

The Sin of Gibeah?:  
Reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 in the Context of Migration and Trauma

By  
Alexiana Dawn Fry



A dissertation submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Old Testament (PhD)  
Stellenbosch University

Promoter: Prof. Juliana Claassens

December 2021

## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: December 2021

Copyright © 2021 Stellenbosch University  
All rights reserved

## **DEDICATION**

To my mother, who always told me I would be a teacher, and encouraged my love for learning and reading.

To my supervisor, who pushed me to be better in ways I could not have done on my own.

To my husband, who would have given up anything to make this a reality, never stopped believing in me, and has sacrificed more than words can say.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores an intertextual connection of the texts Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 based on the phrase “the sin of Gibeah” through the methodological lenses of trauma hermeneutics and migration theory. With particular consideration of the impact of the Judean exile on texts not only in the exilic period, but also post-exilic, I propose in this study that the sin of Gibeah can best be understood as one of Othering. A central argument of this dissertation is that both Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 can be read as stories of migration, as writing impacted by exile, depicting the horrors the community had experienced.

In these texts, we find that the literary figures of the bodies of the women Gomer and the nameless Concubine are characters through whom the trauma of migration played out in order to make sense of the senseless for the community in the form of narratives. Yet, from the position of the authorship of both texts, this understanding is not necessarily to be condoned. The sin of Gibeah as Othering demands that the history of exile be told with all truth, with all horror, even as it calls many to account.

The importance of these biblical narratives of migration is brought into sharper focus when read also in the context of contemporary narratives of migration. The role of trauma narratives as formative, enabling the re-making experience for both individuals and communities impacted by migrating, manifests in biblical as well as contemporary stories of migration. In exploring the intersection of trauma, migration, and gender in contemporary discussions on migration, specifically in my context of the United States, this study’s understanding of the sin of Gibeah as the sin of Othering continues to point the finger at those in power, asking if we too will bear witness.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek die intertekstuele verband tussen Rigters 19 en Hosea 9-10, gebaseer op die frase “die sonde van Gibeah” deur middel van die metodologiese lense van trauma-hermeneutiek en migrasie-teorie. Met besondere oorweging van die impak van die ballingskap van Judea op tekste, nie net ten tye van die ballingskap nie, maar ook ná die ballingskap, stel ek in hierdie studie voor dat die sonde van Gibeah verstaan kan word as een van *Othering* (om mense of ’n groep mense as inherent anders of vervreemd te beskou of behandel). ’n Sentrale argument in hierdie proefskrif is dat beide Rigters 19 en Hosea 9-10 gelees kan word as verhale van migrasie, as literatuur wat deur ballingskap gevorm is, wat die gruwels wat die gemeenskap ervaar het, uitbeeld.

In albei tekste vind ons dat die literêre figure van die liggame van vroue, Gomer in Hosea 1-2 en die naamlose Byvrou in Rigters 19, karakters is op wie die trauma van migrasie uitspeel om sin van die sinnelose vir die gemeenskap te maak in die vorm van vertelling. Vanuit die posisie van die outeurskap van albei hierdie tekste, beteken dit egter nie noodwendig dat hierdie beginsel goedgekeur word nie. Die sonde van Gibeah as *Othering* vereis dat die geskiedenis van ballingskap met alle waarheid en met afgryse vertel moet word, terwyl dit baie tot verantwoording roep.

Die belangrikheid van hierdie Bybelse verhale van migrasie word skerper in fokus gebring as dit ook gelees word in die konteks van hedendaagse verhale oor migrasie. Ons sien in die Bybelse sowel as die hedendaagse migrasie-verhale dat trauma-narratiewe as vormend en sin-gewend vir beide individue en gemeenskappe wat deur migrasie beïnvloed is, kan wees. In die ondersoek na die interseksie van trauma, migrasie, en gender in kontemporêre besprekings oor migrasie, spesifiek in my konteks van die Verenigde State, wys hierdie studie se verstaan van die sonde van Gibeah as die sonde van *Othering* die vinger na maghebbers en vra of ook ons getuies sal wees.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	1
DEDICATION.....	2
ABSTRACT.....	3
OPSOMMING.....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	5
CHAPTER ONE .....	10
LISTENING .....	10
1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION .....	10
2. PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	14
3. RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH STATEMENT .....	17
4. AIM OF THE STUDY .....	18
5. METHODOLOGY .....	19
6. THESIS OUTLINE.....	21
CHAPTER TWO .....	25
THE PROCESS(ING) OF MIGRATION .....	25
1. NATURAL MADE UNNATURAL .....	25
2. WHO AND WHAT AND WHY ARE “THEY”: THE CURRENT CONVERSATIONS ON MIGRATION .....	27
a) Defining the Muddled Terminology in the Categorization of “Those Who Migrate” .....	27
b) Narrowing the Theories of Migration .....	31
c) Current Underlying “Crises” of Migration.....	33
<i>i. Politicized, or rather, Weaponized.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>ii. White Evangelical Embrace of Nationalism .....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>iii. “Securitization” or Righteous (Ir)rationality .....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>iv. “Crimmigration” in Action.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>v. Gendered Aspects of Migration .....</i>	<i>44</i>
d) Spectrum of Agency, Spectrum of Objectification.....	49
e) Receiving Migration Narratives .....	50

