qualité du dialogue interdisciplinaire mis en place par Drewermann.

À ce niveau, la méthode drewermannienne produit des effets contestables. D'un côté, l'interdépendance entre la théologie et la psychanalyse prisée par le théologien de Paderborn prend une tangente syncrétique menant à sa conversion en une nouvelle théologie. De l'autre côté, elle transforme la théologie en une forme de développement du sujet humain. D'une part, donc, la psychanalyse se fond dans la théologie et d'autre part, l'inverse se produit avec pour résultat que le dialogue annoncé tourne au monologue tantôt théologique, tantôt égocentrique[81].

S'il jette d'abord un regard sur la méthode de Drewermann, le présent travail s'attarde aussi à ce qui, dans l'alliance que l'auteur propose, a failli à la tâche entreprise. Il serait toutefois utopique de prétendre saisir l'ensemble de la pensée de Drewermann tant son œuvre est volumineuse et variée[82]. Il reste que le fondement de cette œuvre se voit sis dans l'analyse des structures du mal présentée dans une série de trois tomes intitulée *Le mal. Structures et permanence* (Bagot 1995, 9)[83]. Par conséquent, puisque *Le mal* est le fruit d'un travail théologique et psychanalytique et que Drewermann y expose les considérations méthodologiques qui marqueront ensuite son œuvre (Bagot 1995, 18; 1992, V), il suffira au présent propos de se concentrer sur la manière dont Drewermann aborde la question du mal pour pouvoir apprécier la qualité des amarres tendues (ou non) entre les disciplines qu'il y attèle.

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[81] Le terme est employé dans sa relation avec le moi/soi jungien pour marquer toute l'influence que cette notion a sur la pensée théologique de Drewermann.

[82] La Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (DNB) comporte 572 entrées au nom de Drewermann, la plus récente datant de 2018, soit 40 ans après l'écriture de son premier livre, *Strukturen des Bösen*, celui-là même qui est analysé ici (Site web de la DNB, consulté le 5 décembre 2018 : https://portal.dnb.de).

[83] L'importance de ce premier opus est manifeste considérant que Drewermann a publié en 2018 un recueil d'entrevues portant sur le même thème du mal, *Gestalten des Bösen : der Teufel – ein theologisches Relikt* (Site web de la DNB, consulté le 5 décembre 2018 : https://portal.dnb.de) ainsi qu'un livre sur l'anxiété, *Wenn mir's nur gruselte! Von Angst und ihrer Bewältigung : Grimms Märchen tiefenpsychologish gedeutet*, un concept qu'il juge connexe à la question du mal (site web de la DNB, consulté le 5 décembre 2018 : https://portal.dnb.de).

Ce travail comportera donc trois parties et ne critiquera Drewermann qu'après avoir analysé son approche méthodologique, qu'il abordera via quatre sources : l'exégèse, la philosophie, la psychanalyse et la théologie. C'est dans cette optique que seront revues les introductions des trois tomes de *Le mal* (1978)[84], où Drewermann expose en détails les tenants et aboutissants de sa méthode et aborde ses débouchés épistémologiques[85] ; le premier tome de sa série de psychanalyse et de théologie morale, publiée sous le titre de *La peur et la faute* (1982), qui se veut un résumé de sa proposition sur la question du mal doublée d'une ouverture pratique ; ainsi qu'un recueil de certains de ses entretiens (1984-1988), *La parole qui guérit*, dans lequel il revient sur ses propositions et sur les critiques qu'elles ont encourues.

Spécificités de la méthode drewermannienne

Drewermann explique les étapes de sa méthode dont les sous-titres des tomes de *Le mal* donnent un aperçu. Il affirme débuter par l'exégèse du texte biblique, qu'il considère comme la source du discours théologique en soi (Drewermann 1995, 21). Il dit poursuivre par une relecture psychanalytique du même texte dans le but « d'y déceler concrètement les formes que peu[ven]t prendre » ses découvertes exégétiques (Drewermann 1991a, 311). Enfin, constatant les limites de la psychanalyse, il se tournerait vers la philosophie afin d'y trouver des catégories existentielles que la psychanalyse ne peut fournir (Drewermann 1997a, 18-19)[86].

Il confond toutefois la philosophie et la théologie, concevant la première comme un réservoir de catégories culturellement situées pour l'usage de la seconde (Bagot 1995, 16). Les catégories existentielles

[84] Les dates en parenthèses concernent les années de parution des premières éditions en allemand ou les années d'enregistrement des entretiens par la suite publiés en recueil.

[85] Chacun des tomes de cette série est précédé d'un ou de deux avant-propos consistant en des prolégomènes.

[86] Drewermann consulte bien Kant, Hegel et Sartre sur la question du péché originel dans *Le mal*, mais ne retient vraiment que Kierkegaard pour son résumé de la question du mal dans *La peur et la faute*. Les autres existentialistes n'y sont cités que brièvement sans que leur propos ne fassent l'objet d'une élaboration quelconque. Je le suivrai dans cette tendance.

kierkegaardeiennes semblent de fait des *a priori* de l'exégèse et d'une partie de l'analyse psychanalytique[87]. C'est la raison pour laquelle il semble préférable de débuter l'analyse par ses abords philosophiques avant de rétablir l'ordre proposé par son auteur, pour enfin terminer par ce qui, dans sa thèse, est théologique. Par cette distinction entre philosophie et théologie, la source des travaux de Drewermann, généralement considérée comme tripartite, se voit agrémentée d'un quatrième volet.

Perspective philosophique

Drewermann base sa théorie sur le mal à partir des écrits de Kierkegaard en la matière et notamment sur la thèse que ce dernier élabore dans *La maladie à la mort* publiée en danois en 1849[88]. La vision kierkegaardienne sert bien Drewermann en raison de ses affinités avec la théologie – le philosophe danois étant un théologien chrétien – et avec la psychanalyse freudienne qui viendra 70 ans plus tard (Drewermann 1992, I:94). Il est d'ailleurs permis de se demander si la possibilité même du modèle psycho-théologique de Drewermann tiendrait la route sans la philosophie de Kierkegaard.

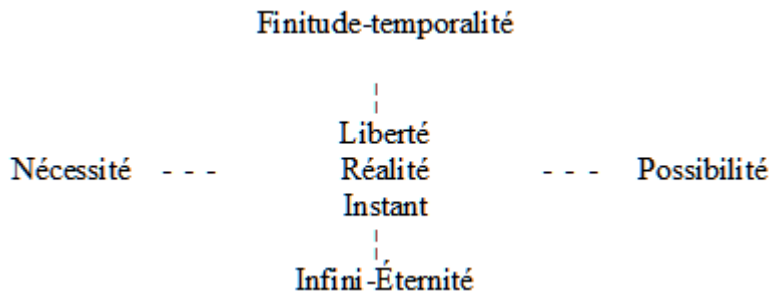
Celle-ci suppose que l'humain est un être spirituel créé dont l'« esprit est lié aux sens, au corps, à la finitude » (Drewermann 1992, I:98). Compte tenu de cet état à la fois spirituel et corporel, l'humain est libre tout en étant contingent, ce qui fait de la liberté humaine une tentative de dénouement des contradictions posées par la finitude et l'infini de même que par la nécessité et la possibilité (Drewermann

[87] Drewermann admet avoir lu Kierkegaard avant de s'attaquer à l'exégèse de Gn 2–11 (Drewermann 1995, 21-22). S'il nie avoir *plaqué* la philosophie du Danois sur le texte hébreu Je suis d'accord, il en reconnaît une influence certaine sur son interprétation, affirmant toutefois que le cercle herméneutique qui en découle serait plutôt « vertueux » que « vicieux » (Drewermann 1995, 22). On peut cependant douter de cette qualification à la lumière de l'aveu suivant : « *Sören Kierkegaard* m'a appris à voir dans l'angoisse le problème fondamental de l'existence humaine » (Drewermann 1991a, 310, je souligne), où une cohérence dans le propos aurait plutôt attendu *le récit yahviste des origines* comme pédagogue sur la question de l'angoisse.

[88] Søren Kierkegaard, « La maladie à la mort. Un exposé psychologique chrétien pour l'édification et le réveil », dans *Œuvres complètes*, traduit par Paul-Henri Tisseau, tome XVI (Paris: Éditions de l'Orante, 1971), 163-285.

1992a, I:98-99; cf. figure 1, tirée de 1992a, I:99). Ces antinomies signalent les avenues qui s'offrent à l'humain face à cette liberté existentielle, chacune d'entre elles provoquant un type de désespoir particulier (Drewermann 1992, I:100).

FIGURE 1 : LIBERTÉ DE SOI EN TANT QUE SYNTHÈSE DE COUPLES OPPOSÉS



L'angoisse kierkegaardienne naît de la liberté insupportable à laquelle fait face l'humain (Drewermann 1992, I:99). Elle se trouve à être la force qui l'empêche d'opérer la synthèse des antinomies précitées, synthèse qui lui permettrait de se réaliser lui-même en brisant la confiance qui le liait jusqu'alors à son créateur (Drewermann 1992, I:46. 99). Seul devant lui-même, l'humain ne peut que fuir sous la poussée de l'angoisse : il se prend alors pour Dieu (infini-éternité), se complaît dans sa finitude (finitude-temporalité), limite sa liberté (nécessité) ou place son absolu dans son existence (possibilité) (Drewermann 1992, I:46. 102. 109).

Tous ces désespoirs sont autant de fautes devant Dieu (Drewermann 1992, I:54). Le péché se trouve donc dans le fait d'être coupé de Dieu. En ce sens, il découle directement de l'angoisse car c'est bien elle qui pousse l'humain à la fuite vers le désespoir (Drewermann 1992, I:100). Kierkegaard comprend donc le désespoir humain comme « une *mauvaise relation à soi-même* », mais il place cette carence ontologique dans le contexte d'une « mauvaise relation à Dieu » (Drewermann 1992, I:92. 97. 108, soulignés de l'auteur).

Pour Kierkegaard, il apparaît néanmoins manifeste qu'afin de se sauver soi-même, l'humain doive trouver refuge en le Crucifié

(Marshall 2013, 346, citant Kierkegaard)[89]. Ses écrits admettent en effet que la foi transcende ce que l'expérience empirique dicte à la psyché et aux sens humains (Marshall 2013, 345-46). Somme toute, la foi kierkegaardienne est confiance en la puissance de la parole de Dieu face à la tentation qu'est l'angoisse (Marshall 2013, 346).

Perspective exégétique

Drewermann trouve en le récit yahviste des origines[90] une preuve de ce qu'il avance philosophiquement (Drewermann 1997a, 20). Il est conscient qu'il ne peut bâtir une théologie sur la foi de l'analyse d'un seul récit (Drewermann 1995, 23). Son choix s'arrête malgré tout sur le récit yahviste pour trois raisons : 1. son contenu existentiel manifeste, qui provient de l'inscription du mythe des origines dans une authentique historiographie ; 2. son essence mythique particulièrement propre à l'investigation anthropologique et 3. ses catégories thématiques déjà tant étudiées de la philosophie (Drewermann 1995, 23. 31).

Il est aussi conscient que l'exégèse historico-critique et diachronique ne suffit pas à la tâche à laquelle il s'attaque (Drewermann 1995, 33). C'est que le mythe a selon lui deux dimensions, l'une sociale et l'autre psychologique, et une fonction : il vise à intégrer « l'individu dans la vie de la tribu » (Drewermann 1995, 35). Or, selon Drewermann, si le récit yahviste des origines nous est transmis en langage mythique, son contenu mythique est absent ; le contexte social qui permet d'en lire les fonctions est depuis son écriture perdu (Drewermann 1995, 34).

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[89] Søren Kierkegaard, « Christian Discourse », dans *Kierkegaard's Writings*, tome 17/26, traduit par Howard V. Hong et Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978-2000), 280.

[90] Drewermann souscrit à la théorie documentaire voyant dans Gn 2–11 un récit prenant ses sources dans un document dit *yahviste*. Quoiqu'il en soit des considérations actuelles envers cette théorie, son exégèse ne souffre pas vraiment de cet emploi du terme yahviste. Il suffit de la considérer dans une perspective synchronique, ce en quoi plaide Drewermann lorsqu'il argumente en faveur de la structure du texte (Drewermann 1995, 22). Par souci de cohérence avec la pensée de l'auteur, le présent texte emploiera aussi ce terme pour traiter de Gn 2–11.

L'absence de contexte le force à approcher ce mythe en tant que symbole, c'est-à-dire dans sa dimension psychologique plutôt qu'ethnologique (Drewermann 1995, 33-35). Il utilise d'abord pour ce faire du processus d'amplification, allant chercher dans les autres mythes, rêves, contes et œuvres artistiques le matériau analogue dont il a besoin pour son interprétation (Drewermann 1995, 43). Il s'attarde ensuite à ce qui caractérise la pensée hébraïque, selon la thèse de Boman sur la différence entre cette dernière et la pensée grecque[91].

En déshellénisant l'anthropologie hébraïque, Drewermann parvient à montrer combien la compréhension de l'essence d'un objet est liée à sa fabrication et combien la compréhension hébraïque du temps en fait un « temps psychologique » plutôt qu'un temps kantien (Drewer-mann 1995, 24-26). Cela lui permet d'affirmer que le péché ne concerne pas une réalité morale, mais plutôt une incohérence entre les comportements humains et le potentiel de liberté qu'ils présupposent, c'est-à-dire ce que serait l'humain sans l'angoisse (Drewermann 1995, 21).

Il démontre ainsi comment, en rupture avec les autres récits de la création de l'époque, le récit yahviste ne place pas le mal en l'homme, mais en l'angoisse (Drewermann 1997, 10; 1992a, I:46). Pour illustrer cette constatation de manière univoque, Drewermann propose « en principe » comme traduction de בְּרֵאשִׁית (*b^{e}ré'shîth*)[92], le premier mot de la Bible hébraïque (Drewermann 1995, 26). Le récit mythique du péché originel devient de la sorte « la clé d'une explication universelle de l'existence humaine » et Adam y devient l'essence originaire de l'humain (Drewermann 1992, I:48, 1995, 29-30, 1997a, 17). Abraham, quant à lui, devient la réponse universelle de Dieu au mal, montrant par-là la possibilité d'un étant humain sans péché sous la guidance de Dieu (Drewermann 1995, 32. 53)[93].

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[91] Thorleif Boman, *Das hebräische Kenken im Vergleich mit dem griechischen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968).

[92] Littéralement « en premier », compte tenu de l'idée de *tête* associée à la racine ראשׁ (*rôsh*) (Brown, Driver, et Briggs 2007, 912).

[93] Gn 12,1-3, qui rapporte l'appel d'Abraham, suit directement le récit yahviste des origines tel que l'organise Drewermann (Gn 2–11) et a bel et bien une portée universelle qui répond à la structure des premiers chapitres de la Genèse (merci à Dr Marie-France Dion pour cette analyse exégétique). Voir Von Rad, Gerhard.

Le déplacement de la description phénoménologique de l'origine du mal vers son universalisation passe aussi par le structuralisme (Drewermann 1995, 32. 46-54; 1997, 9)[94]. Drewermann base son analyse structuraliste sur les travaux de Lévi-Strauss[95], dans lesquels ce dernier étudie le mythe en tant que genre littéraire. Chez Drewermann, le structuralisme complète le symbolisme en tant que lecture synchronique du récit (Drewermann 1995, 52).

Perspective psychanalytique

Aux deux méthodes exégétiques qu'il emploi, diachronique et synchronique, Drewermann associe deux méthodes psychanalytiques distinctes : le procédé analytique de Freud et le procédé synthétique de Jung (Drewermann 1995, 43)[96]. Freud lui permet l'analyse psychologique du retour en arrière auquel nous soumet le récit yahviste tandis que Jung en autorise une relecture synchronique grâce à son appréhension affective du symbole (Drewermann 1995, 44. 50).

Drewermann aborde ainsi la question de l'angoisse et du désespoir par le biais de la théorie des névroses freudienne qui selon lui traduit en termes analytiques ce que le yahviste exprime dans un discours théologique. Les névroses représentent ainsi le reflet « des conflits qui touchent à la globalité de l'existence humaine et à la liberté (Drewermann 1992, I:129). Ces derniers restent néanmoins toujours, pour Drewermann, concernés par la position de l'humain face à Dieu (Drewermann 1992, I:129).

Débordant du contexte freudien qui les a vu naître, les névroses manifestent l'angoisse de la coupure d'avec Dieu et forment « une

1962. *Old Testament Theology. Volume 1. The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, translated by D. M. G. Stalker. New York: Harper & Row, 163-164.

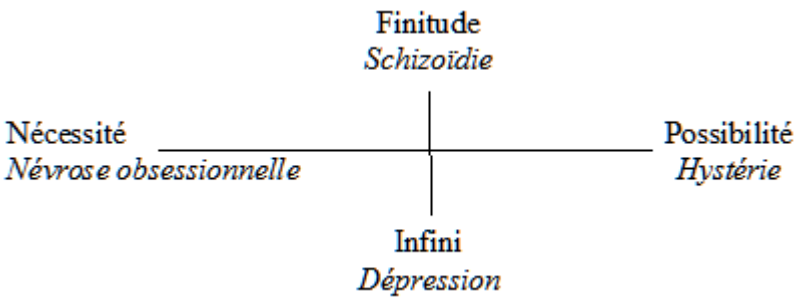
[94] Pour Drewermann, le structuralisme comprend le mythe dans ses *a priori* inconscients, tout comme le fait la psychanalyse, mais en ignore ce qui s'y manifeste du désir pour se concentrer sur son interprétation intellectuelle (Drewermann 1995, 50).

[95] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris: Pion, 1958); *La pensée sauvage* (Paris: Pion, 1962).

[96] Drewermann fait aussi appel, quoiqu'à moindre échelle, à la psychologie individuelle de Adler, à l'inconscient familial de Szondi ainsi qu'à la néo-psychanalyse de Schultze-Hencke (Drewermann 1995, 46-47).

véritable phénoménologie théologique du « péché » » en mettant en scène un rejet du statut de créature spirituelle et une déification de l'humain (Drewermann 1992, I:46.100.112.114. 129). Drewermann effectue de la sorte une synthèse des formes de désespoir et des « fausses manières névrotiques de traiter l'angoisse existentielle » (Drewermann 1992, I:101) ce qui revient à construire une psychopathologie du mal.

FIGURE 2 : QUATRE FORMES FONDAMENTALES D'ANGOISSE NÉVROTIQUE ET LEUR RAPPORT AU DÉSESPOIR KIERKEGAARDIEN



Les différentes formes de névroses représentent ainsi pour Drewermann « les formes nécessaires d'une existence qui, parce qu'elle est coupée de Dieu, se rétrécit à une seule de ses dimensions » (Drewermann 1992, I:129). On comprend donc que pour Drewermann, une véritable guérison doive dépasser le stade névrotique et trouver une réponse ailleurs.

Il se tourne conséquemment vers Jung dans le but d'y « découvrir les dispositions spirituelles sous-jacentes aux dispositions pulsionnelles névrotiques », ce qui implique pour l'individu une redécouverte de lui-même dans sa capacité à prendre des décisions libres, ce que Jung associe au concept d'individuation (Drewermann 1997a, 18). Autrement dit, l'humain doit, selon Drewermann, reconnaître la place de sa culpabilité originelle, dont la maladie névrotique n'est que l'enveloppe extérieure (Drewermann 1997a, 18).

Il a besoin, pour ce faire, du concept d'âme collective développé par Jung, c'est-à-dire cette idée que la mentalité primitive

était d'abord forgée d'une conscience de groupe avant que n'advienne la conscience individuelle (Drewermann 1995, 31). Dans cette compréhension, l'âme collective jungienne agit tel un réservoir de symboles, que Jung nomme archétypes. Selon Drewermann, ces derniers sont d'origine divine et sont transmis à l'humain afin que celui-ci puisse connaître Dieu (Drewermann 1991b, 244).

Perspective théologique

Ayant donc posé l'énigme d'une culpabilité nécessaire et libre par le biais du déterminisme structurel et analytique ainsi que par la liberté originelle philosophique, Drewermann se doit en dernier lieu d'en faire une lecture théologique au risque de perdre l'âme de la théologie dans la psychanalyse ou dans le structuralisme intellectuel (Drewermann 1995, 54-55).

La théologie est par conséquent un pan essentiel de sa théorie puisqu'elle seule est habilitée à traiter de la destruction et du salut humains (Drewermann 1997a, 10). Malgré un net penchant anthropologique chez Drewermann, elle ne rejette ni l'idée de la grâce augustinienne ni l'idée de la justification par la foi luthérienne. Elle comprend plutôt la première comme « la confiance en l'ordre et en la bonté fondamentale de l'existence » et la deuxième comme l'acceptation de « tenir son existence de Dieu » (Drewermann 1992, I:52; 1997a, 22).

La faute drewermannienne ne se pose pas en face de la vertu scolastique, mais de la foi (Drewermann 1995, 21). Celle-ci n'est donc pas subordonnée à l'intelligence ou à la volonté thomiste (Drewermann 1992a, I:49). Elle doit plutôt être découverte « comme un don » demandant à l'humain une capacité de transcendance qui l'oblige à poser ses fondements à l'extérieur de lui-même et exigeant qu'il vive « ce que la théologie appelle « grâce » » (Drewermann 1992a, I:51). La foi que propose Drewermann n'est donc ni de Pélage ni d'Augustin, elle se pose entre eux deux dans un constat à la fois anthropologique et théologique : l'homme pécheur est appelé, comme Abraham, à suivre Dieu. En raison de la grâce qu'il reçoit de Dieu, de cette confiance envers le Bien, il se met en route.

Étonnamment, la théologie mise de l'avant par Drewermann, un ancien prêtre catholique, reprend une idée luthérienne (Drewermann 1991a, 327)[97]. Le protestantisme est pour lui une religion plus moderne que le catholicisme en ce qu'elle perçoit mieux le tragique humain et la crise existentielle qui en découle (Drewermann 1991a, 325, 1992, I:50). Les « grandes questions des réformateurs sont les clefs qui lui permettent de formuler la doctrine chrétienne du salut », cette doctrine qu'il veut lier à la « commotion existentielle que constitue l'angoisse » (Drewermann 1991a, 327). Il y a donc pour Drewermann une certaine adéquation entre la justification par la foi luthérienne et la justification de l'existence kierkegaardienne.

Théologie et psychanalyse : dialogue ou monologue ?

Drewermann invite la théologie et la psychanalyse à se diriger vers un but commun (Drewermann 1992a, I:50). L'une des façons d'assurer cette convergence passe par le dialogue interdisciplinaire et interreligieux. L'autre façon puise dans la pensée moniste.

Le dialogue implique deux partis distincts gardant leurs spécificités. Il ne s'agit pas ici pour l'un des partis d'accepter fidèlement les conclusions de l'autre mais de les entendre pour ce qu'elles sont, des propositions particulières de la vérité soutenues par d'autres rapports de croyances, dans le but de poser un jugement éclairé sur leur validité (Lyden 2007, 210). Si avec l'écoute vient parfois le changement, celui-ci ne peut atteindre ce qui bat au cœur des vérités soutenues par chacun des partis : la théologie chrétienne ne peut se passer du Christ ressuscité et la psychanalyse freudienne ne peut soutenir un sujet conscient.

Ce n'est pas cette voie que choisit Drewermann pour mener à bien les convergences précitées. Fidèle aux archétypes jungiens qui le guident dans sa réflexion, il fusionne les partis opposés en un ensemble dans lequel ils perdent leurs repères vitaux. La théologie

[97] Il a écrit, en 2016, *„Luther wollte mehr". Über den Reformator und sein Glaube*, qui reprend la justification de la foi sous ses abords théologiques, anthropologiques et psychologiques (site web de la DNB, consulté le 10 décembre 2018, https://portal.dnb.de).

drewermannienne n'est par conséquent plus chrétienne mais universelle, et l'outil psychanalytique utilisé y prend tant de place que l'individuation du sujet devient le lieu même du discours théologique. En lieu et place d'un dialogue fructueux, Drewermann engendre deux monologues reniant les vérités aux bases des partis qu'il tente de rapprocher.

Monologue théologique

Avec les archétypes, Jung pose les bases d'une « langue universelle qui permet à toutes les religions de se comprendre » ainsi qu'un retour au langage le plus foncier de l'être humain, là où se situerait la vérité *divine* (Drewermann 1991b, 244). C'est ainsi que l'expérience d'Adam est arrachée « à sa singularité [et] transformée en son propre « archétype » », via lequel Adam représente l'Homme et dans lequel tous les humains participent d'Adam (Drewermann 1995, 30). L'âme collective de Jung dénomme cette unité entre ce qui est singulier et général (Drewermann 1995, 30-31) ; en lisant « sa propre nature dans les archétypes que le monde lui réverbère », elle en vient à « se croire l'âme du monde » (Lacan 1999, 179).

Celle-ci se veut une poussée autant syncrétique qu'universelle, ayant donné au christianisme des premiers siècles ses pendants païens (Drewermann 1997b, III:561; 1991a, 313). Le christianisme n'est donc plus qu'une religion parmi d'autres à s'appuyer sur les archétypes inconscients dans le but de formuler une solution à l'angoisse (Drewermann 1991a, 313). Au surplus, l'inconscient collectif ouvre les vannes d'une mer archétypale dont la source semble beaucoup plus compatible, à première vue, avec une philosophie sapientielle qu'avec une religion du livre (Boyd 1996, 226-27).

Subséquemment, le Dieu de Drewermann ne se révèle pas dans la Bible. Le récit des origines et l'histoire du salut qu'elle comprend expriment des manifestations inconscientes, quoique structurellement et rationnellement ordonnées, et par conséquent humaines (Drewermann 1995, 49; 1991a, 313-14; Boyd 1996, 225, n. 7). Ce sont les archétypes qui sont d'origine divine et, en tant que structures inconscientes collectives, elles participent à la genèse des mythes. En effet, Drewermann décrit le salut divin – dont l'archétype est la forme

– comme l'élément central de l'inconscient collectif autour duquel les mythes procèdent à une constante circumambulation (Drewermann 1995, 42). Le Dieu de Drewermann se révèle donc par ces archétypes situés au cœur de l'inconscient collectif humain. Ce n'est que par une certaine « gnose de l'inconscient » que l'humain parvient à entendre cette révélation (Sublon 1993, 114).

Si chaque peuplade développe ainsi les mythes qui lui sont propres, les figures archétypales se recoupent universellement. Le retour à Dieu ne passe donc pas par les normes et les doctrines d'une foi particulière, mais par le retour aux origines archétypales. Si tant est qu'il « retrouve les archétypes fondateurs du christianisme » en Égypte ancienne, Drewermann se trouve alors à dissoudre la présence du Christ dans le titre de *Fils de Dieu* des anciens pharaons, niant par le fait même toute la singularité de la Passion (Bagot 1992, VIII-IX). Après tout, « l'idée d'un Dieu mourant n'est pas un bien spécifique du christianisme », étant lié à la naissance de la culture et à la conception humaine de la mort et de la procréation (Drewermann 1996, II:613-14; 1997b, III:541). La Passion doit plutôt être comprise, selon Drewermann, comme l'ouverture du chemin menant de l'angoisse à Dieu (Drewermann 1997b, III: 541). On peut donc facilement imaginer d'autre chemins, quoique le Christ semble être la voie privilégiée par Drewermann, qui fait de lui *le* chemin (Drewermann 1997b, III:541; 1991a, 314).

La pensée drewermannienne rêve ainsi à « l'abolition des différences » et à la fusion avec la mère-amour (Drewermann 1992, I:134-35; Sublon 1993, 115). Sa lecture de l'angoisse devrait pourtant lui donner une autre clé de lecture puisqu'il la dit découler d'un trop plein de liberté. L'angoisse prend effectivement ses sources dans le « manque du manque » (Sublon 1993, 115) ; il est donc éthiquement problématique de suggérer la fusion avec l'Autre comme élément de réponse à l'angoisse. Si Drewermann était conséquent avec son diagnostic, il conclurait que seule l'atteinte d'une altérité peut diminuer le sentiment d'angoisse[98] et reconnaîtrait que celle-ci passe la

[98] L'altérité n'est ni fusion ni duel, mais une autre façon d'être face à l'autre.

destitution de l'Autre dévorant (Sublon 1993, 115), angoissant parce que fusionnel.

Monologue égocentrique

C'est possiblement à cet effet que Drewermann construit sa « psychologie théocentrique » (Drewermann 1997a, 27), quoiqu'il juge, *a contrario*, que la « dilution de l'individu dans la masse » constitue la fusion qu'il faille éviter à tous prix (Drewermann 1997a, 27; 1997b, III:536-37). Ce type de psychologie, fondement de sa méthode théologique, stipule que l'humain doive guérir à tout prix du désespoir et comprend l'altérité sous la forme de l'individuation jungienne (Drewermann 1995, 45; 1991a, 326), ou du « devenir individu », devenir qui ne demeure toutefois possible que sous l'égide de Dieu (Drewermann 1997b, III:536-37). Marqué par la philosophie de la liberté de Kierkegaard, Drewermann identifie cette individuation avec la synthèse des antinomies des figures 1 et 2 (Drewermann 1997b, III:539).

Or, l'individuation est d'abord un principe jungien qui émule le développement de soi (Boyd 1996, 225-26, n. 7). Cette visée jure avec l'idée du sacrifice que prise Kierkegaard dans d'autres écrits (Boyd 1996, 226; Drewermann 1997b, III:539-40)[99]. Elle laisse aussi de côté le concept psychanalytique, tiré de Freud et remanié par Lacan, affirmant que l'inconscient est une hypothèse exprimant la « perte radicale de l'homme parlant » (Sublon 1993, 113).

L'individuation implique au surplus que le vrai *moi* de l'individu surgisse de manière à intégrer « la psyché toute entière » sur la base des archétypes jungiens (Drewermann 1991a, 326). La confiance en Dieu dont l'humain a besoin pour *guérir de la peur*[100] proviendrait par conséquent de ces archétypes (Drewermann 1991a, 326), faisant de ceux-ci les moteurs premier du salut humain. Cette idée qu'il faille *développer* sa psyché et renforcer son *moi* (Drewermann

[99] Søren Kierkegaard, « L'Instant », dans *Œuvres complètes*, traduit par Paul-Henri Tisseau, tome XIX (Paris: Éditions de l'Orante, 1982). Voir aussi la note 10.

[100] Du titre d'un entretien de Drewermann publié dans *La parole qui guérit*. Voir la liste des références.

1992a, I:53) renie ainsi l'amour de Dieu dont fait pourtant tant état Drewermann (Sublon 1993, 112, qui qualifie Drewermann de « chantre de l'amour »).

L'individuation promeut de plus l'idée que la foi ne soit qu'un remède. Drewermann illustre le rôle du prêtre par le biais de la métaphore du médecin divin (Drewermann 1992a, I:136-37) ; il traite médicalement du désespoir, dont la symptomatologie et le traitement sont religieux ; et il pose la théologie comme seule thérapie possible de l'angoisse (Drewermann 1997a, 17-18). Bref, Drewermann ne propose rien de moins qu'une « équivalence entre guérison de la psyché et maturation en Dieu » (Drewermann 1992a, I:102).

Autrement dit, l'inconscient est ici identifié à l'âme et la thérapie qui en découle force le passage par une conversion imaginaire en ce qu'elle « évacue pratiquement les rapports du corps au langage » (Sublon 1993, 113-14)[101]. L'humain ainsi converti n'a rien à faire du réel ni du langage ; il se complaît dans une réalité qui a du sens pour lui. La croix, avec la souffrance humaine qu'elle implique, et la Passion, qui fait de la croix l'élévation du Verbe et la dénomination du Christ, sont encore une fois mises de côté puisqu'appartenant aux registres réel et symbolique.

C'est la raison pour laquelle Drewermann ne peut poser la spécificité du christianisme que dans « le problème de la guérison de l'angoisse dans la vie humaine » (Drewermann 1991b, 244) et non pas dans la Passion christique. Car la personne de Jésus Christ n'implique pas plus, chez Drewermann, qu'une personne confrontant l'humain angoissé par sa liberté et lui permettant de trouver derechef le repos du paradis perdu (Drewermann 1991b, 244; 1991a, 313). Au nom de la psychanalyse, Drewermann ne voit donc dans la relation entre l'humain et Dieu qu'une pathologie (Sublon 1993, 113, citant Drewermann[102]).

[101] Le terme imaginaire doit ici être compris dans son acception lacanienne où il traite d'un registre distinct du symbolique et du réel (Lacan 1974, séminaire non publié dont le format mp3 est disponible sur www.valas.fr).
[102] Eugen Drewermann, *De la naissance des dieux à la naissance du Christ* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 129.

Conclusion

Drewermann conçoit le dialogue entre la théologie et la psychanalyse comme nécessaire, considérant que toutes deux sont porteuses de réponses sur la vie profonde de l'humain, bien que chacune doive composer avec des limites : le rejet de l'inconscient pour la théologie et le rejet de l'absolu pour la psychanalyse (Drewermann 1995, 38. 57; 1992a, I:52-55). Cependant, en essayant d'arrimer la psychanalyse à la théologie dans le but d'introduire cette dernière à une réalité existentielle (Drewermann 1992, I:129), Drewermann ne fait que reprendre à mauvais escient « la démarche théologique de toujours », celle qui tente constamment d'« articuler ce qui est difficilement articulable, à savoir, la raison et le sentiment » (Sublon 1993, 111-12).

Son approche est systématique et ambitieuse. Les données qu'il recueille sont multiples, tant au niveau de leur genre que de leur nombre. Le travail d'interprétation et de compréhension qui s'ensuit est d'autant impressionnant qu'il est mené avec une rigueur exemplaire. Drewermann est un philosophe, un théologien, un exégète et un psychanalyste. Sa psychologie théocentrique démontre l'aisance avec laquelle il manie tous ces niveaux de langage. Non seulement cela, mais l'ancien prêtre devenu thérapeute a le courage de passer de la parole aux actes et de vivre selon l'éthique propre à sa conception théologique.

Toutes les critiques qui lui sont adressées, y compris celle-ci, ne le contredisent que dans les jugements qu'il porte sur les données qu'il analyse si scrupuleusement. Le présent travail a tenté de regrouper les erreurs de jugement dénotées par nombre d'auteurs en deux catégories, placées sous le signe du monologue, c'est-à-dire de l'infructuosité du dialogue, de celui qui parle mais qui n'écoute pas toujours. Dans le monologue théologique, Drewermann utilise la psychanalyse pour élaborer une nouvelle théologie ; dans le monologue égocentrique, la théologie se voit transformée en cure visant à faire la promotion du moi. Dans les deux cas, Drewermann opère à nouveau la synthèse des antinomies kierkegaardiennes qui l'avait amené au départ, à se lancer sur la question du mal.

Pourtant, le structuralisme, qu'il adopte volontiers lorsqu'il est temps d'effectuer une exégèse, est apte, avec le poststructuralisme français, à lui fournir des éléments de réflexion. Les développements de

Lacan, qui relit Freud à la lumière de Ferdinand de Saussure, permettent de ne pas tomber dans les excès romantiques propres à Drewermann car, contrairement à la vision pathologique de la faute drewermannienne, les lacaniens pensent la religion comme le *ménagement*, « avec l'affirmation absolue de l'Amour, [de] la négation absolue de la Loi » (Sublon 1993, 113).

Un tel ménagement refuse la fusion et dépasse la confrontation dans une visée d'altérité : « S'il en est ainsi, au lieu de chercher à composer et à articuler deux discours en posant le problème des rapports ou de l'absence de rapport entre eux, la seule démarche possible est de se demander quels *effets* produit la psychanalyse, tant comme expérience que comme théorie, chez le croyant tenu par le discours de la foi » (Beirnaert 1987, 138, soulignés de l'auteur).

Somme toute, nous dit Beirnaert, la vie de foi et la psychanalyse partagent des éléments communs : le discours croyant et la psychanalyse s'occupent toutes deux du « sujet parlant comme tel » puisque, comme la psychanalyse, « la parole de Dieu concerne le sujet » et non pas les énoncés du discours scientifiques (Beirnaert 1987, 139). Il y a donc possiblement, dans les deux discours, des éléments qui se donnent sans se retrouver ailleurs (Beirnaert 1987, 139) ; d'où la nécessité d'un dialogue subjectif qui passe obligatoire par une écoute. C'est pourquoi Saint-Arnaud invite à se faire comme Freud et à « accepter l'un et l'autre, sans pour autant se suffire de l'un ou de l'autre » (Saint-Arnaud 2002, 23).

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Simeon Stylites: Assessing Scholarly Perspectives on the Prototypical Pillar Saint
Introduction and Methodology

Karol Roseman

BY THE TIME SIMEON STYLITES climbed his first short pillar in the early fifth century his celebrity status was well established in Northern Syria and, by the time he died atop his final 18 metre *stylos* 37 years later, he enjoyed world-wide fame as a spiritual athlete and combatant beyond compare. His example brought numerous successors and imitators,[103] some of whom took on the same complex social and religious functions that had accreted to Simeon as his notoriety and influence grew. Interestingly, it has only been in the last century or so that scholars have begun to take an earnest look at Simeon and his rigorous and singular *askesis*, in search of relevant historical and religious contexts in which to ground both his practice and his powerful influence.

The goal of this paper is to explore the range of scholarly theories that have arisen in regards to the enigmatic saint. The brief initial focus will be on the salient characteristics of the three extant *vitae* as these are the primary touchstones for all of the recent scholarly analysis. These analyses, while emerging from a relatively small

[103] Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites*, Bruxelles: Subsidia Hagiographica 14, 1923.

group of experts, disclose a broad range of interpretations, each arising from the particular methodology undertaken. And indeed, Simeon's stark uniqueness, foregrounding as it does a relative paucity of clear historical detail, admits and even invites the application of creative theories to weave together the sparse threads that exist beyond the *vitae* themselves. While each of these interpretations is persuasively presented, the most promising is arguably the one least dependent on fact-based historical-critical methodology. From this perspective, it is the mythological significance of Simeon and his pillar that are emphasized and firmly positioned within the ambit of Mircea Eliade's theory of the *axis mundi*, concerning the fundamental transit points between sacred and ordinary (or profane) space.[104]

The Lives of Simeon Stylites

a) *The Life of Saint Simeon Stylites*, by Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus[105]

There are three important lives, or *vitae*, of Simeon. The first, by Theodoret of Cyrrhus, was written at least sixteen years before Simeon's death. Even so, it is the authoritative anchor to our knowledge and understanding of Simeon. As the pioneering stylite scholar Hippolyte Delehaye notes, this is no ordinary *vita*, as

> par une rare fortune, ce n'est pas à un écrivain obscur et peu renseigné que nous sommes redevables de ces mémoires. Théodoret l'évêque historien, l'homme mêlé aux principaux événements ecclésiastiques de son temps, est l'ami et le protecteur de celui dont il écrit la vie, et son

[104] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, translated by William R. Trask, New York: Harcourt, 1957.

[105] Theodoret, "The Syriac Life of Simeon Stylites," in *The Lives of Simeon Stylites*, translated, with an Introduction, by Robert Doran. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1992, 69-84. Unless otherwise noted, all references to the three *vitae* will be to Doran's translations contained in this work.

admiration est puisée dans le spectacle de cette extraordinaire existence.[106]

The *vita* appeared in 444 in Theodoret's seminal work, *A History of the Monks of Syria*,[107] which contains the stories of 30 monks,[108] making Theodoret the preeminent authority of early Syriac asceticism who, through his experience and ecclesiastical position, had detailed personal knowledge, both of the "monastic tradition independent of that of Telanissus [or Telneshe, the village nearby to Simeon's pillar]… [and] the monastic tradition of Telanissus itself."[109]

While there is some uncertainty about Theodoret's education, it was almost certainly of the highest order within the Greek *paideia* tradition. According to Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies it is very likely that he studied in Antioch which, "at the time boasted not only one of the highest concentrations of grammarians in the empire but also some of the greatest rhetors, among them Libanius … and John Chrysostom."[110] Theodoret's skill and, by extension, his reliability is also supported by the prominent role he had in the great christological disputes of the time regarding the proper conception of Christ's combined divine and human nature, in which Theodoret supported the position of Nestorius of Antioch against that of Cyril of Alexandria. This led to Theodoret being deposed at the Robber Council of 449 and being reinstated two years later at the Council of Chalcedon.[111] Interestingly, Theodoret makes no mention in the *vita* of being directly supported by Theodoret in these debates which had been underway for at least two decades before the Vita and extended well into the 450s. This, despite the fact that, according to scholars, Simeon was on several occasions approached by - and supported –

[106] Delehaye, i.
[107] Robert Doran, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites*, translated, with an Introduction, by Robert Doran. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1992, 37, citing P. Canivet's *La monachisme syrien selon Théodoret of Cyr*, Théologie historique 42 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 31-35.
[108] Theodoret of Cyrrhus. *A History of the Monks of Syria*, translated by R.M. Price. Collegeville, Minnesota: Cistercian Publications, 1985, xvi-xvii.
[109] Theodoret, *History*, 173, n1.
[110] https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5770, accessed April 13, 2020.
[111] Doran, 36.

significant imperial and religious authorities, including Theodoret, on Chalcedon and other important matters of the day.[112]And, while there is no doubt that Theodoret portrays Simeon as consistently deferential to ecclesial authority (at least after Simeon left the monastery),[113] his reluctance to self-promote in the *vita* regarding such matters of personal import, argues well for the impartiality and objectivity of his portrayal of Simeon as a whole. Still, there is no doubt that Theodoret's is anything but a disinterested perspective. As Robert Doran concludes in his introduction to Theodoret's *vita*, "one must keep in mind the voice of the narrator: it is a bishop conscious of his position as shepherd of God's flock and not yielding that position to any other."[114]

b) *The Life and Daily Mode of Living of the Blessed Simeon the Stylite*, by Antonius

The second *vita* was also written in Greek at an unknown date by a monk named Antonius who professed to be an intimate disciple personally attending Simeon for several years leading up to his death. It is slightly shorter than Theodoret's life, but has the obvious advantage of being written after Simeon's death and remarkably elaborate funeral which is recounted both by Antonius and in the Syriac *vita*.

Antonius' style contrasts with Theodoret's on significant points. Whereas Theodoret writes in a mostly anecdotal style about incidents related to him by Simeon and others, Antonius often uses long, verbatim quotes of conversations of Simeon, at which Antonius was not present. A notable example regards Antonius' recounting of Simeon's conversion experience, occurring more than 50 years prior to Antonius' writing. Here, an old man gives the youth a detailed analysis of a sermon they have just heard, which amounts to an anticipatory *apologia* for Simeon's extreme *askesis.* He is told,

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[112] See a list compiled and cited by R.M. Price in Theodoret's *History*, 175, n35.
[113] See, for example: ch.6 (obeyed Bassus, a *periodeutēs*, and kept food on hand during a long fast); ch.10 (agreed with the *chōrepiscopos* Meletius to remove a chain holding his leg to a rock.).
[114] Doran, 41.

> you must be assaulted and buffeted and reproached, you must groan and weep and be oppressed and suffer ups and downs of fortune; you must renounce bodily health and desires, be humiliated and suffer much from men, for so you will be comforted by angels. Now that you have heard all these things, may the Lord of glory grant you good resolveaccording to his will (C.2-3).[115]

Antonius also seems much more prone than Theodoret to inflate his recountings of Simeon's experiences to legendary status. This can be illustrated by a comparison of their accounts of one of Simeon's earliest and most extreme mortifications in which he secretly ties a rough rope around his waist which becomes imbedded in his skin. According to Theodoret, after ten days the wound began to drip blood attracting the attention of one of Simeon's fellow monks who, upon discovering the cause, advised the abbot who in turn sternly rebuked Simeon and "with difficulty" untied the rope. After an indeterminate time and further similar mortifications, Simeon was expelled, lest he influence his peers to attempt similar mortifications "beyond their powers."[116]

Antonius' account is more extreme and gruesome.[117] Here, Simeon also hides the rope, but under a tunic made from hair, and for over an entire year, which rots his flesh causing a stench so horrible that no one could stay near him. In this version, when the abbot finally investigates, he finds Simeon's bed and wound both full of worms. Two physicians eventually separate the almost dead Simeon from the rope and after fifty days of convalescing the Abbot tells him, "Look son, you are now healthy, Go where you wish."[118]

The *denouements* of the respective recountings are also very different in tone and style. In both versions, after Simeon leaves the monastery he descends into a hole to pray. While Theodoret describes it simply as a cistern, "waterless and not too deep,"[119] for Antonius, it

[115] Antonius, ch.3.
[116] Theodoret, ch.5-6.
[117] Antonius, ch.5-8.
[118] Antonius, ch.8.
[119] Theodoret, ch.6.

is a deep well. It too "contained no water, but many unclean evil spirits lived in it: not only unclean spirits, but also unimaginable numbers of asps, vipers, serpents and scorpions, so that everyone was afraid to pass by that place."[120] Finally, in both accounts, Simeon is searched for and rescued by monks sent out by the abbot, but in Antonius' telling, this is inspired by a powerful vision given to the abbot castigating him for "persecuting" Simeon and telling him that Simeon "will be found greater than you in that fearful, terrible day."[121] And when Simeon returns, the abbot begs Simeon to become his teacher. No such dramatic vision or corresponding role reversal occurs in Theodoret's account.