<b>3. BIBLICAL NARRATIVES AS STORIES OF MIGRATION .....</b>	<b>53</b>
a) Ancient Near Eastern Historical Discussions on Migration .....	54
i. <i>Judean/Israel Exile Migration Story</i> .....	55
ii. <i>An Overreach or an Opportunity?</i> .....	58
b) Towards a Theology of Migration .....	60
c) Foundational Framing for Intertextual Connection.....	61
i. <i>Judges 19 as a Migration Narrative</i> .....	62
ii. <i>Hosea 9-10 as a Migration Narrative</i> .....	62
<b>4. CONCLUDING AND CONTINUING.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE:.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>THE INTERSECTION OF TRAUMA HERMENEUTICS AND MIGRATION LITERATURE</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>1. IS YOUR STORY “GOOD” ENOUGH? .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2. THIS AGE OF CATASTROPHE .....</b>	<b>67</b>
a) What is Trauma? .....	67
b) Corrective Lenses .....	70
i. <i>Intersectional Feminism</i> .....	70
ii. <i>Postcolonialism</i> .....	72
c) Persistent Trauma, Not Post .....	74
i. <i>Insidious Trauma</i> .....	74
ii. <i>Collective Trauma</i> .....	76
iii. <i>Intergenerational Trauma</i> .....	79
iv. <i>Chosen Trauma</i> .....	81
<b>3. THE CONFLUENCE OF MIGRATION AND TRAUMA(S) .....</b>	<b>82</b>
a) Current Traumas With/In Migration.....	84
b) Can We Call it Trauma? Migration in Biblical Context .....	87
<b>4. MAKING SENSE OF WHAT MAKES NO SENSE: MIGRATORY TRAUMA NARRATIVES</b>	<b>91</b>
a) Trauma in Narrative .....	92
b) Safety in Symbolism .....	94
c) Naming, Story, Testimony as Re-Making.....	97
d) “Survival” Literature.....	100
<b>5. CONCLUSION: THE “GRITTY” STORIES OF TRAUMA .....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: .....</b>	<b>107</b>

<b>THE MEMORY OF GIBEAH, THE SPLITTING OF HER(THEIR) BODY</b> .....	<b>107</b>
<b>1. HOW NOW SHALL WE READ?</b> .....	<b>107</b>
<b>2. TRANSLATION</b> .....	<b>108</b>
<b>3. DIASPORA AS A DISMEMBERED WOMAN: JUDGES 19 EXPLORED</b> .....	<b>110</b>
a) How Exile was Remembered .....	110
b) The Community Mediator(s).....	111
<i>i. Authorship as Potential Deuteronomist</i> .....	113
<i>ii. Authorship as a Redacting Priestly Source</i> .....	115
<i>iii. A Transitioning Member, In-Between Authorship</i> .....	116
c) Speaking to Each Other: Judges 19 and Intertextual Allusions.....	119
d) An Ancient Near Eastern Context’s Potential Reception of Judges 19.....	124
<b>4. INTERPRETING THEIR HISTORY: HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT EXILE?</b> .....	<b>125</b>
a) Genre: What Way Does Trauma Talk? .....	126
b) Characterization: Who Plays a Part in this Narrative of Trauma? .....	131
c) Feminist Biblical Interpretation: Listening to Her/Their Voices .....	134
<i>i. The Main Character Who Never Speaks</i> .....	136
<i>ii. Unfaithful How?</i> .....	139
<i>iii. Can We Call It Rape?</i> .....	140
d) Introducing Othering as Sense-Making Mechanism .....	145
<b>5. CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>149</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE:</b> .....	<b>150</b>
<b>HOSEA, GOMER, AND THE “DAYS OF GIBEAH”</b> .....	<b>150</b>
<b>1. A NATURAL POLYVALENCY</b> .....	<b>150</b>
<b>2. TRANSLATION</b> .....	<b>151</b>
<b>3. IDENTIFYING AND PLACING HOSEA’S FRAGMENTED PUZZLE PIECES</b> .....	<b>154</b>
a) History’s Roots.....	154
<i>i. Who Claims Authorship of These Words?</i> .....	155
<i>ii. For Whom? Text Reception for Generations of Survivors</i> .....	161
b) Specific Histories, Memories in Spaces and Places .....	165
<i>i. Sukkoth</i> .....	166
<i>ii. Cities both Inside and Outside of Israel</i> .....	168
<i>iii. Gibeah</i> .....	170
<b>4. HISTORICAL MEMORIES MEDIATED IN AND THROUGH LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>173</b>