Antonius emphasizes the presence and significance of worms emanating from Simeon's putrid flesh in another incident paralleling Theodoret's *vita* in which, again, they are not mentioned. Both writers refer to a time when Simeon was forced to stand on one foot on the pillar due to a painful ulcer, In Theodoret's version it is on his left foot (the left traditionally being the devil's side) and referred to as "a malignant ulcer from which a great deal of pus continually oozes."[122] In Antonius, the wound has all of this gruesomeness, and more and is imbued with great symbolic significance, again involving worms. The ulcer is on his left thigh and caused by a blow from Satan himself,

> just as happened to the blessed Job. His thigh grew putrid and accordingly he stood on one foot for two years. Such huge numbers of worms fell from his thigh to the earth that those near him had no other job but to collect them and take them back from where they had fallen, while the saint kept saying, 'Eat from what the Lord has given to you.'[123]

The symbolism here indicates that even the process of human, physical decay and decomposition are divinely ordained and

[120] Antonius, ch.9.
[121] Antonius, ch.10.
[122] Theodoret, ch.23. In n31 of his translation, Doran notes that Canivet has characterized the injury as "literally 'an ulcer of Cheiron', perhaps named after the incurable and malignant sore that Cheiron received from his wrestle with the Centaurs."
[123] Antonius, ch.17.

integrally connected to all aspects of creation, even the most unseemly and unclean. This is reinforced when during that period, the king of the Arabs is said by Antonius to have visited Simeon and found that a worm he had reverentially retrieved after it fell from the ulcer had turned into a priceless pearl.[124] The clear implication is that through the sheer power of Simeon's spiritual will and physical prowess, he is not only able to withstand these unfathomable, if somewhat "natural' assaults but to transform them into a physical symbol of the Kingdom of God, like the "Pearl of Great Price" of Jesus' parable (Mt 13:45-6).

This transformative aspect of Simeon's pillar practice has been recently explored by William Conte in his aptly titled article "Trans(Per)forming Abjection: St. Simeon Stylites."[125] While most of the specific examples referred to by Conte are taken from the even more graphic and fantastic *Syriac Life*, discussed below, the concept is aptly introduced here. Conte's contribution comes from his application of the theories of structuralist philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva[126] to argue that Simeon's "performance" on the pillar, in front of both small and large participatory audiences is in a way analogous to the participatory, sacramental rituals of Baptism and Reconciliation where what is broken, rotten (abject) in the human condition is cast off or made whole. For Conte, Simeon's practice was a "conscious self-fashioning [which] resulted not from thrusting the abject aside, but from his deliberate embrace of a lifestyle that made him *abjection incarnate* (*emphasis* added).[127] The resulting decades-long performance demonstrates, above all else, Christ's ability to redeem everything, including the corruptible flesh, as well as the "abject," or outcasts, from society, such as the leprous, crippled and demon-possessed, who all came to witness and be themselves transformed by Simeon's almost inconceivable example of *imitatio Christi* and the resulting healing power.

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[124] Antonius, ch.18.

[125] William Conte, "Trans(Per)Forming Abjection: St. Simeon Stylites," *Ecumenica*, 5 no.1 Spr (2012), 7-24.

[126] See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection,* translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.

[127] Conte, 7.

Regarding Antonius' *vita*, Robert Doran would place this episode of the worms, which are tolerated and even encouraged in their "work,"[128] within the impressive range of Simeon's healing and redemptive interactions involving not only people, but all aspects of nature.[129] Doran's summing up of the *vita* is succinct and accurate: "The biographer has attempted to portray the holy man as cosmic intermediary who unites himself in the world of humans and animals and heals it."[130]

c) *The Syriac Life*

If, compared to Theodoret's, Antonius' *vita* is properly seen as even more creatively laudatory in its portrayal of Simeon, the *Syriac Life* demonstrates an extension of that principle in almost every conceivable characteristic. Written in 473,[131] fourteen years after Simeon's death, it is purported to have been authored by close intimates of Simeon's, though Delehaye's examination concludes that whoever wrote it, received much of their information from third party "intermediaries" since many details conflict with Theodoret's supposedly first-hand experiences.[132] The Syriac version is more than seven times longer than each of the other lives, dramatically outdoing them in the number and power of miracles performed and is more than

[128] It should be noted that while Doran interprets the instructions to "Eat from the Lord has given to you" as having been addressed to the worms (44), Charles M. Stang sees them as being addressed to Simeon's followers, who are themselves to eat the worms, in a powerfully symbolic eucharistic act. ("Digging Holes and Building Pillars: Simeon Stylites and the 'Geometry' of Ascetic Practice." *Harvard Theological Review*, 103 no. 4 Oct. (2010), 460.

[129] Miracles involving other animals include: visitors who were cursed by Simeon to bleat like animals because they greedily invoked his power to capture and kill a pregnant hind (ch.15); Simeon heals a dragon who has a piece of wood stuck in its eye. The dragon lies peacefully at Simeon's enclosure for three days while being healed without harming anyone (ch.19); Simeon provides a cave full of water for a crowd of humans and animals who are perishing of thirst (ch.21). Numerous human healings are omitted here, and are scattered throughout the *vita*.

[130] Doran, 45.

[131] Doran, 36. Interestingly, Susan Ashbrook Harvey dates the *Syriac Life* to shortly after Simeon's death ("The Sense of a Stylite : Perspectives on Simeon the Elder", *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), 376).

[132] Delehaye, vii.

equal to their effusive praise of Simeon, both in character and quantity. It is, according to Arthur Vööbus, "a long panegyric, a *neshana*, victory, or praise."[133]

A brief comparison of the *Syriac* life's seven chapters long account of the ulcer episode to the much shorter versions of the other *vitae* exemplifies the differences in tone and detail seen throughout the works. As in Theodoret's version, it is on his left foot, and as in Antonius', it is brought on by a direct assault by Satan which in this case even more directly mirrors the origination of Job's encounter.[134] The putrid wound both oozes pus, as in Theodoret's account, *and* drops worms, as in Antonius' but is also accompanied by an additional affliction: a "stench … so strong and foul that no one could go even half-way up the ladder without great affliction from the severe rankness of the smell.[135] Simeon is also visited by numerous kings and religious authorities (though none receive a worm which transforms into a pearl). After almost nine months he is enclosed for his usual 40-day Lenten fast during which, after thirty days he appears as if dead to his attendants. Then, on the thirty-eighth day, he is visited by a vision of an angel who heals his wound, replaces the stench with a beautiful fragrance and assures him that "your struggle is over, your slanderer [as in Job, this is Satan] has been shamed, and a crown is fashioned for you in heaven."[136]

Robert Doran provides an excellent summary and catalogue of numerous other ways in which "the position of Simeon is magnified" in the Syriac life. In addition to Job, there are extensive, favourable comparisons to prophets, especially Moses, Elijah and Samuel; an equation of Simeon's status to the apostles Peter and Paul; even comparisons to Jesus himself, particularly in the life's

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[133] As quoted by Robert Doran at page 51. Interestingly, Susan Ashbrook Harvey applies the term "panegyric" to Theodoret's less sensational, though still highly adulatory account. Harvey's use, however, is in the context of a comparison of Theodoret's *vita* of Simeon to those of the other monks in his *History* in relation to which "[h]is style is more inflated, his rhetoric more stylized, his use of hagiographical *topoi* more pronounced" (Harvey, 378).

[134] *Syriac Life,* ch.48 and Job 1.

[135] *Syriac Life,* ch.48.

[136] *Syriac Life,* ch.52.

descriptions of his regular forty day Lenten fasts and performance of miracles.[137]

Of course, the main advantage Antonius' and the Syriac lives have over Theodoret's is their perspective on the death and funeral of Simeon, whom Theodoret predeceased. Again, the Syriac version is much longer, more detailed and contains more effusive praise and significant symbolism, especially with regard to his death. While in Antonius' version Simeon dies quietly and alone, with no narrative foreshadowing, in the Syriac version his death occurs after a long period of anticipation during which it is foretold.[138] His actual death is characterized by direct echoes of the Crucifixion. Simeon dies in the presence of two disciples whom he exhorts to love one another and entrusts to heaven before beating his breast, laying his head on one of the disciple's shoulders and giving up his spirit.[139] The effusive, universal reaction to Simeon's death, his funeral procession and internment comprise the final eleven chapters of the *vita*, almost half the length of Antonius' entire work. Most of the pertinent details in the two lives are similar beyond the Syriac life's more extensive and repetitive declarations of praise and long list of victorious achievements, including how "such a reliable master-builder, who by his intercession carried the weight of creation, was taken away from the world. For his prayers – just like the beams in buildings – held up creation."[140] The miraculous powers of Simeon's dead body are stressed in both works as well and there is also concern regarding the protection of his remains from relic seekers, more muted in the Syriac life[141] but emphasized for Antonius, according to whom numerous people offered gold and silver for parts of his limbs.[142] Citing Meinardus, Sebastian Brock suggests that Simeon's relics soon were widely distributed.[143]

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[137] Doran, 51-3.
[138] *Syriac Life*, ch.114-17.
[139] *Syriac Life*, ch.117.
[140] *Syriac Life*, ch.118.
[141] *Syriac Life*, ch.118.
[142] Antonius, ch.33. See also ch.29.
[143] Sebastian Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism." *Numen* 20 (1970), 18.

The last and most adulatory recounted fact regarding Simeon is, not surprisingly, in the Syriac life and involves Simeon's final resting place. Both lives note that Simeon is interred in a great church in Antioch at the order of Ardabar, the commanding general.[144] Notably, in the Syriac life, the location is not meant only as an honour to Simeon but, at least as importantly, to ensure that, even in death, he could be the great protector of Antioch which remained without walls due to the great earthquake of the same year.[145] The Syriac life goes on to note that the church was built by Constantine and that Simeon was the first of the great saints to be buried there.[146] Perhaps even more impressive is that Emperor Leo himself attempted "assiduously" to have Simeon translated to Constantinople where he could protect the entire Empire. In the end he is said to have acquiesced to the "tears and groans" of the citizens of Antioch and allowed Simeon to remain there.[147]

In Search of Christian Influences on Simeon Stylites' *Askesis*

Without question, and despite his many other remarkable qualities, it is Simeon's pioneering use of the pillar that established his reputation as a unique historical figure and a great saint. But from what source did this singularly novel spiritual practice spring? Simeon himself never directly addresses the question, though two of the *vitae* do provide, by way of *apologia*, some attempt to explain – or at least justify – Simeon's stylitism, which was considered unnatural even by the extreme examples written about in Theodoret's *History of the Monks in Syria*.[148] But rather than establishing actual historical links, these *apologia* tend to point to biblical comparators for Simeon, almost in the manner of proof texts to support his exalted religious

[144] Antonius, ch.32, *Syriac Life*, ch.125.
[145] As written about by Isaac of Antioch. See https://www.britannica.com/biography/Isaac-of-Antioch, accessed April 18, 2020.
[146] *Syriac Life*, ch.126.
[147] *Syriac Life*, ch.125.
[148] In Theodoret, 23, Simeon is asked by a deacon, [A]re you a human or an incorporeal nature?" Brock (15) cites Evagrius as noting that Simeon was temporarily excommunicated for his extremism by a group of Egyptian monks.

status. The *Syriac Life* cites numerous examples of God's calling his favoured servants to strange behaviours, including Jeremiah, (told to wear a yoke with a collar, Jer 27:2), Ezekiel (called to shave his beard and head, carry his baggage on his shoulder and breach the wall, Ez 5:1; 12:3), and Hosea (instructed to take a prostitute for his wife, Hos, 1:2)[149] Likewise, "therefore it pleased his Lord that Mar Simeon stand on a pillar in these days because he saw creation as if asleep"[150] and in need of being jolted awake. Theodoret notes these examples and others for a similar purpose, declaring that "the novelty of the spectacle is a reliable guarantee of the instruction, and whoever comes to the spectacle departs instructed in divine affairs."[151] Theodoret does add a practical motive noting that Simeon climbed his first three-metre pillar to get away from the crowds who were coming to see him. If this was Simeon's primary strategy it was, of course, an abject failure though it might have helped, as Theodoret suggests, to at least keep Simeon's admirers from trying to touch his skin and garments which were thought to have healing powers.[152] Sebastian Brock, while not specifically referencing this passage or (any other evidence) suggests in passing, that, "As his fame spread, and the crowds became intolerable and just as, in the Gospels, Jesus had retired to a boat to avoid the throng of the crowds, Simeon too found a simple answer to the same problem: it was to mount a column."[153] Interestingly, Antonius makes no reference to Simeon's motivations for his ascents his respective pillars, and only briefly mentions the circumstances in which they occurred.[154]

Lacking cogent evidence regarding Simeon's specific choice of the pillar, historians have broadened their search for indications of Christian influences on the comparatively extreme ascetic practices of Syria in late antiquity, of which Simeon's is only one very unique

[149] *Syriac Life*, ch.111.
[150] *Syriac Life*, ch.111.
[151] Theodoret, ch.12.
[152] Theodoret, ch.12.
[153] Brock, 15.
[154] Antonius, ch.12; 17.

example. Unfortunately, Jesuit scholar Robert Murray notes the regretful paucity of evidence in that regard as well:

> The rise of Syriac-speaking Christianity is bafflingly obscure, and the earliest literary works help us little. They are too difficult to date, to place, or to interpret historically. … [And the] isolation early Syriac Christianityfeels from the Greek-speaking world, considering how largely the twoworlds overlapped … is amazing.[155]

That said, attempts have been made to establish links to possible antecedents reflected in early Christian texts, most of which are non-canonical. Sebastian Brock, especially, has drawn links from extreme Syriac ascetic practices like Simeon's back to the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat (*c.*270- *c.*345), a Son of the Covenant; the writings of Ephrem (d.373); and the Diatessaron of Tatian (120-173), all of which are noted to emphasize practices, such as vegetarianism, prolonged fasting and celibacy even within marriage. All of these predate the tentative establishment of the Roman canon in 373 and, while they are beyond still-developing mainstream Roman practice, are seen as still known in Syria[156] during Simeon's time.

Nor is it clear that Syrian monastic practices were very much influenced by their more famous Egyptian predecessors. Here, Brock makes the significant observation that the extreme practice of the Syrian monks is indeed "in complete contrast to the situation in Egypt … . Whereas Egypt's *forte* was cenobitic monasticism, in Syria it was the solitary virtuoso who dominated the scene and … the most famous of these [was] Saint Simeon Stylites."[157] R.M. Price makes a similar observation, noting that it cannot be proven that Syrian monastics were developing their own, unique ascetic styles of practice as early as their Egyptian counterparts. However, "if St. Anthony had never been made famous by Athanasius's biography, and if Theodoret had

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[155] "The Characteristics of the Earliest Syriac Christianity," in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*. N. Garosïan *et al.* ed. Washington: Dunbarton Oaks, 1982, 5-6.
[156] Brock, 3-19.
[157] Brock, 13.

been writing fifty years earlier, at a time when memories of the early fourth century were less dim, this impression of Egyptian priority may not have arisen."[158] Respecting their respective practices and emerging roles in society Peter Brown also asserts a distinct line of development between Egyptian and Syrian monasticism. With typical literary flair he acknowleges that,

> Egypt was the cradle of monasticism. … Yet the holy men who mintedthe ideal of the saint in society came from Syria, …– not from Egypt ….[T]he violences of the monks in Egypt are notorious: yet the ferocious independence, the flamboyant ascetic practices, the rapid rise and fall of reputations, and the constant symbiosis with the surrounding villages – these are the distinctively Syrian features that were welcomed in Byzantine society. They were virtuoso cadenzas on the sober first score written by The Great Men of Egypt (footnotes omitted).[159]

According to Robert Doran, a survey of other possible precedents for the Syrian monastics' solitary practices also discloses that:

> scholars are concluding that both the dualism of Mani and the antitheses of Marcion seem to have found a ready home in Syriac Christianity because it itself was grounded in the radical statements of the Gospels themselves, in a thorough commitment to the imitation of Christ.[160]

Sebastian Brock has pointed out that some of these more "radical statements" come from the Gospel of Luke, which is generally thought to have been written in Antioch[161] and would, by extension, reflect early Syriac interpretations of the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Brock's comparison of Matthew's and Luke's versions of the Beatitudes notes that, while the former are more

[158] Theodoret, *History*, xix.
[159] Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies,* Vol. 61 (1971), 82.
[160] Doran, 25. In this section Doran discusses the competing views of A. Vööbus, A. Adam, Robert Murray and Sebastian Brock, among others.
[161] Brock, 3.

metaphorical, the latter are starkly direct, emphasizing their ascetic nature. For instance, where Matthew quotes Jesus as saying "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Mt 5:3), Luke's Jesus says simply, "Blessed are those who hunger now, for you shall be filled" (Lk 6:20).[162] While the perceived distinction is intriguing, it doesn't bear much authoritative weight, first, because the Lucan Beatitudes are fewer, and generally shorter and simpler in style than those of Matthew which, secondly, many scholars believe may have been of Syrian origin itself.[163]

In Search of Pagan Antecedents of Simeon's Pillar Practice

Seekers of possible associations between early Syriac monasticism and its local pagan predecessors have cast their methodological nets more widely, with arguably more success than those in search of Christian influences. Archaeologist G.R.H. Wright, for example, has asserted clear linkages from iconography depicting stylitism all the way back to the Syro-Hittite cult of the Sacred Tree which served the god of reborn vegetation a millennium earlier. Common imagery include columns (or trees), with attendants mounting ladders to, in Simeon's case provide provisions, and in the ancient cult, to artificially fertilize the date palm.[164]

Wright also posits two connected, intermediary stages of iconographic representation between ancient Syria and Simeon's own time: one Christian, and one pagan.[165] The former of these associates iconography of Simeon standing with his arms outstretched atop the pillar (in *imitatio crucis*) to Christian legends connecting another tree of life and fertility, the "Sacred Tree in the Garden of Eden and the Holy Cross."[166] The latter is related to another fertility-based religion, the cult of the *magna mater*, Atargatis, at Hierapolis, in the third

[162] Brock, 3-4.
[163] See, for example, Benedict T. Viviano, "The Gospel According to Matthew, in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, R.E. Brown, *et. al.* ed., New York: Prentice-Hall, 1990, 631.
[164] G.R.H. Wright, "The Heritage of the Stylites," *Australian Journal of Biblical Anthropology*, 1/3 (1970): 84-86.
[165] Wright at, 90-99.
[166] Wright, 96.

century, and written about in *De Dea Syria*, by Lucian of Samosata. Lucian notes the existence of two pillars at Hierapolis which appear central to the cult and, according to Wright,

> describes a rite not attested elsewhere. … He says that twice a year a man climbs up one of these pillars as though climbing a palm tree with a rope. He remains on the summit for seven days supposedly being near the Gods and thus in a favourable position for offering prayer. Never ceasing, he prays for the prosperity of Syria and for individual donors.[167]

Wright suggests that this description overemphasizes a connection to Dionysus, "providing the cult with Hellenised garb"[168] that obscures its more prominent connection with Atagartis and its numerous Ancient East predecessors.[169] However constituted, Wright notes that this cult at Hierapolis probably survived into the fifth century[170] and, even if defunct, would certainly have been known about by northern Syrians in Simeon's day, as would other related examples noted by Wright's article here and in another from two years earlier.[171] In short, Simeon lived in both a time and place which were "nodal", in terms of the variety and continuity of extant religious symbolism, even though Christianity was, by then, "unassailable": "The Heritage of the Stylites was thus central in the basic religious tradition of the world. Specifically, all the cultural influences effective on Judeo-Christendom [including pagan influences] had been experienced equally validly and directly in this region."[172]

David Frankfurter also attempts to situate Simeon's stylitism in an overall context that particularly includes the pagan cult at Hierapolis written about by Lucian.[173] His goal is a new methodology

[167] Wright, 93.
[168] Wright, 91.
[169] Wright, 92.
[170] Wright, 94-96.
[171] G.R.H. Wright, "Simeon's Ancestors (or The Skeleton on the Column)", *Australian Journal of Biblical Anthropology*, 1/1 (1968), 41-49.
[172] Wright, "Heritage",100-101.
[173] David M. Frankfurter, "Stylites and *Phallobates*: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria", *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990), 168-198.

which purports to challenge existing scholarly prejudices by posing "the question of 'stylite continuity' in somewhat more mature terms than that of 'pagan survivals.'"[174] He takes particular aim at the Bollandist Hippolyte Delehaye, who dismissed a possible connection between the phallobate cult and Simeon, made by Jules Toutain, with a blanket condemnation: "C'est un intéressant exemple des aberrations de la méthode qui se flatte de retrouver, sous n'importe quelle institution chrétienne, les vestiges de quelque usage païen."[175] According to Frankfurter, then, it was simply unthinkable for conservative scholars, (and presumably the hagiographers as well), that a true saint like Simeon would even contemplate any influence from pagan idolators, especially those "from a heathen practice with sexual overtones."[176]

Given this perspective, it is interesting that Frankfurter begins his analysis by persuasively disentangling the Dionysian sexual content from *De Dea Syria* which, going even further than Wright, Frankfurter asserts was specifically introjected by Lucian due to his pro-Greek prejudice and his preoccupation with Dionysus.[177] The result of this disentangling according to Frankfurter is to enable a critical reading that allows discernment of a variety of religious practices associated with the Atargatis cult at Hierapolis which, in turn, opens potential avenues of connectivity to Simeon that conservative scholars and the hagiographers themselves could or would not entertain. Two other pillar-related iconographies of Late Antique Syria are also asserted, potentially broadening the range of pillar precedents by which Simeon was influenced: one related to the Arabic *baetyl* cult and the other depicting a conical semeion.[178]

Frankfurter, however, also critiques Wright's analysis on similar grounds as he did Lucian's asserting, in this case, a methodological prejudice arising from over-generalizing connections between disparate cults up to a millennium and a half apart, from

[174] Frankfurter, 168.
[175] Delehaye, clxxvii. This disagreement with Toutain is noted by Frankfurter at 172.
[176] Frankfurter, 172.
[177] Frankfurter, 170-172. This, despite the fact that Lucian was Syrian.
[178] Frankfurter, 180-83.

classical Mesopotamia to late antiquity. Here by removing the veil of assumed symbolic homogeneity and imposed "archetypal patterns' one is able to apprehend distinct local examples amongst the variety of coexisting influences, pillar-related and otherwise during Simeon's time.[179]

Frankfurter's methodology, then, is meant to break open fertile, common ground amongst commentators from different perspectives, in part by identifying the limitations of those individual perspectives, thereby opening new avenues of investigation. Regarding Simeon, for instance, conservative scholars are certainly not wrong to assert his unique status as a Christian holy man *nonpareil*, because he was clearly seen as such by his hagiographers and thousands of admirers. But that recognized status should not preclude consideration of possible non-Christian influences that may have also been extant at the time. That said, analyses of those pagan sources should also examined for limiting assumptions, such as Lucian's, that the *De Dea Syria* cult was dominated by the worship of Dionysus, thereby obscuring the presence of other cultic practices worthy of consideration. Finally, scholars such as Wright who organize their analyses into broad symbolic or archetypal categories are seen as being bound to overlook specific details of time and place which again, if thoughtfully surfaced, could enlarge the investigative scope of the analysis. In short, one must be open to a synthesis of the diachronic perspective, which has an eye to the nuances of historical context and precedent, as well as to the synchronic perspective, which focuses on circumstances and relationships specific to the time. In Frankfurter's words:

> To understand an event in Late Antiquity as pure novelty ignores the often dangerous significance of novelty to the Greco-Roman and Late Antique worlds; on the other hand, to understand a phenomenon purely from the perspective of

[179] Frankfurter, 173.

> precedents and archetypes tends to impose a rigid determinism on historical development and change.[180]

The Pillar as *Axis Mundi?*

Charles M. Stang's recent analysis begins with a careful critique of the work of Frankfurter Wright and others, which he follows with a novel repositioning of Simeon's pillar practice into an even broader and arguably more significant context. While Frankfurter and Wright certainly disagree regarding their methodologies and the attendant, respective results,

> [t]hey agree, however, that the pillar was a sacred symbol around which evolved a whole constellation of meanings and associations, including for Simeon's contemporaries fertility, accumulated spiritual power and presence, and communication with the divine.[181]

Stang's contribution, then, is to suggest religious historian Mircea Eliade's concept of *axis mundi* "or cosmic pillar… [as a] helpful framework for interpreting the peculiar 'geometry' of Simeon's asceticism.[182]

As Stang notes, it is surprising that scholars have not only almost totally ignored what would seem to be an obvious connection between the Simeon's pillar and the *axis mundi*,[183] but that they have also neglected what, according to all three *vitae,* Simeon did prior to mounting the pillar: he descended into the earth.[184] Theodoret and Antonius, as shown, recount Simeon hiding in a cistern and well, resprectively, before mounting his pillar. The Syriac life also recounts Simeon going underground in a different context, when he digs a hole in a corner of the monastery garden so he can experience the full heat

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[180] Frankfurter, 190.
[181] Charles M. Stang, "Digging Holes and Building Pillars: Simeon Stylites and the 'Geometry' of Ascetic Practice." *Harvard Theological Review*, 103 no. 4 Oct. (2010), 444-70.
[182] Stang, 449.
[183] Stang, 464.
[184] Stang, 448-9.

of a Syrian summer.[185] Most significant for Stang is a vision of Simeon's immediately after his conversion, recounted by Theodoret, wherein he is instructed repeatedly to dig, deeper and deeper, until he is allowed to rest and told that now the actual building would be easier.[186] For Stang, this the establishment of the foundation, which, taken together with his experiences in the well and cistern, his early ascetic practices above ground and, of course, his final ascent of the pillar, correspond to the 'geometry' of Eliade's *axis mundi*, which can be a *hierophany*, "the act of manifestation of the sacred" in the realm of the profane (ordinary world).[187]

If properly established, this "universal pillar, *axis mundi*, supports, breaks through and connects all three cosmic planes: the underworld (hell), the earth, and the upper regions (heaven). Stang notes Eliade's requirements for a hierophany which Stang refers to as a "fourfold structure":

> (a) a sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space;
>
> (b) this break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld); (c) communication with heaven is expressed by one or another of certain images, all of which refer to the *axis mundi* pillar (cf. *universalis columna*), ladder (cf. Jacob's ladder), mountain, tree, vine, etc,; (d) around this cosmic axis lies the world (=our world), hence the axis is located "in the middle,"at "the navel of the earth"; it is the Center of the World.[188]

Stang correctly notes that criteria (a) and (c) are clearly met by the very fact of the pillar and what Simeon does there. Stang goes on to address criteria (b) and and (d), the former of which is met by

[185] *Syriac Life*, ch.12.
[186] Theodoret, 3.
[187] Mircea Eliade, *The Scared and the Profane*, Translated by William R. Trask, New York: Harcourt, 1957, 12.
[188] Stang, 466, quoting Eliade at 37.

Simeon's encounters with Satan and evil spirits underground,[189] his fellow humans in his devotions on the surface in the enclosure and on his pillar, and the heavenly angels on his pillar.[190] Criterion (d), that the hierophany be at the 'Center of the World' is amply illustrated in the Syriac life,[191] and especially by Theodoret, who in uncharacteristically poetic language, writes of how throngs from all countries are drawn to Simeon from the far ends of the earth: "As they all come from every quarter, each road is like a river: one can see collected in that spot [Simeon's pillar] a human sea into which rivers from all sides debouche."[192] Simeon on his pillar is, indeed, the 'Centre of the World – the vast, symbolic ocean, to which all humans are drawn to return.

Stang concludes his analysis of how Simeon and his pillar exemplify *axis mundi* by demonstrating how Simeon's *askesis* satisfies two of the most central aspects of Eliade's theory: first, that the "site of the irruption of the sacred – *be it an object or a human* – must endure a split existence: 'By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu'" (emphasis added).[193] Simeon is clearly both; certainly he is active in his world as his involvement in both civic and ecclesiastical matters indicate[194] and, as Stang points out, of possibly *both* and human *and* otherworldly status, as suggested even by ecclesial authoritites.[195]

Finally, Stang addresses Eliade's assertion that in organizing and establishing a space as sacred, a hierophany "repeat[s] the paradigmatic work of the gods."[196] Stang asserts that Simeon's pillar repeats this paradigmatic work by becoming "aligned with the Tree of Life and the Cross, while Simeon himself would become aligned with

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[189] See, for instance, Antonius ch.12 and the discussion on p.6-7 above.
[190] Stang, 466.
[191] *Syriac Life*, ch.3.
[192] Theodoret, ch.11.
[193] Eliade, 12; quoted by Stang, 468.
[194] As alluded to in the discussion of the three *vitae*, above, and as will be more fully discussed in the following section.
[195] Stang, 468.
[196] Eliade, 32, quoted by Stang, 468.

Adam and the second Adam, Christ."[197] His argument centres around the conception of Simeon's pillar *askesis* as *imitatio Christi* and, even more specifically as *imitatio crucis*, which would be much more germaine to the comparsion Stang attempts. This line of thought accords with Eliade's observation that raising a cross in a new land was seen as consecrating it and giving it new life; thus, the "newly discovered country was 'renewed,' 'recreated' by the Cross."[198] And, as Eliade notes, **"**for Christians it is Golgotha that is on the summit of the cosmic mountain."[199] Certainly, Simeon was raised on his pillar and comported himself in a manner which at least suggests the comparison. In completing this analysis Stang returns to how the hagiograpers, iconographers and Simeon himself might be seen to disclose these *imitationes*.

Here, Stangs' most compelling argument aligns iconography of Simeon on his pillar with Christ on the Cross, which, in turn has been directly associated, in Christian legend, with the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden.[200] This is accomplished through an extended analysis of Simeon's vision of his brother's death in the Syriac life the detailed imagery of which "figures the saint as a fertile tree or, more precisely, as a tree that comes into full bloom, once it is pruned and its roots are fully grounded ... and [it] sustain[s] the entire surrounding flora and fauna.[201] This imagery, of course, also accords with that of the Sacred Tree, discussed in relation to the cult of Atargatis.

Arguments in relation to the other two hagiographies are less compelling. Reference is made again to the progressive 'geometry' of Simeon's practice, beginning in the foundational digging seen in the vision from Theodoret, which is argued by Stang as being related to Jesus' parable in Luke 6:47-8, about building one's foundation on a rock, [202] though it's not clear how this rises to the level of *imitatio Christi*, let alone *imitatio crucis*, which would have more purchase in

[197] Stang, 469.
[198] Eliade, 32.
[199] Eliade, 38.
[200] Stang, 469.
[201] Stang, 463.
[202] Stang, 469.

the present argument. Similarly, Strang's references to Antonius' *vita* are not uniformly helpful. Antonius' one direct statement, that "Holy Simeon imitated his teacher, Christ" is well noted, though the context emphasizes how he called on Christ to effect his miracles, as opposed to imitating his asceticism or more particularly his crucifixion.[203]

Stang's two purportedly direct examples of *imitatio crucis* from Antonius are also somewhat problematic. He suggests that Simeon directed his followers to eat the worms falling from his rotten flesh as part of his eucharistic body, [204] a claim that is not to my knowledge supported by other commentators. Nor does Stang address Doran's more plausible explanation that Simeon's statement to "Eat from what the Lord has given you"[205] was directed to the worms, and not to Simeon's followers.[206] Stang also says that "Antonius describes Simeon's death atop the pillar in a manner that recalls Jesus' death on the cross,"[207] when in fact, in that account, though he dies on the Day of Preparation, he is alone and in silence, and his death is discovered only two days later, as compared to the Syriac life which does mirror the biblical crucifixion much more closely,[208] but is not mentioned by Stang.

In the end, the issue of whether the portrayals of Simeon obtain to a cruciform version of *imitatio Christi* is not resolved. Earlier in his paper, Stang notes the debate between Han Drijvers who argued that the hagiographers, iconographers and Simeon himself all saw Simeon's practice as an at least general form of *imitatio Christi* [Stang isn't more specific], and Susan Ashbrook Harvey who argued deinitively *against* any hagiographical portrayal of Simeon as specifically performing *imitatio crucis*.[209] As promised Stang returns to the question of whether any inferences regarding the historical

[203] Stang, 469, quoting Antonius, ch.13.
[204] Stang, 460 and 469.
[205] Antonius.
[206] Doran, 44.
[207] Stang, 469.
[208] Antonius, ch.28; *Syriac Life*, ch.117. An attendant argument that Stang makes on p. 460 regarding the shaking of the mountain and the gathering of crowds refers to what, in fact, happens days later, not at the crucifixion itself.
[209] Stang, 452.

Simeon's own intentions can be drawn from an examination of the evidence but since Simeon himself is entirely silent on the matter, nothing definitive emerges. Stang's conclusion is that

> Although I am inclined to think that the hagiographers are following, and no doubt developing, Simeon's own *interpretatio sui* and that Simeon himself understood his peculiar asceticism as recapitulating the work of Christ (in Eliade's terms, "repeating the paradigmatic work of the gods"), I cannot be certain. And so Simeon, despite the fact that he lived his life standing atop a pillar, again resists our efforts to fix him in place.[210]

However, while the article may not achieve all the ambitious and very specific goals the author sets, its overarching importance is to succeed in two larger and more significant respects: it extends the application of Eliade's *axis mundi* into a fertile and intriguing new realm; and, as Charles Stang hoped, it provides an enlightening new "framework" with which to examine the significance of a most enigmatic saint.

Liturgical Innovator or Good Patron Writ Large?

Peter Brown's "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity" is a seminal work in the field, commanding the attention of anyone seeking understanding of Simeon Stylites. Interestingly, Brown's approach is characterized by David Frankfurter as exemplifying the "*synchronic* perspective – that is, in dialectic with contemporaneous socio-economic trends and realities" (emphasis textual).[211] Brown does not disagree. His own stated methodology

> to analyse … [the holy man's] image as a product of the society around the holy man. Instead of retailing the image of the holy man as sufficient in itself to explain his appeal to the average Late Roman, we should use the image like a

[210] Stang, 470.
[211] Frankfurter, 190.

> mirror, to catch, from a surprising angle, another glimpse of the average Late Roman.[212]

Brown's initial assertion is that the rise of the Holy Man has been incorrectly attributed to one or a combination of wrong assumptions: first, that the Holy Man's spectacular feats of charity and prayer made him a natural recourse of hope against the violence and oppression that dominated that time; second, that the mere fact of the Holy Man's "athletic prowess", as evidenced by seemingly impossible mortifications, was sufficient in and of itself to command societal power and; third, that the general local decline in civilization, and commensurate rise in "superstition", was fertile ground for the growth in stature of charismatic spiritual individuals.[213]

Brown counters that it has become clear that in the fifth and sixth century the Roman east was "a vigorous and sophisticated society,"[214] and that the rise of the Holy man must be reassessed in light of that reality. The boundaries between village and countryside were blurring and the local economies were growing so quickly, agriculturally and commercially, that villages, often run by a council of elders, lacked the administrative prowess necessary to keep up. Into this leadership vacuum stepped the προστάτης, the "protector" of the village, or rural patron who could mediate disputes and achieve redress for civil wrongs.[215] As the society continued to evolve and the holy men gained in prestige, they were seen as being uniquely suited to this role. Brown sees this as resulting from the citizens' perceived need for access to authentic δυναμις, which the holy men demonstrated through their physical endurance and the ability to perform curses, exorcisms and other miracles, which were evidence of this power. Brown enlists Theodoret's *Historia Religiosa* in support of this theory, suggesting that his supposedly short accounts of miracles in the *vitae* indicates that he was more concerned with highlighting the power that lay behind the miracles than with

[212] Brown, 81.
[213] Brown, 80-82.
[214] Brown, 82.
[215] Brown, 84-87.

emphasizing the miracles themselves.[216] He even goes so far as to suggest Theodoret's work was motivated by a specific desire to show how the holy men filled this need:

> For what men expected of the holy men coincides with what they soughtin the rural patron. The *Historia Religiosa* deserves careful attention from this point of view. It was written to validate and publicise the local traditions surrounding the holy men of Syria, and so it reflects all the more faithfully what Theodoret and his informants wanted from a holy man. They knew exactly what they wanted – a version of the good patron of Libanius, a man with sufficient power to 'reach out a hand to those in distress.[217]

And just as Simeon is the most notable of Theodoret's subjects, he is foremost among the holy men turned rural patron. Brown catalogues many of his works, including successful curses, intercessions,[218] arbitrations, even negotiations of commercial transactions.[219] He was "objectivity personified,"[220] and, "[i]n a word, Simeon, the model holy man of the early Byzantine world, was the 'good patron' writ large.[221]

Like Peter Brown, Susan Ashbrook Harvey also takes a synchronic approach to her analysis of Simeon's significance, but for a decidedly different purpose. Whereas Brown positions Simeon as the "lone hermit" or "stranger *par excellence*"[222] uniquely suited to the emerging role of the powerful and necessarily independent rural patron, Harvey sees him and his practice as an integral part of an evolving liturgical community that "had appropriated the saint into its

[216] Brown, 87.
[217] Brown, 87. Libanius is cited by Brown in support of his ideas regarding the early evolution of the rural patron.
[218] Brown, 88.
[219] Brown, 90.
[220] Brown, 92
[221] Brown, 91.
[222] Brown, 91

centre through eucharistic practice."[223]

Indeed, Harvey is unique among modern scholars in her overarching focus on Simeon as liturugist, as expressed in Theodoret's *vita* and the Syriac life. Again, whereas Brown sees Theodoret's goal as "validating" the role of the holy man as rural patron to general society,[224] for Harvey,

> Theodoret's chapter on Simeon can almost be read as a handbook of church order; his overall emphasis is on the form and structure of Simeon's vocation and activity in relation to these same aspects of the institutional life of the church. By contrast, the Syriac *vita* reads like the mystagogical commentary to the handbook; its concern is the symbolic layers of meaning in each act and event of the saint's career.[225]

The two lives as are seen, then, as working complementarily to demonstrate how in both practical and symbolic terms, Simeon's entire ascetic career mirrors the practice and teaching of the church. Interestingly, Antonius' *vita* is no more than briefly mentioned. In an earlier paper, while not dismissing its value entirely, Harvey sees it as less than edifying: "With Antonios, there is no real victory… . There is only repentance, through ceaseless abasement and punishment. … It is not the angelic life, nor is it transcendent."[226]

Significantly, while Harvey sees Simeon's asceticism as completely conforming with ecclesial authority, this is demonstrated over time in a mutually transformative experience. On Simeon's part, there is an initial post-conversion period of outright rebellion against existing monastic authority in order to eventually pursue a new devotional practice in a "redefined monastic form – specifically enacted within the church in its civic vocation."[227] Harvey asserts that

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[223] Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "The Stylite's Liturgy: Ritual and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol 6, no 3, Fall 1998, 537.
[224] See previous page, above.
[225] Harvey, 532.
[226] Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon the Elder", *Vigilae Christianae* 42 (1988), 387.
[227] "Stylite's Liturgy", 527.

in this new context, Simeon becomes completely deferential to church authority, which she characterizes as entering "into the care of the diocesan structure of the ecclesiastical institution."[228] All of his practices are seen as operating within established liturgical traditions, directly administered and even limited by ordained clergy, often Bishops.[229] This is especially true of his 40-day Lenten fasts, which were always broken with receipt of the Eucharist with great circumstance and ceremony before large crowds and under ecclesial authority.[230]

Simeon's alleged transformation from monastic rebel to ecclesial exemplar did not, however, occur in a static vacuum. The Syrian institutional church according to Harvey, like the civil institutions, were also in a fluid state of evolution, and for the Church as for the wider community, as argued by Peter Brown, Simeon Stylites played a pivotal role in galvanizing that process. Simply put, the holy man, exemplified by Simeon, could not be ignored. In the circumstances:

> the ecclesiastical structure had to articulate and cement its own religious authority, while at the same time negotiating a means by which the charismatic authority of the holy man or woman could be subsumed into the normative order of religious life as it was now being defined by men of institutional power.[231]

To accomplish this consolidation of institutional power, the church re-centred many of its liturgical process at Simeon's pillar and enclosure, the *locus* of charismatic power where the saint performed the sanctioned rituals before and with the vast crowds that would come to observe and participate. For Harvey the institutional church, like the civil infrastructure for Brown, had to seek out and adapt to the reality of Simeon's unique authority, while Simeon himself became a dynamic and interactive part of both important transformations.

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[228] "Stylite's Liturgy", 527. See also specific examples noted in fn11, above.
[229] "Stylite's Liturgy", 528-9.
[230] "Stylite's Liturgy", 528-9.
[231] "Stylite's Liturgy", 523.

Conclusion

It is clear then, that from fifth-century Syria to modern academia, Simeon's singular character and ascetic practice have commanded attention and demanded interpretive response. It has been shown, for instance, how both his religious and civil contemporaries incorporated his powerful presence and example into their own evolving spheres while at the same time reshaping the form Simeon's *askesis* and his interactions with his followers and admirers who, if the hagiographies are even modestly accurate, came to him in their thousands from the ends of the earth. And, certainly, the limited nature and viability of the evidence we do have for Simeon is problematic; however, this fact, combined with the divergent methodologies of captivated scholars has generated an intriguing range of interpretations related to the saint.

The three vitae do provide a discernible outline of Simeon's career and many intriguing anecdotes of his athletic prowess, miraculous healings and social interventions. That said, they are hagiohraphies, not historical documents, and are motivated by spiritual and not factual concerns. It is not surprising, then, that while there is a definite and consistent "ring of truth" to the recountings of Simeon's extreme mortifications, many significant episodes are clearly legendary – even fantastic – in nature. As shown, the *vitae* also differ amongst themselves in tone, purpose and many important chronological details, making a collective "rationaliztion" between them as impossible as it has proven to be with the Gospels.

Concomitant with the lack of factual certainty in the *vitae*, scholars have grappled with a corresponding paucity of historical evidence regarding the social, political and religious contexts of northern Syria relevant to the fifth century. Their varied methodologies have demonstrated, however, that there are enough potentially useful threads available for creative scholars to weave together intriguing theories. It has also been especially instructive to see the extent to which the relatively small group of interested academics critically engage each other's research to clarify and inform their own perspectives. This too, perhaps, is a necessary function of the scarcity of independent evidence not being allowed to stand in the

way of examining such a compelling figure to the fullest possible degree.

Not surprisingly, Peter Brown is involved in most of these discussions. His work in the area is certainly extensive and his ability to create rich, well-documented literary tapestries from the available evidence has seemingly given him command of the field. That said, it is suggested that the most intriguing potential for further study on Simeon Stylites is advanced by Charles M. Stang. Stang engages Brown and most of the other scholars surveyed, as he attempts to conform the hagiographical and icononographic evidence regarding Simeon and his pillar to Mircea Eliade's concept of the *axis mundi*. As noted, while the results are perhaps somewhat strained, the motivation is sound and, indeed, the difficulties encountered underscore the potential benefit of elevating our search for Simeon's meaning out of the dim fog of the indistinct past and placing him and his pillar on the symbolic plane of the mythical and archetypical where their truth and power can shine undiminished. The *vitae* belong there too, since they are the vehicles by which we recognize that power, through their purely literary conventions which prioritize the truth of compelling story over the truth of biographical fact.

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Doubt & Fear: Examining the Humanity of Jesus through Cyril of Alexandria and Post Modernity

Scott Royle

Introduction

IN LUKE 22:42, praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus addresses God asking of him, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me." In Mark 15:33-34, Jesus, writhing in pain atop the cross, again calls out to God, asking, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" These uncharacteristically vulnerable moments of Jesus beg us to ask three questions in particular: Did Jesus harbour feelings of doubt and fear? Is it necessary to our understanding of a soteriological Jesus that he had such doubts and fears? How can the answers to these questions aid in developing a modern Christology?

Regarding the first question, perhaps the answer is obvious; Jesus asks politely to be spared in the salvation plan set forth by God the Father and indeed questions whether or not, near the end, God has abandoned him in his suffering. These are indications of doubt and fear in the human will of Jesus. What we will explore more closely are the manifestations and implications of these doubts and fears, how they can be used to further indicate the insistence of a duality of wills in Jesus/Christ, and how these doubts and fears might lead to a postmodern understanding of the personhood of Jesus.

In examining the second question I will answer "yes," it is necessary to our understanding of Jesus as a saviour to accept and examine that he doubted and feared. We must accept what Lucas D. Stamps calls a "*comprehensive incarnation* – that Christ assumed the full range of human experience, with the exception of sin."[232] As well, while it is common to accept the sacrifice of Jesus in its physical manifestations, the corporeal punishment is only one aspect of the suffering of the person of Jesus – he undoubtedly suffered vast amounts of emotional pain as well and the examples above, from Mark and Luke, display momentary torrents of emotional suffering in Jesus, during both the anticipation of his sacrifice and in its execution. In order to give some concrete context on historical understandings of the humanity of Jesus I will draw upon the writings and teachings of the Church father, Cyril of Alexandria, who gives unique insights into the division of the divine and human wills as well as the particular functions and capabilities of the human aspect of Jesus. Furthermore, I will examine, and through a postmodern lens provide reasons, how and why this emotional sacrifice was just as, if not more, important a sacrifice as the physical.