a) The Man Hosea and How “He” Communicates/Mediates.....	174
b) Imagery and Repetition in the Text.....	177
<b>5. MULTIPLICATIVE TEXT OF TERROR? THE FEMINIST CRITICS .....</b>	<b>180</b>
a) Dysfunctional Marriage .....	180
b) Gomer as Sex Worker.....	183
c) Gomer’s Body, The Concubine’s Body, The Communal Body .....	187
<b>6. CONCLUSION: NO ONE WAY TO DESCRIBE TRAUMA .....</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX: .....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>MAKING SENSE OF TRAUMA THROUGH HER BODY: JUDGES 19 AND HOSEA 9-10 IN CONVERSATION.....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>1. THE SIN OF GIBEAH FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF OTHERING .....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>2. JUDGES 19 AS CHOSEN MIGRATION TRAUMA NARRATIVE .....</b>	<b>194</b>
a) Her Body is Our Body .....	197
b) Fragmented Body, Fragmented Time .....	198
c) Highlighting Moral Injury .....	200
<b>3. HOSEA AS MIGRATORY TRAUMA NARRATIVE .....</b>	<b>202</b>
a) Sites of Remembrance: The Importance of Place.....	203
b) Scriptotherapy in Hosea 9-10 .....	205
c) Hosea and Ironic Self-Blame .....	206
d) Moral Injury .....	210
<b>4. GOMER AND THE CONCUBINE: MEDIATED IN THEIR BODIES.....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>5. THE SIN OF GIBEAH; SO WHAT?.....</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>6. TRAUMA NARRATIVES AND LARGE-GROUP IDENTITY.....</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>7. CONCLUSION: A NEW DEFINITION OF THE SIN OF GIBEAH .....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: .....</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>COMMUNION.....</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>1. RESISTING NECROPOLITICS .....</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>2. RECEIVING MIGRATORY TRAUMA NARRATIVES IN POLYVALENCY.....</b>	<b>231</b>

<b>3. FROM BIBLICAL STORIES OF MIGRATION TO MODERN MIGRATORY NARRATIVES</b> .....	<b>234</b>
<b>4. THE SIN OF GIBEAH AND ANTI-IMMIGRATION RHETORIC</b> .....	<b>237</b>
<b>5. VALUE OF RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>241</b>
<b>6. POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>243</b>
<b>7. OUR “AFTER”</b> .....	<b>244</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>248</b>

## CHAPTER ONE

### LISTENING

*There is really no such thing as the voiceless. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard. (Arundhati Roy)*<sup>1</sup>

*The world does not need white people to civilize others. The real White People's Burden is to civilize ourselves. (Robert Jensen)*<sup>2</sup>

*If the prey does not produce their version of the tale, the predators will always be the heroes in the stories of the hunt. (Igbo proverb)*<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

My most recent work with a non-profit organization goes beyond refugee resettlement in order to integrate our new neighbors so they might thrive in their new homes in entirely new places. Through relationships with these women, as well as the advocacy work done in both private and public realms, I get a very clear picture of the injustice displaced persons face just for wanting to survive. Although the United States would call itself a “Christian nation,” the 81 percent of evangelicals who voted for the previous president, Donald Trump, support values that are remarkably un-Christian<sup>4</sup>: xenophobia,<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Arundhati Roy, “Peace & The New Corporate Liberation Theology,” November 2004, Sydney Peace Prize lecture. Full transcript: <https://realvoice.blogspot.com/2004/11/arundhati-roy-2004-sydney-peace-prize.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Jensen, *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism, and White Privilege* (San Francisco: City Light Publishers, 2005), 96.