How do we approach a contemporary understanding of the necessary importance of the emotional sacrifice of Jesus and the significance of his doubt and fear in this sacrifice? What I propose is to do so by utilizing a hermeneutical method in employing the deconstructionist thought of Jacques Derrida to show the juxtaposition, without synthesis, of Jesus' wills in order to demonstrate that there is no absolute truth in the sacrifice of Jesus but instead a necessary division and tension. Its my contention that in order for postmodern readership to understand a Christology for their time we must do away with the post-enlightenment Hegelian model of personhood and adopt a postmodern acceptance of re-interpretation and division.

It is first important to establish, as I have below, the implications of Jesus' death and sacrifice, how emotion points to a

232 Stamps, R. Lucas, "Did Jesus Ever Get Sick?: Some Thoughts on Christ's Human Nature," *Criswell Theological Review* 13, no. 1 (Fall 2015), 76.

unique human will in Jesus, and then, finally, we can look at how the human will and death/sacrifice of Jesus is more appropriately understood in present times through a Derridian deconstruction. What makes this investigation essential is the belief I share with the postmoderns; that it is essential for understanding to do away with what we once knew only to build it back up again in a newly relatable and modern way. This holds true too for a contemporary Christological understanding, as David Ford says, "our lives need to be continually reimagined in dialogue with the teachings, patterns, encounters, and relationships of [Jesus'], and our actions informed by thinking analogically and imaginatively about his story."[233] We need a new method to understand Jesus in order to understand ourselves.

Doubt & Fear

As the gospels tell us Jesus felt fear and doubt as well as the entire myriad of human emotion. We know that he rejoiced with friends, was angered by commerce at the Temple, and wept. For our purposes we examine how these emotions are related to the sacrificial offering of Jesus. As well as examine how these aspects of the humanity of Jesus relate to a soteriological Christ whose fate is to save us from sin and who's "assumption of human weakness (such as hunger, thirst, and fatigue) and his assumption of human suffering (chiefly experienced in his passion and death) were sufficient to meet the 'job requirements' for a Savior fully identified with fallen humanity."[234]

Jesus' life followed the trajectory that God willed and it would be safe to assume that the divine will of Jesus, to some degree, knew beforehand the fate that awaited him. However, while Jesus had a divine nature, he had a human nature as well and while he performed miracles and preached, as a messiah would to do, he also struggled in accepting his fate. There is evidence of an obvious internal battle between the two wills of Jesus most notably shown in his

233 Ford, David, "Who Is Jesus Now?: Maxims and Surprises," *Anglican Theological Review* 101, no. 2 (Spr 2019), 219.
234 Stamps, "Did Jesus Ever Get Sick?," 76.

apprehension to die, despite knowledge of its necessity in carrying out the fulfillment of the God's promise to humanity. This is, perhaps, the clearest indication and culmination for evidence for the existence of a human will in Jesus. If he had been a solely divine being, there would be no apprehension but instead an unquestioned carrying-out of celestial duties.

We can posit therefore that Jesus both did and did not want to die. In examining whether Jesus was a "martyr-prophet" in the Jewish tradition, Paul E. Davies says,

Within the larger framework of a suffering prophet's career he could still hope to see some different outcome, some other issue and way of fulfillment of this destiny. Jesus did not control the forces of opposition that occasioned his suffering, and it follows that the outcome remained uncertain almost to the end.[235]

Jesus had a fate, a divine plan perhaps not fully revealed to him, that was hard for the human will to accept. This is the real suffering of Jesus; the internal battle to reconcile these two wills that were at times in harmony and at other times in discord. In essence, when Jesus asks for the "cup to be taken from him" he is saying "really, does this really have to happen to me?" This points to the uniqueness of the human condition and the negotiation any individual may undergo in accepting the difficulties of life, as Rachel Erdman states, "Christ did not suffer any punishment that every other human does not suffer."[236] What this points to more is that Jesus shares in this undesirable aspect of humanity, accepts this fate on our behalf, and, whats more, is placed as a guide for such occasions. Humanity is there with Jesus as "Jesus is also sent into the darkness, conflict, evil, suffering, and death" and we are left to ask "what does it mean to be sent into darkness like him?"[237]

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235 Davies, Paul E., "Did Jesus Die as a Martyr-Prophet," *Biblical Research* 19 (1974), 46.

236 Erdman, Rachel, "Sacrifice as Satisfaction, Not Substitution: Atonement in the Summa Theologiae," *Anglican Theological Review* 96, no. 3 (Sum 2014), 467.

237 Ford, "Who is Jesus Now?," 223.

This idea, of Christ's emotional battle, is taken up in the book *The Last Temptation of Christ* by Nikos Kazantzakis and the film version based on the novel. The final temptation that the book alludes to displays a fictional account of Jesus being spared his life on the cross by who he believes to be an angel of God but is, in fact, Satan. Jesus lives a full life and has wives and children but still in the end, when the truth of the trick of the temptation is revealed, Jesus begs to be placed back as the sacrifice and in doing so fulfills his divine destiny. The unique quality of this film is that it explores the emotional temptation that Jesus undoubtedly felt which was the impetus for his asking God to spare him. While Kazantzakis' book decides to frame this story as a diabolic trick it displays a truly human side to Jesus that is relatable and can inform a modern Christology, all from the perspective of a temptation to be wholly human. So, how then can Jesus have been tempted, in a fiction or in Gospel, but that temptation not in itself be a sin? John Knox explores this question, "Jesus, when he was tempted did not *consent* to sin, did not succumb to its enticements. But, we may ask, can temptation be real if sin itself is not in some sense or measure already present?" and "can we, then, think of Jesus as tempted – and moreover tempted in all respects as we are – and yet as not knowing from within the existential meaning of human sinfulness?"[238]

Sacrifice

The sacrifice of Jesus is that he gave his life in exchange for the exoneration of sin. He took upon himself the "sins of the world" and, in carrying this load for them, baptized humanity anew so that they may worship and go forth with the promise of the redemption of further sins, if petitioned. Erdman says on this, that "Jesus' death was not a punishment he endured in our place; it was a freely offered sacrifice of obedience to restore a relationship broken by human sin, which had prevented us from being in harmony with the divine

238 Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of* Christ, 47.

order."[239] So, the obvious questions are how and why this sacrifice happened.

For the purposes of this paper the "why" isn't going to be directly examined past this paragraph but suffice to say that the event of Christ's redemptive promise to humanity in the form of his sacrifice is seen theologically as a necessary device to "re-navigate" humanity. Renewal and purification stories are common in the scripture leading up to the time of Jesus (for example Noah and the Flood) so it is no surprise that theme continues here, albeit there is a more distinct metaphysical quality and aftermath to the re-navigation through Jesus' sacrifice. So the *event* makes sense both in terms of historical continuity and as a means to radical change.

The "how" in the sacrifice question of Jesus is the subject this paper wishes to discuss more in-depth – how is what Jesus did a sacrifice? We understand the subject of Jesus Christ as one entity with two wills – the human will and the divine will. It is the human will that we wish to examine and to that will I will assign two deaths and therefore two sacrifices – the physical death/sacrifice and the temporal death/sacrifice. The physical death and sacrifice has long been the focus point of the suffering and redemptive components of the life of Jesus. This is the death that took what we might call the "living" out of Jesus – he ceased to breath, his heart stopped, and the blood ran from his body. The temporal death, however, took the "life" from Jesus. By that we might mean, he was robbed of his familial connections, friendships, hope, and the mystery of a life yet to be discovered. I use the word "temporal" because what was taken from him was time – the promise of a future that motivates and guides an individual throughout a life.

Treating the physical and temporal deaths of Jesus separately is necessary in understanding a modern application of sacrifice. The purpose of the sacrifice is understanding through relatability – Jesus gave his body and life for the sins of man. Adherents could easily understand that this is an undesirable circumstance for themselves or anyone else. The basic idea is, Jesus did what they would never wish

239 Erdman, "Sacrifice as Satisfaction, Not Substitution," 464.

to do themselves and that this *means* something. However, in antiquity this was understood and expressed more naturally through the destruction of the physical – there was relatability to the pain of a spear, a crown of thorns, suffocation via crucifixion. However, modernity has raised in us concerns of pain that are more focused on the mental and emotional – anxiety, depression, anguish, and woe. In order for modernity to understand the sacrifice of Jesus it has to do as antiquity did and understand it in relation to their own experience, therefore an increased emphasis on the emotional elements alongside the physical is necessary. The salient point to understand in the context of sacrifice as a device to understanding Jesus is that, "...sacrifice is the way that human beings orient themselves properly to God – they show 'submission and honor' to the divine. This orientation is for the sake of union with God – in fact, any act done for the purpose of clinging to God should be considered a sacrifice."[240]

Both deaths, temporal and physical, are sacrifices - a sacrifice is an offering and Jesus offered both his body and will to save humanity in God's divine plan. The temporal sacrifice comes when Jesus acquiesces to God's will in the moments after he asks to be spared. He asks for the cup to be taken from him but follows this with "but if it be your will" - he asks that this not happen with the understanding that his trust is still with God. A self-sacrificing Jesus doesn't necessarily like the fate that bestows him, nevertheless it is he that must, and does, accept it.

Perhaps here, John D. Caputo can enlighten us when he speaks of destiny - though we often look at the *death* of Jesus as the fulfillment of his destiny, "to have a destiny...is to be open to inherited possibilities, not a deterministic closing; it is freedom, not fatalism"[241] so it stands to reason that the death was just one possible fate of Jesus and, therefore, even if its not a choice it is one of many possible fates known to Him. The fact that Jesus accepts it is a key moment as it is the instance where the sacrifice is agreed upon. Jesus' previous reluctance is the component to understanding a duality of will and,

240 Erdman, "Sacrifice as Satisfaction, Not Substitution," 470.
241 Caputo, John D., *Hermeneutics: Facts and Interpretation in the Age of Information,* (London: Penguin UK, 2018), 79.

ultimately, the implication of the sacrifice – had his sacrifice been unprotested it would have diminished its impact.

Derrida has a notion called "the unconditional" which modern theologian John D. Caputo uses to describe a soteriological divinity, calling the unconditional "the gift." The unconditional has no precept or a priori contingency for its existence. It is that which doesn't ask *why*? Caputo says that "the pure gift does not exist" but instead "insists."[242] The sacrifice of Jesus' is the unconditional/gift - it is given without expectation of reward to the giver and it *must* be this way, as in order to truly be a gift there can be no expectation or conditions placed upon it; "the pure gift remains under the radar of our conscious goals and intentions. It sustains itself in a field of anonymity. Once it becomes visible, intentional, it begins to annul itself."[243] While Jesus had reservations, at the moment of expectation these diminished into a full acceptance of sacrifice of self without question.

Cyril of Alexandria

Cyril of Alexandria was a 5th century Church Father whose letters and commentaries are regarded as early examples of a theologian wrestling with the dual concepts of divinity and humanity in the one being of Jesus Christ. Cyril takes on the issue in a number of writings, has some difficulty himself reconciling the two natures, but ultimately does conclude to some understanding of the interplay by citing divine and human natures as "one nature united out of two" in saying "[we think of him as] one and the same individual, being as he is God by nature, issuing from the very substance of God the Father, who in these last stages of history became a man, who was born through the holy Virgin, Mother-of-God, and whom we an the holy angels worship in accordance with the Scriptures."[244] While Cyril may not have completely solved the riddle of understanding the two natures

242 Caputo, John D., *Hoping Against Hope: (Confessions of a Postmodern Pilgrim)*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 50
243 Caputo, *Hoping Against Hope*, 51.
244 St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Three Christological Treatises*, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 53.

cooperation and existence in one being, he does posit some keen theological insights with relevance to our current discussion in trying to understand a humanity in the Christology that would be applicable for modern readership through interpretation and postmodernity.

In what would become the orthodox teaching on the dual natures of Christ, Cyril of Alexandria "contended, in effect, that Jesus was human in his *nature*, but not in his essential being – in what was called the *hypostasis* or *persona*. This ontologically subsisting element was, in Jesus' case, the Logos, who took a human nature. Jesus' humanity, then, was a genuine humanity; but he himself as a 'person' was the Logos."[245] For Cyril, the "hypostasis was the source and centre of all actions and emotions"[246] and he understood the three parts of the Trinity as a cooperative unity of separate wills into a unified will. He also understood that some distinctions must be made between the wills in order to allow for the varied differences between the capabilities, emotions, and powers of these separate wills. For instance, in writing on the difference between the divine and human wills Cyril "presented Christ's human nature as deified in every respect but not divine by nature."[247] That is to say the human part of Jesus was as well regarded as God in so far as it was one with the divine nature, and therefore had to be divine, but that it in itself was not of a divine nature, but a human nature. Cyril tries to further elucidate this "one-ness of nature but separation in mode/power" by using the example of Jesus' raising up of Lazarus from the dead and providing a clear indication of what he believes to be the division of power between the two-in-one natures; "it is not the human nature that raises up Lazarus; nor, on the other hand, is it the power that is impassible that weeps for him when he is lying in the grave. But the tear proceeds from the man, the life from the true [divine] life."[248]

In an attempt to understand the emotive aspects of the human nature of Jesus we have looked at questions regarding whether he felt

245 Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of Christ*, 63.
246 Mellas, Andrew, "The Passions of His Flesh: St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Emotions of the Logos," *Phronema* 29, no. 1 (2014), 97.
247 Ibid, 96.
248 Ibid, 89.

emotion, how these emotions might be looked at in light of a dual nature, as well as the purpose and importance of examining an emoting Jesus. And while Cyril provides some answers to these questions, he is quick to make it clear that it is perhaps too far beyond our ordinary abilities of conception to understand how the divine will understands and processes the emoting human will of Jesus, saying of the divine will's interaction with emotion; "although the divine essence is subject to none of these passions in any way that bears comparison with our feelings, it is moved to indignation the extent of which is known only to itself and is natural to itself alone."[249] Cyril accepts that there must be some response from the divinity to compensate for the response from the humanity, if indeed they are two natures united, but that they wouldn't be similar to any emotional response we could relate to and would be comprehensible only to the divine will itself, not us.

What is the purpose of maintaining that Jesus felt these emotions and that they were real sufferings of the human will, no different than the suffering of any other human individual? For Cyril, the answer lies in freedom:

Just as death was brought to naught in no other way than by the death of the Saviour, so also with regard to each of the passions of the flesh. For unless [Christ] had felt cowardice human nature could not be freed from cowardice; unless He had experienced grief there would never have been any deliverance from grief; unless He had been troubled and alarmed, no escape from these feelings could have been found. And with regard to every human experience, you will find exactly the corresponding thing in Christ. The passions of His flesh were aroused, not that they might have the upper hand as they do in us, but in order that when aroused they might be thoroughly subdued by the power of the Word dwelling in the flesh, the nature thus undergoing a change for the better.[250]

Jesus' suffering was a means in which to curb our own suffering. In all things Jesus tries to position himself in parallel with the persons to which he preaches and this is no different in the realm

249 Ibid, 91.
250 Ibid, 95.

of suffering. Just as he conquers death, Jesus conquers suffering through the "Word dwelling in the flesh" that transforms the nature and becomes an example for man on how to withstand suffering through the grace of God. Of course, as Jesus lights the way he also blows away all the competition; he provides himself as an example that we can overcome our fear, anguish, and woe just as his very human nature does but also he "masters the emotion that has been aroused and immediately transforms that which has been conquered by fear into incomparable courage,"[251] a much higher standard, but no less a standard than would be expected from a uniquely divine, while still human, subject.

Cyril successfully gives us examples on how, though two natures united as one, there are particular modes of power unique to each the divine and human wills of Jesus, and that both natures necessarily make up the figure of Jesus Christ, "I would myself assert that neither God's Word, while separate from the humanity, nor the temple born of a woman, when not united to the Word, can be called 'Jesus Christ.' For what we think of as Christ is God's Word after it has been ineffably brought together with the humanity in accordance with the saving union."[252] Moreover, the human will provides a "blueprint" of sorts as to how to "suffer" as it did – with courage and faith in the Word. Cyril points to the positioning of Jesus as wholly human in his suffering as a means for us to both suffer with and find hope-by-parallel in our own suffering. These ideas are formative, and sometimes overlooked, clues as to how the emotive elements of a suffering Jesus can be re-oriented into an application toward the understanding and evaluation of contemporary emotional suffering and woe. Cyril's ancient ideas perhaps make more sense now that we have begun to regard faith, and sometimes Jesus himself, in a more subjective and postmodern way. We ask who Jesus is in regards to his personhood and what his suffering can do for me? A theme we will explore in the next section.

251 Ibid, 94.
252 St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Three Christological Treatises*, 63.

Applying a Post-Modern Lens

Viewing the death of Jesus in light of accepting that he felt doubt, fear, and emotional anguish, we can come to understand a vision of Jesus that is uniquely postmodern; Jesus does not simply ask *why* but *why me*? This is an important turn toward the individual - Jesus identifies as an "I", simultaneously separating himself from being a completely divine being as well as indicating his unique "me-ness" in his human-being. In regards to his human will Jesus is not just a *man* but a **man** – an individual that developed into a composite of interacting wants, needs, and emotions to create a unique identity. When Jesus asks God to spare his life it is not for the benefit of humanity but an effort toward self-preservation. What's more, this points to a radical human nature of Jesus in that he is petitioning God, with whom the divine will of Jesus is co-eternal. An argument can be made then that not only is Jesus asking *why me?* but that he is posing it as a self-reflective inquiry.

As I see it, there are two ways we approach the duality of wills in Jesus/Christ. The first would be to view it as Hegelian dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis); Jesus is both human and divine and these wills come in and out of activity as necessary but that there is a linear progression toward an absolute truth – in this case perhaps that the one entity of Jesus Christ is the absolute realization of these two wills' correspondence and duality. This is the basic notion of the cooperation between the two wills of Jesus accepted in the modern West since post-Enlightenment thought and is what I would describe as an "eat, pray, love" worldview – the idea that we are made, not only whole, but into a more complete and improved synthesis and version of ourselves by the balancing out of various facets of our life that come in and out of activity. In *The Stillborn God*, Mark Lilla demonstrates the influence of this Hegelian idea in post-Enlightenment Christian interpretation, saying, "the trust was that Christian revelation represented humanity's dawning awareness that the development of its own spirit constitutes the rational core of history and advances by

reconciling the divisions it finds within itself."[253] The attempt here is to continue the pursuit of rationalizing Christianity while at the same time not losing essential qualities of "humanity" and "spirit." This is the Hegelian goal of unification as it pertains to Christian religious philosophy that denotes, again, the dialectic of oppositional sides that interact to create an ongoing absolutization. An example of this Hegelian synthesis might be that one feeds their mind by reading alone and feeds their heart with a night out with friends to create a synthesis of a being that overcomes the being they were previous to these endeavours. There is a continued pattern that leads to re-synthesis over and over as the individual strives for an absolute version of themself to be revealed.

The second way to approach these dualities of will/nature is through the lens of postmodernity and where we witness, instead of a synthesis, a constant re-interpretation in order to re-understand in appropriate context; even with historical texts, in order to understand the dimensions of the text applicable to the modern reader, it has to be re-examined in some sort of a working, present context. This calls for a new approach to interpretation; "Past and future interweave themselves in the figure of the subject who, touched by past and future, is unveiled as gathering or nodal point of a circular temporality" and "this 'synthesis', always changing, always appearing, disappearing and reappearing, is figured in the 'circularity' of being."[254] This radical turn toward present context interpretation goes against the flow of interpretation generally regarded as standard throughout history, that of interpretation in the author's context, or initial readership context, because, as Caputo puts it, "philosophers in the past were more interested in the creative act than in the re-creative one, more interested in authors and artists than in readers and critics, but postmodern thinkers insist that how things are heard and understood,

253 Lilla, Mark, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West,* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 205.

254 Wolfreys, Julian, *Derrida: A Guide for the Perplexed,* (London: Continuum, 2007), 119.

how they are interpreted and reproduced, is an essential ingredient in their history."[255]

Perhaps adding the lens of deconstructionism, popularized by Jacques Derrida and here utilized by the contemporary theologian John D. Caputo, can provide us an opportunity. As Caputo defines it,

Deconstruction is the theory that all our beliefs and practices are constructions, and that whatever is constructed is de-constructible, and that whatever is de-constructible is also re-constructible, which would mean that all our beliefs and practices are *re-interpretable*.[256]

So, instead of any absolute truth we accept that the two wills of Jesus Christ are not so much reconcilable as they are in constant tension via re-(and re and re)interpretation. And that, this constant tension isn't necessarily static, nor does it point to any resolution. The wills are dependent on one-another without the promise of any ultimate unification. While this view is at odds with the post-Enlightenment idea of the wills of Jesus, it describes a very human quality to how we in fact do encounter the world; we can and do hold oppositional views that rely on no hope of resolution and it is the tension of these views that supply the object of inquiry with meaning; ie hot/cold, open/closed, on/off. In deconstruction we accept the limits of the methods and artifacts we use in the process of interpretation, as Wolfreys says, "in deconstruction, one might say language, discourse, system, institution, conceptualization, ontology – all confront their own internal limits. They fall back on the economy of determination in the face of their own ruinous remainders, which nonetheless remain as so many traces of the undecidable."[257] Therefore, we accept that these limits create a tension as no full "truth" can be attained so easily, if ever. There is no secret hidden in the tensionality but instead an acceptance of its necessity. For instance, we accept that we are both alive and going to die at the same time – while people strive to derive meaning from these oppositional truths they are, as concepts, irreconcilable; you are dead when you die and alive while you are

255 Caputo, *Hermeneutics*, 121.
256 Ibid, 9.
257 Wolfreys, *Derrida*, 30.

living and they exist in relation to one another as a tension not a harmony with any promise of an ultimate truth.

Additionally, the post-modern hermeneutic approach would be to accept that any "truth" is in fact an interpretation as there never was anything that was originally original - "There is nothing – never anything – outside or without some conditioning context or another."[258] It follows then that any interpretation is an interpretation of a previous interpretation. This is necessary in the development of understanding and so too has implications in our understanding of the suffering Jesus. While in antiquity the suffering of Jesus was interpreted on a primarily physical basis in the destruction of his body, the necessary reinterpretation in order for the modern adherent to understand the salvation story is to interpret Jesus' suffering on a primarily mental and emotional basis so as to relate oneself to this suffering, and ultimately suffer along with Jesus. Caputo says that, "an interpretation happens in the *space between* the regular and the irregular, the commensurable and the incommensurable, the normalized and the exceptional, the centre and the margins, the same and the other, or, as Derrida will put it later on, the possible and the impossible, or the conditional and the unconditional."[259] The ramification here is an evolution of the soteriological interpretation while the overall message remains the same – sacrifice for the benefit of the other, unconditionally.

Conclusion: Understanding the Personhood of Jesus

The purpose of this paper was to examine the human emotions of Jesus and how this informs us on the implications of his death. What we have shown here is that Jesus had to have human wants and desires implied by the fact that he had human fears and doubts. And that re-contextualizing the suffering of Jesus to emphasize the emotional components over the physical provide a more contemporary application to understanding the sacrifice of Jesus. If we re-orient the personhood of Jesus as that which can be met in dialogue in the

258 Caputo, *Hermeneutics*, 135.
259 Ibid, 139.

immediate person, we can come to understand his sacrifice and personhood in a relatable manner. This concept is essential to encountering Jesus for the modern individual in everyday life and as Ford says, this sort of "face-to-face" encounter:

> ...also gives priority neither to the level of systematic overview nor to that of individual interiority, but to the level of interpersonal relationships, that of people and events in interaction over time – which is the level of most of the Bible, and also most novels, fairy stories, histories, plays, films, and television serials. In other words, living before the face of Jesus gives priority to the level that is primary for ordinary human life, and especially for imagining, experiencing, and relating in love.[260]

It is noted in scripture that Jesus had emotional distress but there are far more references to his physical suffering. Are we to believe then that the psychical components of a suffering Jesus holds a higher status than the emotional and mental sufferings? Not necessarily, as we must understand that in the ancient world a visceral depiction of suffering through violence and physicality was perhaps a more accepted and relatable depiction than that of mental or emotional pain.

One thing to consider is how the idea of a person has changed throughout history. The death of Jesus has primarily been seen in language of physicality because the idea of a person was, at the time, understood more in terms of the physical implications of life as opposed to the emotional/mental. In the language of the Bible there is much more reference to "flesh and blood" than to "felt and thought." The Gospels are products of their time and, though there is a history of development of the idea of a person, it would be centuries after they were penned before the concept of individuality and personhood reached maturity. Descartes famously insisted that we are thinking subjects first and even later in Modernity we began to ask questions about our own existential qualities. These discussions were not

260 Ford, "Who is Jesus Now?," 221.

relatable modes of thought to the readership and general adherents of Christ around the time of His death.

Alongside this, we accept that we have two perspectives on Jesus, as Knox says, "There is a divine and a human ingredient in the concrete reality of Christ. The Church's memory of Jesus is the memory of a man, a *human* being; its knowledge of the risen, living Lord is the knowledge of a *divine* being – still human, in a sense, since he is still the same being, but now *divinely* human. In other words, the humanity and divinity of Christ are actually full present, concretely known, realities. It is simply a fact about us as Christians that we both look *back* to Jesus and look *up* to him."[261] So, while we can accept the "two natures in one" we can also come to view two aspects of Jesus in one; historical and transcendent – Jesus Christ is both a figure of antiquity as well as being free from the constraints of temporality. While this may seem like a paradox, it perhaps figures into the mold of the limits of understanding alluded to by Cyril.

In examining the implications of the emoting Jesus in regards to its role in the salvation plan we find it not only present, but necessary. I would go as far as to say that it is the shift in focus needed to represent a soteriological Jesus in our postmodern age. If there is no sacrifice of will the sacrifice of the body is deemed merely ornamental. Jesus had to want to not die, he had to want for a future, and he had to second-guess his participation in the divine will of the Father in order to truly be participating in the sacrifice. The sacrifice of desire in favour of faith in a divine plan, that he perhaps did not fully understand, is the true sacrifice of Jesus. Moreover, if we adopt a deconstructionist view we understand two important points:

1. Things can, and do, exist in opposition, division, and tension without the hope or goal of reconciliation. The hope is, rather, that we can understand fully each concept in relation to these tensions, not necessarily to overcome these tensions, in search of a more encompassing or absolute truth.

2. The process of interpretation is not static but compounding, dissolving, reimagined, and always in flux. What we accept now as

261 Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of Christ*, 55.

important is due to a unique understanding informed by our time, circumstance, and familiarity with previous interpretations. By accepting the constant re-interpretive paradox of knowledge we can more easily come to understand the importance of issues such as the suffering of Jesus for our own benefit and application. Caputo speaks of this constant process of learning as an essential component of the theological journey, and in our case the Christological journey; "We seek to tweak what is already understood in order to learn something new, by exposing this text to a world that was unknown to its author, the world around us now, and, still more importantly, to expose it to the future, to which the text ultimately belongs."[262]

Why is all of this important? Perhaps Thomas Merton articulated this question best in saying:

> There is only one problem on which all my existence, my peace, my happiness depend: to discover myself discovering God. If I find Him I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find Him.[263]

While Merton was perhaps speaking from the heart here, the academic sentiment is the same – if we discover a more modern interpretation through Christology we can derive a modern application of the theology of Christ. If it is "God's will that we know him" then a Christology that realigns an understanding of the moment of salvation in a relatable means may lead to more fulfilling and applicable understanding of both a soteriological and historical Jesus. How better to know Christ than to know the ways in which he was no different than any other person.

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Matthew's Christ Collage: A Reflection on Contemporary Exegetical Practices

Gabriel Desjardins

Introduction

MATTHEW IS A PARTICULARLY INTERESTING GOSPEL. While interpreting the Hebrew Bible through the lens of early Christianity, Matthew reinterprets his Gospel sources, both Mark and the hypothetical Q. Matthew's sources, for the most part, are traceable. Scholars can see his redactional choices by comparing his text to Mark and Luke. They can also compare his fulfillment quotations, which often originate from the LXX translation of the Hebrew Bible, but this is not always the case. Sometimes Matthew's quotations have uncertain origins, which is one of the mysteries this paper will explore. It will also examine Matthew's redactional elements, which shed light on his theological motivations. Like all Gospels, Matthew's agenda is Christological—the painting of a Christ portrait. For Matthew, Christ is the fulfillment of Jewish scriptures, prophecy, and law. Matthew's Jesus is a successor to Hebrew Bible prophets and personas; he is a typological figure, a preacher, a teacher, a storyteller, and a healer, who cares about humanity's ailments and seeks to remedy suffering.

Matthew 8 and 9 present a series of miracles conducted by Jesus after his Sermon on the Mount.[264] Jesus' purpose is to put into

[264] R.T. France claims that the Greek τὸ ὄρος refers to hills, since no mountains can be found in the mentioned area. R. T. France. *The Gospel of Matthew* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 156-157.

practice his words and teachings, demonstrated in Matthew 5-7, which form a series of discourses. Matthew 8 and 9 are a compilation of narrative elements and are comprised of three miracles compilations, the first of which takes place in Matthew 8:1-17, culminating in Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 53:4. This compilation is striking for three reasons; they each present disenfranchised persons from a Jewish perspective (Matthew 8:1-4 concerns a leper; Matthew 8:5-13 concerns a gentile; and Matthew 8:14-15 concerns a woman),[265] they are heavily redacted from their sources, and they end with a translation of Isaiah 53:4. These three reasons shed light on Matthew's theological motivations, particularly when compared with their Mark, Q, and Isaiah counterparts. To uncover Matthew's theology, this paper will explore the three miracle pericopes of Matthew 8:1-16, along with the concluding prophecy quotation in Matthew 8:17.

For this task, the following work will employ both synchronic and diachronic methodologies, utilizing the work of Matthean scholars. It will begin with a New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation of the text, accompanied with footnotes related to textual variants. I will then comment on the few, but significant variants contained in the passage. Next I will systematically interpret each pericope, beginning with Matthew 8:1-4, followed by 8:5-13, then 8:15-16, and finally 8:17. I will rely primarily on redaction and source criticisms, comparing the theological and narrative differences between Matthew's pericopes and those of Mark and Luke. I will also comment on the form and genre of Matthew's narratives, since Matthew changes the form and genre of certain narratives from those found in Mark and Luke. I will then analyze Matthew 8:17, examining the origins of this mysterious fulfillment quotation. And finally, this paper will end by reflecting on the implications of Matthew's interpretation and using his sources for both exegesis and the field of biblical studies.

Textual Criticism

Matthew 8:1-17, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before

[265] Ibid, 305.

him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." He[266] stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

When he entered Capernaum, [267] a centurion[268] came to him, appealing to him and saying, "Lord,[269] my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." And he[270] said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant[271] will be healed. For I also am a man under authority,[272] with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.[273] I tell

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[266] Codices Ephraimi Syri, Vaticanus, Washingtonianus, Cordethianus, Textus Receptus, lat, sy, sa^{ms}, and mae say "Jesus" in place of the masculine pronoun. However, the *Word Biblical Commentary* indicates that this variant is not found in the best attested manuscripts. See Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 33a: Matthew 1-13* (Dallas Texas: Word Books, 1982), 197.

[267] The Cyprus manuscript and the Syriac^{s} manuscript have a different opening clause. In place of the clause found in this translation, they open with "After these things." See Ibid, 201.

[268] Some manuscripts (sy$^{s,hmg-}$, Cl^{hom}, and Eus) describe the centurion as a commander, or a "chiliarch" in charge of 1,000 soldiers. This variation is also found in verses 8 and 13. Ibid, 201.

[269] "Lord" is omitted in Codex Sinaiticus, and the Cyprus and Syriac$^{s, c}$ manuscripts. Ibid, 201.

[270] Codices Ephraemi Rescriptus, Washintonianus, Coridethianus, Textus Receptus, L, lat, sy$^{c, p, h}$, sa, mae, and bo^{mss} and f$^{1, 13}$ say "Jesus." However, according to the *Word Biblical Commentary*, the earliest attested MSS omit "Jesus." Ibid, 201.

[271] According to the *Word Biblical Commentary*, the word translated as "servant" can also mean "son." Some manuscripts omit the Greek word that is here translated "servant." Ibid, 201.

[272] Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, it and vg read "being put under authority," which *Word Biblical Commentary* argues was added for harmonization with the Lukan version of this periBiblcope. Ibid, 201.

[273] In Codices Sinaiticus, L, Ephraime Rescriptus, Coridethianus, Textus Receptus, f^{13}, Syriac^{h}, lat, and bo^{ms} read "I have not found such faith in Israel",

you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness,[274] where

When he entered Capernaum, [275] a centurion[276] came to him, appealing to him and saying, "Lord,[277] my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." And he[278] said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant[279] will be healed. For I also am a man under authority,[280] with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.[281] I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the

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which again is presented in the *Word Biblical Commentary* as a parallelism to the Lukan account. Ibid, 201.

[274] Codex Sinaiticus—along with it^{k}, syr, and arm—read "will go out," which the *Word Biblical Commentary* argues is added either for parallelism with Luke or to soften the more readily attested "will be thrown out." Ibid, 201.

[275] The Cyprus manuscript and the $Syriac^{s}$ manuscript have a different opening clause. In place of the clause found in this translation, they open with "After these things." See Ibid, 201.

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[278] Codices Ephraemi Rescriptus, Washintonianus, Coridethianus, Textus Receptus, L, lat, $sy^{c,\ p,\ h}$, sa, mae, and bo^{mss} and $f^{1,\ 13}$ say "Jesus." However, according to the *Word Biblical Commentary*, the earliest attested MSS omit "Jesus." Ibid, 201.

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[281] In Codices Sinaiticus, L, Ephraime Rescriptus, Coridethianus, Textus Receptus, f^{13}, $Syriac^{h}$, lat, and bo^{ms} read "I have not found such faith in Israel", which again is presented in the *Word Biblical Commentary* as a parallelism to the Lukan account. Ibid, 201.

kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness,[282] where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let[283] it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.[284]

Jesus Heals Many at Peter's House

When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him.[285] That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

Comments on Textual Variants

As indicated in the above footnotes, there are few textual variants that significantly impact the text. Those that are significant, however, are the result of harmonization with the other Gospels, particularly with the Lukan account of the Centurion's slave/son. These harmonisations occur with portions of Matthew 8:9; 8:11; 8:13; and 8:14. They are attempts at lessening some of the differences between Matthew and his sources, differences that are quite notable. One of the more interesting variants occurs in Matthew 8;13, which is a portion missing from Luke's equivalent pericope in Luke 7:1-10.

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[282] Codex Sinaiticus—along with it^{k}, syr, and arm—read "will go out," which the *Word Biblical Commentary* argues is added either for parallelism with Luke or to soften the more readily attested "will be thrown out." Ibid, 201.

[283] Codices Sinaiticus, Ephraimi, Rescriptus, L, Coridethianus, Textus Receptus, lat, sy^{h}, bo^{ms}, and others read "even" before this phrase, resulting in "even as you have believed." Ibid, 201.

[284] This clause has a few variants. W 700 1424 read "on that day, while other witnesses—such as Ephraimi Rescriptus, Coridethianus, Petropolitanus Purp, and Sangallensis read "in that hour." Still—according to the *Word Biblical Commentary*—the most attested manuscripts read "from that hour," which differs from the NRSV translation. Moreover, other manuscripts include an additional ending, due to a harmonization with Luke. This ending is found in Codices Sinaiticus, Ephraemi Rescriptus, Coridethianus, f^{1}, and sy^{h}, reading "and when the centurion returned to his house in the hour, he found the servant well." Ibid, 202.

[285] The plural "to them" is found in Codices Sinaiticus, L, Sangallensis, $f^{1, 13}$, 33, lat, syr, and bo. According to the *Word Biblical Commentary*, this is likely due to the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke. Ibid, 207.

After telling the narrative, Matthew condemns the "heirs of the Kingdom," which is typically interpreted as the people of Israel. In Matthew 8:13, some codices soften Matthew's harsh word, changing "will be thrown out" to "will go out."

Matthew 8:1-4

Matthew 8: 1-4 and Matthew 8:14-15 are both triple tradition pericopes. However, they are heavily redacted compared to their Markan and Lukan equivalents. Matthew locates this pericope (Matthew 8:1-4) directly after the Sermon on the Mount, utilizing the transitional phrase "When Jesus had come down from the mountain," to transition from discourse to narrative.[286] Matthew, in fact, weaves a narrative among disparaging sources by way of transitional phrases, like the one in Matthew 8:1.

In Mark, Jesus cleanses the leper[287] in chapter 1 verses 40-45, occurring after Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law and embarks on a preaching tour in 1:35-39. In Matthew, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law occurs after the healing of the leper and is not separated by preaching. Luke shares the order of Mark; however, Luke's Jesus heals the leper before the Sermon in the Plain, which is Luke's equivalent of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. As we can see, chronology is seemingly unimportant for Matthew; unless of course, Matthew is correcting Q's and Mark's chronology, but this is unlikely due to Matthew's affinity for grouping similar sequences together. According to France, Matthew places the leper healing before the healing of Peter's mother-in-law because healing a fever is rather mundane compared to the extraordinary event of healing a leper.[288]

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[286] Some scholars argue that Matthew's structure is built on an alternation from narrative to discourse. For example, Matthew 5-7 are discourse, Matthew 8-9 are narrative, and Matthew 10 is discourse. See walter T, 28.

[287] Many scholars—including R.T. France, Donald A. Hagner, Ulrich Luz, W.F. Albright, C.S. Mann, ad Walter T. Wilson—highlight the ambiguity of the Greek term λεπρός, which is translated as "leper" but could refer to any number of scaly, skin diseases, and is not necessarily what we today call Hanson's disease. See R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 305; W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann. *Anchor Bible: Matthew* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1971), 91; Hagner, 198; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 5; Walter T. Wilson. *Healing in the Gospel of Matthew*: Reflections on Method and Ministry, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2014), 39.

[288] R. T. France. *The Gospel of Matthew* (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007, 304. Note, however, that other scholars offer different reasons, such as W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann in the *Anchor Bible Commentary*, who state that

Matthew 8-9 is a perfect example of Matthew's affinity for assembling related narratives and discourses. Matthew places this pericope beside Jesus' healing of the centurion's servant/son and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law to support the fulfillment quotation in Matthew 8:17. Matthew's goal is Christological, and Matthew 8 and 9 pertain to Jesus' healing ministry, which is central to Matthew's Christological portrait. Matthew begins with the impressive feat of cleansing a Jewish leper, followed by healing from a distance, and ending with an intimate healing inside the home of Peter's mother-in-law.

Apart from the chronological differences, the triple traditions of the leper narrative are notably different, with the most notable difference being length. In typical Matthean fashion, the leper pericope is shortened from the equivalent pericopes in Mark and Luke. In all three traditions, Jesus asks the leper to tell no one of the healing. But only in Mark do we see consequences for the leper's disregard of Jesus' request, where Jesus is unable to enter a city without a crowd following him. Matthew gets straight to the point. He takes what he needs from Mark, which is the healing of the leper and the instructions pertaining to ritual cleansing and proceeds to the next story.

Though Matthew removes a lot from the Markan account, Matthew adds an important Christological title, "Lord,"[289] which the leper uses to approach Jesus.[290] According to Wilson, the use of this messianic title, along with Matthew's redactions, change the form of this narrative, making it similar to supplicant worship narratives, which is as follows: "The man: (1) approaches Jesus, (2) bows down before him… (3) makes a petition after addressing Jesus as "Lord" … and (4) has his petition granted."[291]

If Wilson's analysis is correct, Christ is portrayed in this pericope as a living temple, and this has some intriguing implications. According to scholarly consensus, Matthew is a post-70 CE composition. If this is the case, then the portrayal of Christ as a new

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Matthew likely placed this pericope first to demonstrate Jesus' attitude before the law, thereby indicating that Jesus practices what he preaches. See Albright and Mann, 94.

[289] This title is also found in Luke.

[290] According to France, this does not necessarily relate to Jesus' divinity. For him, the leper could have used the term in a "socially conventional way." However, France still recognizes that Matthew intends for us to see more in this term than whatever was implied by the leper. See France, 303.

[291] Wilson, 43.

temple could provide a means for the Matthean community to replace their temple, which was destroyed by the Romans.[292] Either way, this portrayal is in line with Matthew's Christological scheme; Christ supplants and succeeds what came before him; he is the new Moses; he brings a new law; and he replaces the temple.

In light of this understanding, Jesus' healing of the leper is striking, since he touches the leper, who is unclean by the standards of Leviticus 13-14.[293] In fact, unclean persons who enter the temple tabernacle were said to "die in their uncleanness" (Leviticus 15:31 NRSV). If Jesus is the new temple, he is a temple that even lepers can approach, because it is by approaching Jesus that their leprosy is cleansed.[294] Still, Jesus tells the leper to see the priest and offer the necessary gifts for the ritual cleansing prescribed in Leviticus 14, thereby fulfilling what Jesus promised in Matthew 5:17—that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it.

Matthew 8:5-13

Matthew 8:5-13 is the only Q healing story.[295] It is also found in Luke 7:1-10 and possibly in John 4:45-53. This narrative is heavily redacted, emphasizing Matthew's theology. Comparisons can be drawn between this pericope and that of the leper.

First, this narrative is located within the healing triad of Matthew 8:1-17. Unlike with the leper, Jesus does not touch the Gentile.[296] The same is true of another encounter of Matthew's Jesus with a Gentile, the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28, whose faith—like that of the Centurion—astonishes Jesus. In both narratives, Jesus grants the request of a Gentile, who beseeches him on behalf of someone else. In response, Jesus heals the centurion's servant/son and

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[292] It is worth mentioning that many scholars question the consensus, arguing for a pre-70 CE composition. The leading scholar in this movement is R. H. Gundry; however, many scholars sit on the fence, recognizant that we can never be certain of the exact composition date. See R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 599-609; France, 18-19; Hadner, Ixxiv- Ixxv.

[293] France notes that no other disease carried stigma like leprosy, since the leper was forbidden from partaking in "normal life and worship." See France, 305.

[294] Hagner notes that Matthew has removed the Markan "for your purification" (Mark 1:44). For Hagner, this indicates that is Jesus who has cleansed the leper. Thus, the cleansing rituals are for ritualistic purposes and not necessarily for purification. See Hagner, 197.

[295] See Ibid, 202.

[296] Luz says that Jesus does not go to the centurion's home because Matthew wants to show that Jesus is concerned with the law. See Luz, 10.

the Canaanite woman's daughter at a distance.[297]

Though most translations have Jesus saying that he will go to the centurion's home to heal the boy/servant, some scholars argue that the Greek first personal pronoun Ἐγὼ is used here in its emphatic position, making the phrase a question ("Should *I* go to your home?").[298] Instead of saying he will go to the centurion's home, Jesus asks in such a way as if to imply that a Jew should not approach the home of a Gentile.[299]

Notice also that both characters approach Jesus by calling him κύριος, or Lord, the first being a Jew and the second being a Gentile. Here both Jews and Gentiles see Jesus as Lord. The leper calls Jesus "Lord" once, and the Gentile calls him "lord' twice. For the leper, the term alludes to Christ's status as a living temple, but for the Centurion it points to Christ's authority over sickness, lending itself to the centurion's allegory about commanding servants and soldiers. This same title is mentioned one chapter earlier, in Jesus' warning that not everyone who says "Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7:21 NRSV), which ties into the concluding dialogue of Matthew 8:5-13, where Jesus declares that many "will come from the east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11 NRSV), while declaring that the "heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness" (Matthew 8:12 NRSV).

The heirs of the Kingdom are typically identified as the children of Israel, or the Jews. If this is the case, it lends further credence to Matthew's apparent anti-Judaism, which is such that some scholars declare Matthew both the most knowledgeable about Judaism and the most anti-Judaic.[300] However, Wilson argues that those who will come from "the East and the West" (Matthew 8:11 NRSV), are not just Gentiles; he argues that this includes both Jews and Gentiles, since this phrase is used to describe diaspora Jews in the Hebrew

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[297] According to France, the healing of centurion's slave/son is "atypical" due to the racial implications of a Jew healing a Gentile, and more so if the centurion's request really is for a Gentile slave. See France, 314.

[298] Ulrich Luz. 8; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. (London:T&T Clark, 1991), 2:21-22; and France, 312-313.

[299] France notes that the phrasing of this as a question fits with the centurion's comment about being unworthy to have Jesus come to his home. See France, 313.

[300] Michel Desjardins. *Peace, Violence and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 102; Mordechai Bibliowicz. *Jews and Gentiles in the Early Jesus Movement* (New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2013), 49.

Bible.[301] This would then fit with Matthew's eschatological scheme found in Matthew 19:28, which incorporates Jews who follow Jesus into the future Kingdom of God.