<sup>3</sup> Igbo proverb in Chigozie Obioma, *An Orchestra of Minorities* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2019), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory A. Smith and Jessica Martinez, “How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis,” Pew Research Center, November 9, 2016: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>.

<sup>5</sup> “President Trump Issues Executive Orders Suspending Refugee Program and Barring Entry by Individuals from Specified Countries,” *American Journal of International Law* 111/3 (2017): 764-776. doi:10.1017/ajil.2017.55. See also: David Bier, “Trump Cut Muslim Refugees 91%, Immigrants 30%, Visitors by 18%,” *CATO Institute*, December 7, 2018: <https://www.cato.org/blog/trump-cut-muslim-refugees-91-immigrants-30-visitors-18>.

racism,<sup>6</sup> and misogyny.<sup>7</sup> While finishing a Master of Divinity in an evangelical seminary called Grand Rapids Theological Seminary and working in local church education at the time of the election and afterwards, I witnessed biblical illiteracy and blatant misuse of Scripture to perpetuate these ideologies that made the high percentage of Christ followers supporting that administration explainable.

The number of refugees allowed in the United States was at a record low with discriminatory policies on the kind of person worthy to enter in the eyes of the Trump administration.<sup>8</sup> While many hoped that these policies would be abolished quickly after the inauguration of new president, Joseph Biden, those promises have been made and continuously broken, with Biden on track to beat our records for deportation in the half year he has been leading. Those who do seek asylum, which is legal, are abused here in the United States,<sup>9</sup> further perpetuating the already dangerous situation that besets vulnerable women and children who migrate to the “land of the free.” I believe it is necessary to advocate for the refugee, and I see similar circumstances that depict what happens when these ideologies go unchecked in the Hebrew Bible, more specifically, in Judges 19, a “text of terror.”<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Brian F. Schaffner, “Follow the Racist? The Consequences of Trump’s Expressions of Prejudice for Mass Rhetoric,” Tufts University, Department of Political Science and Tisch College, September, 2018: [http://www.ashford.zone/images/2018/09/followtheracist\\_v2.pdf](http://www.ashford.zone/images/2018/09/followtheracist_v2.pdf). See also: Ayal Feinberg, Regina Branton, and Valerie Martinez-Ebers, “Counties that hosted a 2016 Trump rally saw a 226 percent increase in hate crimes,” *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2019: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/22/trumps-rhetoric-does-inspire-more-hate-crimes/?utm\\_term=.af9e82ba41fe](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/22/trumps-rhetoric-does-inspire-more-hate-crimes/?utm_term=.af9e82ba41fe).

<sup>7</sup> William Benoit, “Image Repair on the Donald Trump ‘Access Hollywood’ Video: Grab them by the P\*ssy,” *Communication Studies* 68/3 (June, 2017): 243-259. See also: Alexander Burns, Maggie Haberman, and Jonathan Martin, “Donald Trump Apology Caps Day of Outrage Over Lewd Tape,” *The New York Times*, October 7, 2016: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/08/us/politics/donald-trump-women.html?module=inline>. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/08/us/donald-trump-tape-transcript.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Trump Administration Ends Participation in Global Compact on Migration, Citing Concerns Regarding U.S. Sovereignty,” *American Journal of International Law* 112/2 (2018): 311-313. doi:10.1017/ajil.2018.36. See also: Michele Kelemen, “White House to Cap the Number of Refugees Allowed Into the U.S.,” *NPR*, September 18, 2018: <https://www.npr.org/2018/09/18/649060370/white-house-to-cap-the-number-of-refugees-allowed-into-the-u-s>, as well as most recently: RAI0, “Credible Fear of Persecution and Torture Determinations,” April 30, 2019: <https://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com/gfx/mkt/11/10239/10146/2019%20training%20document%20for%20asylum%20screening%20s.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Angelika Albaladejo, “Care and the Caravan: The Unmet Needs of Migrants Heading for the US,” *BMJ* 363, December 19, 2018: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k5315>. See also: Camilo Montoya-Galvez, “Thousands of Migrant Children Were Sexually Abused in U.S. Custody, HHS Docs Say,” *CBS News*, February 27, 2019: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/thousands-of-migrant-children-were-sexually-abused-in-u-s-custody-hhs-docs-say/?ftag=CNM-00-10aab7e&linkId=64101296>.