Now, let us turn to another anti-Judaic Gospel, the Gospel of John, which has a strikingly similar pericope in John 4:45-53. Since John shares no direct connections with the Synoptic Gospels, this similar pericope has led some scholars to see it as an independent source of the narrative found in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10. Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the Johannine version and the Q version.[302] In Q, the story concerns a centurion, while the Johannine version concerns a royal official. Still, in both versions, Jesus heals from a distance, and a similar phrase is used to describe the time that the healing took place—the two phrases being "in that hour" for Matthew (8:13), and "this was the hour" for John (4:53).

Scholars also highlight a second similarity at least between Matthew and John. This connection concerns the Greek terms used to describe the person being healed. In John, the term used is υἱός, which means "son or male human offspring." In Luke, the term used is δοῦλος, which means "slave." Clearly, there is a difference between a son and a slave. However, in Matthew, the term used is παῖς, which is an ambiguous term that could mean "child, boy, girl, or slave."[303] This ambiguity has led some scholars to see a connection between Matthew and John, adding further evidence that John 4:46-54 is an independent source of Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10. Nonetheless, it should be noted that few scholars are fully convinced.[304]

Matthew and Luke have their own fair share of differences. Luke contains an entire section absent from Matthew. In Luke, the Centurion's servants ask Jesus to heal the servant on the centurion's behalf, whereas in Matthew the centurion asks Jesus himself. In Luke, Jesus is traveling to the centurion's home, while in Matthew this is not the case. Luke's pericope ends with Jesus declaring his amazement,

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[301] Wilson offers Psalm 107:3; Isaiah 43:5; Zechariah 8:7 as examples. See Wilson, 61.

[302] In fact, due to these differences, Luz says that John "contributes nothing to the reconstruction of the history of the tradition." See Luz, 9.

[303] Ulrich Luz points out that Matthew uses δοῦλος for slave in verse 9, and that Matthew has already used παῖς to unambiguously refer to a child; therefore, for Luz, Matthew uses παῖς in this passage to mean son." See Ibid, 10.

[304] Luz, for instance states that John 4:46-53 contributes "nothing to the reconstruction of the history of the tradition. Ibid, 9.

stating "not even in Israel have I found such faith." Luke concludes by stating that the centurion's slave has been healed (Luke 7:9-10 NRSV). Matthew, on the other hand, has Jesus offering a rebuke. This added dialogue, however, is found in Luke 13:28-29 in a completely different context. In Luke, the dialogue is used in response to someone asking Jesus about salvation.[305] This displacement shows two things: (1) Matthew is not concerned with preserving the sequence of his sources, and (2) Matthew's version emphasizes different aspects than those emphasized by Luke.

Matthew, in fact, changes the form of his narrative, emphasizing the dialogue more than the narrative. According to Luz, the healing is secondary to the dialogue. Luz labels this narrative a mixture between an apophthegm and a miracle story, highlighting that Jesus turns from the centurion to the crowd to illustrate a point.[306] Matthew's Jesus uses the centurion's faith as an opportunity to speak of the Kingdom. Wilson notes that the evangelist reformulates the Q narrative, which is now similar to a pronouncement story, indicated by his opening words to the crowd "Truly I say to you…" (Matthew 8:10 NRSV).[307]

Matthew is not concerned with the preservation of his sources in their original form. He readily takes bits and pieces from his sources, as seen in his reconfiguration of this Q narrative.[308] Matthew focusses the narrative on the aspects he sees as vital to his theological agenda, particularly the centurion's faith. He does this to illustrate a lesson to the crowd, pertaining to the Kingdom of heaven, namely that the gates are open to all who follow Christ—both to Jews and Gentiles.

Matthew 8:14-16

In contrast to the previous pericope, this one centers entirely on narrative; there is, in fact, no dialogue. Also, in this pericope Matthew 8:1-17 forms a narrative progression; Jesus moves from the road (the leper) to the city (the centurion) to a home (Peter's mother-in-law). And if we continue Wilson's idea of Christ as the living temple, we see an interesting parallel with the physical temple. The temple went from the road with Israel (Exodus 25-30), to the city of Jerusalem (1 Kings 6), and now the temple comes to the intimacy of

[305] Luz states that Luke retains the original Q sequence, and Matthew deviates from it. See Ibid, 9.
[306] Ibid, 8.
[307] Wilson, 58; and Hagner, 202.
[308] Luz theorizes that Matthew had a scrap pile from his sources that he used whenever needed. Luz, 5.

our homes through the person of Jesus.[309]

The concept of home is quite important in this passage. France suggests that Peter's home was likely somewhere Jesus lodged regularly while in Capernaum.[310] This home may have also been a common meeting point for early Christians. It was a first-century BCE building that was re-discovered by Franciscans, having since gained archaeological support as the house of Peter. Note also that the healing summary in verse 16 states that people came to Jesus, and Jesus has not changed location, so presumably Jesus is healing from Peter's home.[311]

Like with the preceding pericopes, Matthew streamlines the narrative, compared to the Markan and Lukan counterparts.[312] First, Matthew remove's Mark's transitional phrase, "As soon as they had left the synagogue" (Mark 1:29 NRSV), since it no longer fits the context. Luke, on the other hand, maintains the transition from synagogue to Peter's home. Both Matthew and Luke remove the mentioned disciples in Mark—James and John—focussing the narrative entirely on Peter, his mother-in-law, and Jesus. However, Luke maintains the Markan pronoun αὐτοῖς (third person plural, masculine & dative) in Luke 4:39, where Peter's mother-in-law serves Jesus and the disciples after being healed. But Matthew replaces αὐτοῖς with αὐτῷ (third person plural, masculine & dative, referring strictly to Jesus. Returning to the textual variants, we see that this passage contains variants related to this pronoun. Some witnesses replace the Mattean αὐτῷ with the Markan and Lukan αὐτοῖς in an attempt to harmonize the Gospels. The term αὐτῷ, however, is

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[309] Wilson presents this progression as a sense of narrowing. Matthew narrows the story, going from a non-specific location to a specific location—that of Peyer's home. See Wilson, 68.

[310] This much is mentioned in Matthew 4:13. Which says that Jesus "made his home in Capernaum" (NRSV).

[311] France, 320.

[312] Birger Gerhardsson sees the following chiastic structure in this narrative:

a. He [Jesus] saw his [Peter's] mother-in-law
b. lying sick
c. having a fever
d. he touched her hand
c[1] the fever left her
b[1] and she rose
a[1] and she served him

See Birger Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts of Jesus According to the Gospel of Matthew*. (Lund: Gleerup, 1964), 40-41.

considered more authentic because of its Christological implications. Matthew has replaced the pronoun in order to underline service to Jesus as an outcome of Jesus' healing and restorative ministry.[313] As Wilson says, "For Matthew, all that matters is her [Peter's mother-in-law's] response to Christ."[314] This is a foreshadow of Matthew's next theme—that of discipleship to Jesus in Matthew 10, where Jesus sends his disciples to carry on the ministry he began in Matthew 8-9.[315] Matthew provides a healing summary in verse 16, which recalls Matthew's first healing summary in Matthew 4:23-25. However, as mentioned, the sick and demon possessed are brought to Jesus presumably in Peter's home, which is the same context in Mark 1:32-34, since the Markan version also occurs after the healing of Peter's mother-in-law. All three synoptics record that the crowd came to Jesus in the evening—or "As the sun was setting" for Luke (Luke 4:40 NRSV); however, as France notes, the time of day is especially significant for Mark, since in Mark this summary occurs after Jesus has healed someone on the Sabbath. Thus, the Markan version indicates that people waited until sundown to approach Jesus for healing.[316] For Matthew, the day is not mentioned, despite the shared time of day across the synoptics.

Nonetheless, Matthew differs from the triple tradition by removing the end portion of Mark—a portion stating that Jesus did not allow the demons to speak "because they knew him" (Mark 1:34 NRSV). Instead, Matthew provides a mysterious fulfillment quotation from Isaiah 53:4.

Matthew 8:17

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[313] Wilson notes that Matthew changes the literary genre of this triple tradition pericope to that of a call story, which contains the following elements: "(1) appearance of Jesus, (2) Jesus sees the prospective disciple(s), (3) observation on the location and activity of the one(s) called, (4) the call to discipleship, (5) positive response to the call." However, Wilson highlights that 4 is replaced with a healing. Nonetheless, healing and calling—according to Wilson—are associated with other points in the Gospel, such as Matthew 9:30-31, and Matthew 20:29-34. See Wilson, 76.

[314] Ibid, 78.

[315] Wilson presents Matthew 8:15 ("and she served him") as anticipating Matthew 27:55, which says "Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and served him." This is very much like Matthew, who often introduces an element to be recalled at a later point in the Gospel. Ibid, 77.

[316] France, 321.

The remainder of this paper will examine the final verse of Matthew 8:1-17, containing a fulfillment quotation, copied or translated from an uncertain source.[317] The quotation reads αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν (He took our sicknesses and bore our diseases).[318] As argued by Gundry in *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, Matthew differs from Mark in his fulfillment quotations. Whereas Mark's quotations "are almost purely Septuagintal—often slavishly so," Matthew typically departs from the LXX and Markan translations, offering something that is somewhat puzzling.[319] For example, compare Matthew's translation of Isaiah 53:4 with that of the LXX:

Matthew:
αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν
He took our sicknesses and bore our diseases.

LXX: οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται
This one bears our sins and suffers for us.[320]

There is a distinction between Matthew and the LXX translation. Matthew was likely familiar with the LXX, seeing that Mark relies on it for his own fulfillment quotations, and Matthew relies heavily on Mark. Nevertheless, Matthew chose to diverge from the Septuagintal quotation. Here, Matthew replaces οὗτος with αὐτὸς, ἁμαρτίας with ἀσθενείας,[321] φέρει with ἔλαβεν, and the entire phrase περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται with τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν.

A review of the literature reveals a puzzling mystery related to Matthew's translation and its origins. If we compare Matthew's

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[317] Maarten J. J. Menken argues that the final redactor added Matthew's fulfillment quotations, since these can be removed without loss of the narrative flow, and they appear as "reflections after the event." See Maarten J. J. Menken. "The Source of the Quotation from Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:17." *Novum Testamentum* 39, no. 4 (1997), 313.

[318] This translation is taken from Maarten J. J. Menken in his article "Source of the Quotation from Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:17," an article that I will use extensively in this portion. See Menken, 314.

[319] Robert Horton Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel,* (Netherlands: Leiden E. J. Brill, 1975), 9.

[320] This translation is taken from Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 208.

[321] Hagner notes that ἀσθενείας does not occur anything else in the Gospel of Matthew, while νόσους occurs in the miracle summaries found in Matthew 4:23; 9:35; and 10:1. See Hagner, 210.

translation with that of the Masoretic Text (MT), we see some notable similarities:

Matthew:
αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν
He took our sicknesses and bore our diseases.

MT: אָכֵן חֳלָיֵנוּ הוּא נָשָׂא, וּמַכְאֹבֵינוּ סְבָלָם (Isaiah 53:4)
Surely, he, he bore our diseases and carried our pain (sorrow)[322]

The fact that Matthew is closer to the MT than to the LXX has led many scholars to believe that Matthew translated the passage directly from the Hebrew. However, scholars generally agree that there are at least two options: either Matthew translated the source himself, or he was aware of and used an alternative Greek source to the LXX.[323] Some scholars, however, argue that Matthew's quotation is independent of the LXX,[324] while others claim that it is *nearly* independent, citing the omission of the MT's אָכֵן in both Matthew and the LXX.[325]

In any case, Matthew's translation is much closer to the MT than the LXX is. Both Menken and Gundry identify the LXX translation of Isaiah 53:4 as a spiritualized version, like the interpretation given by the Targum, where disease and pain are interpreted as vicarious suffering and the bearing of Israel's sin.[326] In place of the spiritualized LXX translation, Matthew offers a more literal—though imperfect—translation of the MT. Whereas the LXX and the Targum offer a translation consistent with later Christology

[322] This is my own translation.
[323] The two-options position is shared by France and Hagner. See France, 322; and Hagner, 208; Menken agrees with these options but adds a third one—that Matthew's translation was composed from a multiplicity of sources. See Menken 313.
[324] For example, see Albright & Mann, 94; and A. W. Argyle, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 67.
[325] For this perspective, see Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament*, 109-111; and Menken, 316.
[326] See Menken, 314; and Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament*, 109.

and Christo-soteriology,[327] Matthew's translation is consistent with the immediate context of Matthew 8:1-17—the context of Christ's healing ministry in Israel.[328]

Menken explores whether or not this translation originated from Matthew's author. He locates Matthew's omission of אָכֵן as one of the main reasons why Matthew's quotation is likely not the author's own translation, since the term occurs in the assertive sense and therefore should have been translated.[329] Another reason is Matthew's use of ἀσθενείας, which is not used anywhere else in Matthew.[330] Menken also sees Matthew's use of νόσους (diseases) as odd, compared to the MT's translation.[331] And finally, many of the words used in the Isaiah quotation are found in arguably redactional elements of Matthew, with the possible exception of τὰς νόσους.[332] Overall it is difficult to argue, with any level of certainty, that Matthew translated the text himself.

Instead, Menken believes that Matthew drew from a revision on the LXX, since Matthew's translation is consistent with the LXX only where the LXX is consistent with the Hebrew. And, as we have seen, Matthew's translation—though closer to the Hebrew than is the LXX—has made translation choices that are inconsistent with the MT. For Menken, Matthew's translation is closer to those of Aquila, Symmachus, and the allusion to Isaiah 53:4 from Ignatius in his letter to Polycarp (Pol. 1:3).[333]

Nonetheless, as we have seen, Matthew has a specific purpose in mind when he uses the text. Since he uses many of the LXX fulfillment quotations found in Mark, he was likely aware of the LXX,

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[327] I should state, however, that I am in no way suggesting that the motivations behind the LXX translation and the Targum interpretation were Christological or Christo-soteriological. They are, nonetheless, somewhat consistent with later Christian theology, especially substitutionary atonement models of Christo-soteriology.

[328] Though the consensus is that Matthew's translation runs counter to Isaiah 53's context, Rikki E. Watts argues that Matthew is faithful to the *actual* context and promise of Isaiah 53:4. As Rikki sees it, Isaiah 53:4 refers to a promise that the Servant's mission is to liberate Israel from her exilic bondage, and for Watt that bondage is removed through the healing of Israel's diseases and the easing of her pain. See Rikki E. Watts, "Messianic Servant or the End of Israel's Exilic Curses?: Isaiah 53:4 in Matthew 8:17." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament.* 38, no. 1 (2015), 81-95.

[329] Menken, 319.

[330] Ibid, 320.

[331] Ibid, 321.

[332] Ibid, 323.

[333] Ibid, 326-327.

yet he chose to use an alternate translation, because it fit with his theological and Christological agenda of demonstrating Jesus' role as healer of sickness and reliever of suffering.

Conclusion

In discussing the history of interpretation related to Matthew 8:17 and Isaiah 53, Ulrich Luz makes an interesting comment: "They [theological interpretations] are legitimate if, and only if, the interpreters know that they—on their own theological responsibility and on the basis of their own understanding of faith—are making something new out of the text."[334]

This is what Matthew does. He creates something new—a new angle of seeing Jesus—out of Mark, Luke, Isaiah, and whatever else he drew from. Matthew would make a terrible exegete; but exegesis is a foreign concept to the iblical authors, especially for Matthew. Instead, Matthew is creating a portrait, a collage from variegated sources that each have their own theological agendas. Matthew has a religious mind that approaches *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* and creates something beautiful. To be beautiful, theology should be free. In some ways, exegesis places a constraint on that freedom, albeit a necessary constraint. Freedom is most free within bounds—the bounds that protect interpreters from going too far off into the wild.

For contemporary interpreters, Matthew creates somewhat of a dilemma. It is through exegetical practices that we uncover Matthew's Christological portrait, but these methods are not what created this portrait. Exegesis, then, is useful for understanding theology, but it is not the only—or even the best—way of creating theology. Theology should be creative because theology reaches beyond the human capacity of understanding and approaches questions transcending empirical knowledge. Theology is, after all, an inductive mode of reasoning.

This raises several questions about the role of biblical studies in the myriad hermeneutics of Christian communities, many of which run counter to what the text actually says. One question is whether or not exegetes should correct incorrect interpretations. Another is if modern interpreters would have corrected Matthew if he had written his Gospel today. No matter its role, however, biblical studies is an essential component of contemporary theology, since theology has had a history of creating dogmatism, rigidity, and fundamentalism.

[334] Luz, 14.

The exegete's unending challenge is to minimize her own presuppositions;[335] yet try as she may, her presuppositions will always be there. In speaking of fundamentalists, biblical scholar James Barr highlights that their supposed literalism is not true literalism, since they slip in and out of literalism based on their need to maintain biblical inerrancy.[336] And this is true of many religious interpreters and interpreters in general, beyond fundamentalists.

In line with Luz's comment above, the exegete's role is to instruct religious communities on how to interpret texts, making them aware of the bounds within which interpreters should interpret, and at times exegetes must negotiate individuals and communities away from fundamentalisms and back to freedom. Without freedom, Matthew and most of the Bible would not exist; but without exegetical methods, interpreters could not learn—or at least come close to learning—what these authors were trying to say. Theology should be beautiful, and biblical studies should protect it from losing that beauty to the restraints of dogmatism and the dangers of unbridled mysticism.

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[335] See, for example, G. N. Stanton, "Presuppositions in New Testament Criticism." In I. H. Marshall (ed.) *New Testament Interpretation, Essays on Principles and Methods* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 60-71.

[336] James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 40.

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Eschatology and Exile: The Crisis of the Fourteenth Century

Molly E. Taylor

Introduction

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY bore witness to a variety of calamities. Poor weather hindered crop production, war waged between the two age-old foes England and France, pestilence irreparably damaged the social composition of entire cities, and the papacy was no longer in Rome, but rather, captive to the corruption of the secular world in Avignon. This substantial ecclesiastical, cultural, and demographic trauma borne by late-medieval Europe proved to be a fertile ground for eschatological discourse. Face-to-face with starvation, contemporaries drew upon biblical parallels, reckoning that the dearth of grain and produce was a sign of the Day of the times. The grotesque pain, suffering, and death brought about by the Plague not only encouraged the idea that Armageddon drew nigh, but also caused a critical eye to be turned to the clerical establishment. Rumours about the birth of the Antichrist and the birth of a quasi-messianic figure coincided with the Avignon papacy.[337] Heaven-rending storms, earthquakes, and general devastation would also

[337] Rosemary Horrox, ed., *The Black Death*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 99.

accompany the displaced pontificate.[338] These apocalyptic crises saw not only a turn toward end-times prophesying, but also worked to forge anticlerical sentiments. Catastrophes alongside a spiritually and theologically cheapened papacy rankled, thus the general crisis of the fourteenth century served as a sort of turning point for Christendom – arguably, it effectually acted as a catalyst for the sixteenth-century reformations, on both sides of the confessional divide. Eschatology and exile left an indelible mark on the fabric of the Holy Mother Church, for better or worse.

The harvest season of 1315 proved to be very disappointing. Cold, wet weather prevented food production, and this trend carried on for several more years, until it finally plateaued in 1322.[339] Chroniclers in the Low Countries reported that their mortality rate was atrociously high, reporting that it was heretofore "unseen and unheard-of by anyone then living."[340] Other chroniclers employed a wide variety of superlatives to express the destruction, recording "'an innumerable multitude' of dead, and… an 'inexpressible mortality.'"[341] Rumours of stricken families resorting to cannibalism abounded. A populace weakened and reeling from intermittent famine found itself especially prone to disease. When *Yersinia pestis* reared its ugly head mid-century, it made quick work of the denizens of Europe; by the end of the Great Mortality, somewhere between 40 and 60 percent of the Continent had fell to the disease.[342] One phenomenon that coincided with these twin devastations was the Avignon papacy, where, due to political instability, the pope no longer took up residence in the Holy City of Rome. Rather, he found himself in safe Avignon, virtually a subject of the French crown. As the successor of Saint Peter, the pope was meant to reside in Rome. Quite understandably, the deprivation of the Petrine tradition embittered

[338] Various sources recorded natural disasters and peculiar climate patterns from 1347 to 1351. Horrox, ed., *The Black Death*.
[339] John Aberth, *From the Brink of the Apocalypse: Confronting Famine, War, Plague, and Death in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 16.
[340] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 16.
[341] Ibid.
[342] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 94.

many, prompting certain prominent *literati* to turn their pen against the papacy, on grounds both political and theological.[343] It is within this upside-down milieu that the fourteenth-century apocalypse is to be found.

Historian John Aberth, in *From the Brink of the Apocalypse: Confronting Famine, War, Plague, and Death in the Later Middle Ages,* describes the horror of famine as "an apocalyptic messenger that connives to wreak its misery repeatedly upon mankind while its victims stand by, seemingly powerless to act."[344] The eight-year famine – the so-called 'Great Famine' – was unprecedented. In England, torrential downpours rotted grain where it stood in the field, and consumption of the fetid produce could easily sicken and incapacitate someone who was already greatly ailing. Indeed, in 1316, a chronicler lamented that "little grain grew that year, nearly all of it having perished."[345] The Continent fared no better than England; abbeys and almshouses quickly became overwhelmed, and good Christian virtues, such as charity and generosity, fell to the side.[346] Starvation led to desperation, and astonishing claims of infanticide and subsequent cannibalism were made. Whether or not this happened – or if it happened on such a scale – can be contested. Yet, such stories conveyed the profundity of the hopelessness felt by contemporaries; even if the numbers are not indicative of an historical *fact*, they are, nevertheless, a useful window to get a glimpse of peoples' mindsets during this great hunger, giving us a more nuanced understanding of how contemporaries dealt with such horrors. It is within the reports of cannibalism and murder that the despair that was felt may be understood. Such actions would be, understandably, last resorts, motivated by desperation. The world was so wicked – as can be seen by *actual* famine and *reported* barbarities – that it had to be drawing to a close. Horrors were otherworldly and had to be portends of the apocalypse.

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[343] Unn Falkeid, *The Avignon Papacy Contested: An Intellectual History from Dante to Catherine of Siena*, I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017).
[344] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse,* 7.
[345] Ibid., 9.
[346] Ibid., 22.

Johannes de Trokelowe was a Benedictine monk at the Abbey of St. Albans in southeastern England during the famine. He records a deplorable situation in his *Annates*: "Meat and eggs began to run out, capons and fowl could hardly be found, animals died of pest, swine could not be fed because of the excessive price of fodder."[347] When King Edward II came to visit from London, the monks could hardly come up with enough bread to supply the royal retinue. When bread was made, its flour was ground from sickly, subpar grain, so the product did not stave off hunger effectively.[348] Upon observing the desolation wrought not only by starvation, but also war and disease, the *Annates* takes a prophetical, even apocalyptic turn:

> we can see how the prophecy of Jeremiah is fulfilled in the English people: "If I go forth into the fields, behold those slain with the sword, and if I enter into the city behold them that are consumed with famine." (Jeremiah 14.18)... Entering the city we consider "them that are consumed with famine" when we see the poor and needy, crushed with hunger, lying stiff and dead in the wards and streets…[349]

The lamentations in the Book of Jeremiah seem to be widely applicable to the suffering state of not just England, but Europe at large. Bitter winters and prodigious amounts of rain prohibited crop growth. Animals had already been eaten, stolen, or dead from disease. This pattern shows itself in St Albans, as Trokelowe describes it, but it would not at all be shocking to find similar reports from Tournai or Brabant. Though not explicitly apocalyptic, the dearth was, nevertheless, a sign of God's anger and justice. In stating that Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled in England's present state, Trokelowe sees the angry Hand of God behind the suffering, dispensing divine punishment. Further signs of the apocalypse accompanied the famine, making themselves known in the skies:

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[347] Johannes de Trokelowe, "Famine of 1315," in *Annates*, ed. H.T. Riley, trans. Brian Tierney, Rolls Series 28 (London, 1866), 92–95, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/famin1315a.asp.
[348] de Trokelowe, "Famine of 1315."
[349] Ibid.

"comets, showers of scarlet light resembling blood, and a lunar eclipse" all foretold of the end of the world, which began with starvation.[350] Starvation, however, was not the only disaster to come.

Our word 'plague' comes from the Latin term *plaga*, meaning 'blow' or 'strike.'[351] Humanity was buffeted by the terrible blows of God, in the form of pestilence. In an effort to understand the cause of their suffering, many contemporaries surmised that these heavenly strikes were incurred by fault of humanity's inherent fallen nature; God's judgment was harsh upon those who were "'wallowing in the mire of manifold wickedness… drowning in a sea of depravity.'"[352] Punishment by way of pestilence was not a novel idea whatsoever. This was, for all intents and purposes, an example of the awesome horror of divine retribution. Indeed, "anything so deadly and so parallel to the pangs of Judgment Day had to have an unearthly cause."[353] It seemed as though the plague would never end, so it should come as no surprise that people began to believe that it was, quite clearly, a sign of the apocalypse. Historian Rosemary Horrox puts it succinctly: "against this background of disaster, Antichrist's coming seems imminent."[354]

Contemporaries observed many signs of the apocalypse in the natural world, and certain groups reacted zealously. Such is the case of the flagellants, penitents who mortified and humiliated themselves, so that "'God may cause this mortality to cease and forgive [humanity] our sins."[355] While each individual flagellant may not have subscribed to the apocalyptic fervour, it is undeniable that they were possessed of a significant "millenarian aura."[356] They proceeded through towns and cities, whipping themselves viciously to atone for humanity's sin, and to hopefully appeal to God to stop the march of the plague.

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[350] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 3.
[351] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 80-1.
[352] Gabriele de' Mussis, "The arrival of the Plague," quoted in Horrox, *Black Death*, 14.
[353] Byrne, *The Black Death*, 40.
[354] Horrox, *Black Death*, 99.
[355] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 140.
[356] Ibid., 135.

Gilles li Muisis recorded in 1348, the second plague year, "that there were reportedly many storms and the air was unhealthy."[357] Storm motifs abound in the Book of Revelation; lightning bolts and thunderclaps rend the air before the throne of God.[358] An anonymous source writing from Avignon spoke of "frogs, snakes, lizards, scorpions and many other similar" animals raining from the sky in the East.[359] Earthquakes find their apocalyptic precedence in John's Revelation, as well: "When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake."[360] It was especially distressing, then, when an earthquake struck during vespers in 1349, throwing monks "from their stalls… [and] sprawling on the ground."[361] Even these dutiful monks, who prayed for mercy and protection from the plague, were not safe from God's wrath. All of these incredible events occasioned the plague, which was, in itself, sufficiently horrifying. The combination of pestilence, dearth, natural disasters, and alleged monstrous births were all glaring signs of the apocalypse.

Try as they might, the clerical establishment failed to contain and put an end to the pestilence. This is not to say that they sat idly by. The pope, Clement VI (r. 1342-1352), granted plenary indulgences to any pilgrims who made it to Rome in the Jubilee year of 1350.[362] Realising the dire situation that they were in, the Bishop of Bath and Wells in England "felt it wise to remind his flock that confession could… be made to a lay man, or even to a woman."[363] Moreover, the dying was permitted to, by a papal indulgence, "to choose their confessor in their hour of death."[364] These measures were passed because there was a remarkably high clerical death rate. This should come as no shock, as priests and monks would tend to the ill in their community. Even Clement VI supervised "sick-care, burials, and the

[357] Gilles li Muisis, "The Plague seen from Tournai," in Horrox, *Black Death*, 46.
[358] Revelation 4:5, New Revised Standard Version.
[359] Anonymous, "The Plague in Avignon," in Horrox, *Black Death*, 41-2.
[360] Rev. 6:12, NRSV.
[361] Thomas Burton, "The Plague at Meaux Abbey," in Horrox, *Black Death*, 68.
[362] Horrox, *Black Death*, 98.
[363] Ibid., 241.
[364] Aberth, *Brink of the Apocalypse*, 121.

pastoral care of the dying."[365] Nevertheless, reports of clerical misconduct alongside the pope's abandonment embittered many. Gabriele de' Mussis decried the clergy and priesthood as a "treacherous and maleficent fellowship," dogged by nepotism, simony, and selfishness.[366] They did not serve God, but themselves. These thoughts and opinions were made all the more relevant with the papacy's new home in Avignon. Deprived of the spiritual authority given to them by the city and its tradition, many saw the papacy in Avignon to be a spiritually weakened version of itself, or even an illegitimate one.

The city of Rome was no stranger to endemic political violence. However, this didn't make it any less troubling. Indeed, the political climate in Rome became so insupportable that, in the early decades of the fourteenth century, the papacy packed up and moved beyond the Alps, and settled in Avignon. Originally, the city was a temporary stay, a calm port to wait out the storm back home.[367] Yet, by the 1330s, Pope John XXII "found it exceptionally easy to govern Christendom from Avignon," and so the papacy stayed.[368] Circumstances became increasingly political. Following the papacy's acquisition of Avignon in 1348, its reputation was further wounded "by the spectacle of a French pope… surrounded by a majority of French cardinals, living in a French-speaking territory and often supporting the political and diplomatic aims of French kings."[369] For all intents and purposes, Avignon was now the seat of Christendom, and not Rome. The Avignon papacy was, then, a theological travesty; it was a corruption of what the papacy should have been. Prophecies about the assassination of Clement VI abounded, parallel to prophecies of Antichrist and a quasi-messianic warrior-child.[370] In the

[365] Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 125.
[366] de' Mussis, "Arrival of the Plague," in Horrox, *Black Death*, 15-6.
[367] Yves Renouard, *Avignon Papacy, 1305-1403*, trans. Denis Bethell (London: Faber, 1970), 31.
[368] Renouard, *Avignon Papacy*, 36.
[369] Joseph H. Lynch, *The Medieval Church: A Brief History* (London; New York: Longman, 1992), 323-4.
[370] Horrox, *Black Death*, 99.

midst of Clement's pontificate, the "plague fitted easily into the chronology of the Last Days… Against this background of disaster, Antichrist's coming seemed imminent, and rumours circulating in Rome claimed he had already been born and was a beautiful child of ten in 1349."[371] The pope was no longer in Rome, and so Antichrist, born to a whore with the Devil as the father, took up residence in that holy city.[372] These cosmic figures come to the fore with a churning backdrop of starvation, pestilence, war, and political intrigue. If the Avignon papacy was not apocalyptic in itself, it was certainly a portend of what was to come.

Many saw the Avignon papacy as a blight. Not only was it disingenuous to Saint Peter, but it was highly bureaucratic, politically suspect, and extremely expensive.[373] Indeed, "throughout Europe, the papal court was criticised for greed, pomp, and a lavish lifestyle. The political enemies of France… also criticised the papacy for its pro-French bias," regardless of the veracity of such claims.[374] Attitudes toward the pontificate began to sour. The seeming frivolity of what historian Eamon Duffy considers to be a "colonised" church, combined with its faulty theological foundations, caused the papacy to sustain serious damage in regards to its popular reputation.[375] Rome without a pope was Rome widowed, as some contemporary thinkers put it.[376] Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) was one of its chief critics, and considered it as tantamount to the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews in 597 BCE. He drew parallels between Avignon and Babylon, depicting both of the cities as unholy, ripe with corruption and the contemporary manifestation of the Whore.[377] If Avignon was the new Babylon, then Rome was the new Jerusalem, which made the pontiff's absence all the more troubling. Babylon, that den of immorality, bore witness to the Church's damnable and

[371] Ibid.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Lynch, *Medieval Church*, 324.
[374] Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 125.
[375] Ibid., 132.
[376] Falkeid, *The Avignon Papacy*, 101.
[377] Falkeid, *The Avignon Papacy Contested*, 98.

dishonest luxury. His statements speak not only to religiopolitical criticisms, but also, to the wrath of God. The failing of both the clergy and the pontiff was alienating to many, on grounds both theological and political. The Church as an institution had been considerably weakened in public esteem, but not in its strength; indeed, during its stay in Avignon, it underwent a series of centralising projects. Nevertheless, as said by historian Unn Falkeid, the Avignon papacy "effected a deep trembling of the church, in both spiritual and institutional regards."[378]

The Catholic church was deeply influenced by the chaos of the fourteenth century. These circumstances made it inevitable that eschatology and anticlericalism would meet; hunger and disease were just as omnipresent as the Church itself. Contemporaries often called upon biblical trials and tribulations to make sense of their suffering; recall Trokelowe's allusions to the Book of Jeremiah concerning the famine, or Petrarch's 'Babylonian captivity.' It was during the Babylonian exile that Israel was deprived of Jerusalem, their holy city, and it was during the Babylonian captivity that Rome was deprived of her spiritual leader, the pope. From such terminology, the depths of disillusionment that some sunk to becomes clear. There was a growth of "popular anti-papal feeling" throughout the fourteenth century, especially in countries hostile to France.[379] More immediate, however, was anticlericalism. Some felt as if the corrupted and vice-ridden clergy did little to succor the suffering populace, or that they brought such horrific punishments down upon their own heads and the heads of their parishioners by their behaviour.[380] The behaviour of the men who were sworn to God angered Him greatly. This is most strongly expressed in de' Mussis' vitriolic record of the plague's arrival.

> Because those I appointed to be the shepherds of the world have behaved towards their flocks like ravening wolves, and do not preach the word of God, but neglect all the Lord's

[378] Ibid., 176.
[379] Lynch, *The Medieval Church, 326.*
[380] J.H. Robinson, "Petrarch: Letter to a Friend, 1340-1353," in *Readings in European History* (Boston, 1904), 502, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/14Cpetrarch-pope.asp.

> business and have barely even urged repentance, I shall take a savage vengeance on them. I shall wipe them from the face of the earth… They feared men rather than God… The treacherous and maleficent fellowship of priests and clergy… will be destroyed. No one will be given rest… incurable disease will strike down the proud.[381]

The damnation of the clergy by the plague is the culmination of the impending apocalypse. Poor weather, the death of farm animals, poor crop yields, and pestilence all came about because of God's disgust at the comportment of humanity, and especially, the (alleged) flagrant and unapologetic transgressions of those special few He chose to be His shepherds. Not only do the priests act no better than the common man, but the pope himself, St Peter's successor, lived among earthly riches in an earthly city, subjugated to an earthly king. This was a corruption of the church, so it was no wonder why God was mightily displeased. Divine displeasure was seen, then, as the century progressed; after the papacy sequestered itself in Avignon in 1309, famine befell Europe from 1312 to 1322, war between England and France sparked in 1337 and lasted for 116 years, and then the plague ships arrived, destroying anywhere from 40 to 60 percent of Europe's population. For the average person in the fourteenth century, it was a logical procession of events. The seeming collapse of the ecclesiastical tradition alongside disaster upon disaster was certainly apocalyptic.

These circumstances allowed for volatile opinions to more easily foment. The thought that the end was drawing ever nearer, as well as the lessening esteem in the Catholic church (due to its inability to do much of anything helpful during the plague, try as it might, and the delegitimising nature of the French papacy), led to the generation of a general anticlerical sentiment. While apocalyptic sentiment evolved over the centuries, gripes with the ecclesiastical institution remained. As has been seen, the Catholic Church sustained serious trauma from the fourteenth century, which, when combined with the

[381] de' Mussis, "Arrival of the Plague," in Horrox, *Black Death*, 14-16.

warmongering, simony, and nepotism of the fifteenth-century papacy, created the perfect environment for the various Reformations in the sixteenth century. The potent strain of apocalypticism that ran throughout the fourteenth century became profoundly intertwined with anticlericalism and antipapal tendencies. This, along with other unrelated factors, proved to be fertile ground for sectarian ideas and changes in the sixteenth century. It does not matter at which angle one may approach the issue at hand; the general crisis of the fourteenth century irrevocably changed the Catholic church and the face of western Christendom.

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Notes on Theological Aesthetics

Steven Tutino

Fragments – Oil on canvas

Transcendence – Oil on canvas

In the Storm of Roses – Oil on canvas

THESE PAINTINGS ARE SPIRITUAL and theological. They capture in images and colors the landscape of my consciousness and the undulating waves of my soul-spirit. They are visual revelations of Spirit and the search and quest for an embodied spirituality which takes art as redemption and salvation. Art is an essential element of my spirituality because the way I live out my spirituality and embody my spirituality is through art, through color and form - in other words, through the visual. I am interested in theological aesthetics - the way the artwork is a carrier of theological meaning. The material form is self-referential, pointing directly back to its origin point, the way past theologians such as Thomas Aquinas have argued that God can be known through the things he has created - the material world in turn is a blueprint where we can find patterns and signs, symbols and clues which point us back to our origins in God. Art is a testimony to God's creation infused with the breath of life. The artist is therefore a mini-god who creates order out of chaos, whose declarative act brings forth something real, finite, concrete into human reality.

The act of creation itself is a form of sustained prayer and attention, where the entire self (mind, body and spirit) is devoted to the construction of meaning and value. In the words of Bernard Lonergan, "Total surrender to the demands of the human spirit: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be in love."[382] For Lonergan, God is the very starting point and fulfillment of our conscious intentionality. Authenticity is certainly rooted in intentionality, but for Lonergan, the end-goal of intentional consciousness is God - God is already in the fabric of our lives and everyday living – but it requires being attentive, being intelligent, being reasonable, being responsible and lastly, being-in-love. There is something inherently spiritual and transcendent about art and the creative process itself as rooted fundamentally in our orientation toward meaning and value as an antidote to nihilism and despair. Art points us back to the principle of all things. Art, as testified within these works, is about the hungering quest for an authentic, embodied and holistic spirituality. The artistic

[382] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, ed. Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 117.

impulse is rooted in the spirit, comes from spirit, springs from an inherent belief in love, goodness, devotion to truth, goodness of the body and the senses because seeing itself is a miracle. It is positive life-affirmation, attestation to meaning, value, beauty, pleasure, emotion, nobility and greatness. We can arrive at a spirituality of God by reflecting on art and engaging with various artistic practices and engaging with the practice of art-making itself to arrive at richer, more sustained ways of living.

In the framing of a larger discourse on art and spirituality, the artist is ultimately searching for God. God is in these paintings. God is in Art. Art is a testament to the freedom of human consciousness, the freedom of the human spirit, "the mysterious and unquenchable desire to know and the artistic break from the ready-made world into a world of transcendent possibility."[383] Art is an orientation to transcendent mystery. Art and the experience of art-making are a testament to our natural desire to understand and our transcendent desire to reach God. Art is a form of liberation and transcendence; it affects the entirety of the person at the biological and the sensory, the intellectual and rational, the spiritual and transcendent dimensions of human living. Art orients us to the re-discovery of beauty and freedom as supreme moral values in themselves. Art reminds us what it means to be human. When I am painting, I am an originator
of values, I am being-in-love.[384] The experience of art and art-making is one of constantly dying and being re-born, hence why "discovery is a new beginning. It is the origin of new rules that supplement or even supplant, the old."[385] In more technical terms, art is what Lonergan, borrowing from Susan Langer's *Feeling and Form*, calls "the objectification of a purely experiential pattern." In art, the experiential pattern can be the poignant experience of being exposed to the great mysteries and depths of nature, or of the sensuous, ephemeral beauty

[383] Rosenberg, Randall S., "Lonergan on the Transcendent Orientation of Art," *Renascence* 61, no. 3 (2009), 141.
[384] "Authenticity consists in being like him, in self-transcending, in being origins of values, in true love." See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 168.
[385] Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*: *A Study of Human Understanding* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 4.

of the sea, turquoise, golden and emerald-green. The experiential pattern can consist of the delight one feels upon reading a Shakespearean sonnet on a fine summer day, the chaotic tremor and tumult within one's being upon having been exposed to Chopin's Nocturne at night, or God's grace flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. But more importantly, art is a testament that everyday moments in our lives do matter; our experiences shape who we are and profoundly transform our outlook on life, hence why artists and musicians and poets translate such experiences into words and colors and through a variety of other artistic mediums.

These paintings are visual depictions of mental life, landscapes of consciousness. The first two pieces are inspired by the works of Québecois artist, Paul-Émile Borduas. Here there is an emphasis on the thickness and texture of white as the texture and landscape of consciousness itself - this layering upon layering of white as a kind of blank space upon which fragments of blues and reds and yellows threaten to emerge, are splayed out throughout the playing field of the psyche. The second oil painting is entitled "In the Storm of Roses," taken from a poem of the same name by the great Austrian poet, Ingeborg Bachmann, that begins with "Wherever we turn in the storm of roses / the night is lit up by thorns ..." It is a self-referential declaration on the nature of love and artistic creation, as well as pure elemental indulgence into the pure sensory bliss of color and oil paint as a transformative medium in itself. It is a practice of integration which requires expanded consciousness, what Paglia refers to as "a sensory or perceptual openness" as a fundamental feature of talent in the visual arts – "stunningly expansive and exquisitely precise."[386] Art is about developing and sustaining deeper more meaningful ways of living and being in the world. Out of the void of blank space, out of the void where God makes Himself known through sheer absence and silence, divine fragments and sparks of red threaten to emerge and

[386] Camille Paglia, "No Law in the Arena: A Pagan Theory of Sexuality," *Vamps & Tramps: New Essays*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 75.

shatter through our commonly held pre-conceptions. Likewise, the other possibility is just as equally valid: life, represented here as the sheer force of color, is threatened to be overtaken and consumed by the totalizing whiteness of the void and blankness of titanium white.

When I paint, when I am creating, I am on a journey, a spiritual quest for meaning and value. Like the cultural philosopher Camille Paglia, my approach to art is reverential[387] and therefore by extension, theological. Theological aesthetics recognizes the immense beauty and power of art as transcendent, rooted in that original and primal act of God's creation within the Book of Genesis. Art emerges "immediately out of the sensuous and emotional experiences I have,"[388] while still being tamed and controlled by a deliberate reflective and intellectual self-discipline. After a painting has been completed, I often take to pen and paper and express my feelings of wondrous thrill, joy, liberation and freedom. I become in the words of the poet Sylvia Plath, a "poet in rest,"[389] or in this case, an "artist in rest." It is pure transcendent bliss and I feel stronger every time as an artist and human being. Art is about reaching some semblance of the divine. The transcendent and divine are integrated within the material confines of the canvas - the painting is symbolic of the deep search for meaning and value and often points to a reality and extraordinary meaning beyond itself. It is self-referential while also a reference point to something bigger than this world. Painting is not simply an art practice; it is a spiritual practice, a theological practice of attention and deliberation, liberation and transcendence. The only time I ever really feel 'normal' and aligned is when I'm engaged in the practice of art-making.

After I've painted, I can feel that my life has taken on deeper meaning. Art and the practice of art sustain meaning and value in my life, all the while recognizing that it is a process which must

[387] Gravitahn, "The Value of Art & Spirituality – Camille Paglia," YouTube video, 14:23, December 15, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyPUH825Bjk&t=559s.
[388] nagusd, "Sylvia Plath Interview," YouTube Video, 6:03-6:07, July 2, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2lMsVpRh5c.
[389] nagusd, "Sylvia Plath Interview," 14:03-14:05

continually be renewed and reinvented: "So human authenticity is never some pure and serene and secure possession. It is ever a withdrawal from inauthenticity, and every successful withdrawal only brings to light the need for still further withdrawals."[390] The French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre remarked that having achieved authenticity in the here and now does not prevent one from sliding into the inauthentic the next. It is a journey, a pilgrimage that ultimately ends in death, where we will be remembered and known through the sum-total of our past actions. One of the ways I would like to be remembered is through my art -art which conveys a sense of timelessness and eternity.

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[390] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 110.

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Molly E Taylor is a fourth-year undergraduate student, pursuing a double major in Honours History and Theological Studies. She is a member of both the Golden Key International Honour Society, as well as the US-based Honor Society. She is particularly interested in the religiopolitical reformations of 16th and 17th century Europe. Her undergraduate thesis concerns legislated intolerance against English Catholics during the Restoration and looks at where these prejudices came from and how deeply they affected the Catholic experience in a country so hostile to them. She is also interested in the history of the pre-'Enlightenment' Catholic Church, the Renaissance, and the Jesuit missions to the New World. She hopes to continue her Master-level studies at Concordia University starting in 2021, still in both History and Theological Studies.

Steven Tutino was born in Montréal, Canada, and is a writer and painter. He is currently a graduate student at Concordia University in Theological Studies. He obtained a B.A. in English Literature and Theological Studies from Concordia University. His poetry has appeared in *Halcyon Days Magazine*, *Perspectives Magazine*, *The Paragon Journal*, and *Anapest: A Journal of Poetry Excellence*. His artwork has appeared in numerous journals and magazines including *TreeHouse Arts*, *Montréal Writes*, *Spadina Literary Review*, *The Montréal Gazette*, *From Whispers to Roars*, *The Indianapolis Review*, *After Happy Hour*, *Apricity Magazine*, *Ariel's Dream*, and *La Piccioletta Barca*. Steven is employed as a notetaker, tutor and academic coach at Concordia's Access Center for Students with Disabilities. Apart from painting, Steven enjoys gardening, reading and writing, going for long meditative walks, and hanging out at the gym.