<sup>10</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984), 6.

Judges 19 concerns a Levite and his Concubine who are looking for a place to stay at nightfall. They pass foreign cities and decide to stay in Gibeah, an Israelite city, because it promises safety. Yet, as Havilah Dharamarj notes, the sexual sin and trauma does not originate from foreign “others,” it occurs within the walled city of Gibeah. As in Genesis 19, men surround the house, demanding to have sex with the foreigner. There is a direct link to Genesis 19, so much so that 69 words are identical.<sup>11</sup> However, whereas the men (and Lot’s daughters) inside Lot’s house in Genesis 19 are saved, in Judges 19, the Levite’s Concubine is handed over to the belligerent men of Gibeah, gang raped and abused. She has no voice or agency in the passage. The Levite responds by bringing her body back to Ephraim, cutting it into twelve pieces, and sending the pieces to the twelve tribes of Israel. It is unclear when she dies in the passage, before or after the dismemberment, making this passage one that lives up to its terrible nickname as one of the “Texts of Terror.”

Meanwhile, the text in Hosea 9-10 mentions this particular place of Gibeah twice. Hosea does not reference the rape and dismemberment in Judges 19, but does mention the “sin of Gibeah” (Hos. 9:9) and the “days of Gibeah” (Hos. 9:9; 10:9-10). Parallels between Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 extend beyond place names. Both texts deal with abuse of wives at the hands of their husbands, as Hosea’s actions follow similar patterns to men who abuse their wives. However, beyond treating women as mere property, both Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 can be viewed as stories of migration. While there are many differences between these two texts, differences that span not only content as well as genre, the intersection of trauma and migration that form an important lens for this study, ties these two narratives together. If both these texts are aware of a particular “sin of Gibeah,” then what is it? This study will work to answer this question by focusing on these two passages, which even though exhibiting distinct differences, yet are clearly linked through this phrase.

Trauma is never simply personal. It has effects that ripple to the wider community, faith community, and even into the literary and social fabric. Even in a basic reading of the Hebrew Bible, it is easy to see that the Israelites depicted and experienced trauma. Eve-Marie Becker, in her own

---

<sup>11</sup> Havilah Dharamarj, “Judges,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary* (Rajasthan: Open Door Publications, 2015), 326.

reflection on reading and interpreting Scripture through trauma hermeneutics, says, “‘trauma and traumatization’ can clearly—beyond mere reflections on autobiography—have a stimulating effect on literature and literary history.”<sup>12</sup> Trauma clearly affected literature both during and post-Holocaust,<sup>13</sup> the interpretations of explaining the traumatic experience differing widely depending on the culture. Jeffrey Alexander, in his study of Holocaust literature, writes: “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.”<sup>14</sup> Frank Ames agrees, arguing that through the cascading effects of loss by forced migration, a key distinguishing marker of what is a trauma-inducing event, “displacement alters the identities of individuals and, over time, the corporate identities of communities.”<sup>15</sup> Alexander goes on to discuss how identity re-making happens through “community leaders who interpret events to their followers with socially-mediated attribution.”<sup>16</sup> When this is applied to Scripture (and particularly to these trauma narratives), the authors of the texts are community leaders and the primary meaning-makers and interpreters of what has been experienced.

The authors of Hosea and Judges were these “community leaders” who made sense of what happened in their context, interpreting through both poetry and narrative respectively. While the history of origin is complex, I assume and will argue that the information they relayed to the peoples around them references the trauma of the war and exile of Israel, and later, of Judah. When applying the hermeneutics of trauma to these passages, the text is reframed to aid in not only understanding Israelite political realities, but also understanding how Israel and Judah chose to narrate their displacement. As migrants, refugees, and victims, the people of Israel and Judah were “broken spirits.”<sup>17</sup> Reading these

---

<sup>12</sup> Eve Marie Becker, “Trauma Studies and Exegesis,” in *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* (Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Yael Daneli, *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York: Plenum Press, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Jeffery C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (New York: Polity Press, 2012), 6.

<sup>15</sup> Frank Ritche Ames, “Forced Migration and the Visions of Zechariah 1-8,” in *The Prophets Speak on Forced Migration* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 155.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander, *Trauma*, 13.

<sup>17</sup> John P. Wilson, “The Broken Spirit: Posttraumatic Damage to the Self,” in *Broken Spirits: The Treatment of Traumatized Asylum Seekers, Refugees, War and Torture Victims* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), 110.

passages through the lens of migration studies and trauma can contribute to a more thorough understanding of these texts in a way that has not been studied before. The exploration of these passages will further intertwine migration studies and trauma, as Judges 19 depicts itself as “survival art” in a post-exilic context.<sup>18</sup>

If trauma is not only to be named and relived but also recovered from collectively and personally, the starting point is narrative. Recovery from trauma involves a step Herman calls “reconstructing the trauma narrative,”<sup>19</sup> which entails an active remembrance and mourning.<sup>20</sup> As I have learned through my work with those whom we call “New Americans,”<sup>21</sup> even when we create safe spaces for refugees in the progressively hostile context of North America, many still struggle to share the horrors of their experiences. Narrative, as Janet Rumfelt discusses in relation to the trauma of war, offers the promise of repair, a retelling that allows victims to be “no longer frozen in time.” Narrating past trauma to make sense of the present involves a transformation of the beliefs of the past,<sup>22</sup> both by “desymbolizing and symbolizing” the trauma.<sup>23</sup> Understanding these passages through the language of trauma is one way in which Scripture can be used to help those who have experienced violence and trauma begin to find words for their own experiences.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 through the lens of trauma offers the opportunity to open up Scripture by reframing how refugees may have made sense of their experience through devastating story. This reading of Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 offers a way to connect the dots between large-scale

---

<sup>18</sup> Louis Stulman, “Reading the Bible through the Lens of Trauma and Art,” in *Trauma and Traumatization*, 188.

<sup>19</sup> Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 155.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 153.

<sup>21</sup> Treetops Collective, “What We Do.” *Treetops Collective*, January 12, 2019: <https://treetopscollective.org/pages/about>.

<sup>22</sup> Kathleen M. O’Connor, “How Trauma Studies Can Contribute to Old Testament Studies,” in *Trauma and Traumatization*, 218.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Lasky, “Introduction,” in *Symbolization and Desymbolization: Essays in Honor of Norbert Freedman* (New York: Other Press, 2002).

issues of displacement as well as the trauma present in our neighborhoods and churches. Ahn and Ames note that, after genocide, forced migration is the most pressing humanitarian issue in the twenty-first century.<sup>24</sup>

This is the current context into which this understanding of Scripture operates: Sixty million people worldwide have recently been forcibly displaced, and less than 0.1 percent will have a chance to start a new life.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the 0.1 percent who actually have a chance to start a new life, face a multitude of inequities and disadvantages, typically found in the schooling and health systems of their new homes.<sup>26</sup> Their vulnerability and desperation leave them open to abuse at the hands of their employers, as well as exploitation by both the governments from whence they came and to where they are migrating.<sup>27</sup> The injustice faced by people enduring forced migration truly renders them victims, which adds to their decreased security as migrants. Although a recent Gallup poll shows that the United States is slightly more in favor of re-homing refugees from Central America, there is still a negative bias towards accepting refugees from places of conflict like Syria.<sup>28</sup>

The trauma of forced migration is compounded by the fact that female or child migrants make up 80 percent of all displaced persons.<sup>29</sup> While exile is already a complicated issue, with a plethora of push and pull factors that determine migration, Ahn states that “for women and the young, issues become exponentially more complicated, with higher levels of exploitation.”<sup>30</sup> Ahn’s research looks specifically

---

<sup>24</sup> Ahn and Ames, “Introduction,” in *The Prophets Speak on Forced Migration*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> USCRI, “Explore the Issues:” <https://refugees.org/explore-the-issues/refugees-facts/>.

<sup>26</sup> Gemma Talud Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Justin McCarthy, “U.S. Support for Central American Refugees Exceeds the Norm,” Gallup, December 20, 2018: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245624/support-central-american-refugees-exceeds-norm.aspx>.

<sup>29</sup> Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Expert’s Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-Building*, Progress of the World’s Women 1 (New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2002), 19.

<sup>30</sup> John J. Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations: A Sociological, Literary, and Theological Approach on the Displacement and Resettlement of the Southern Kingdom of Judah* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 42.



into issues facing Liberia post-civil war, where researchers found “more than half the country’s women suffered some form of sexual or gender-based violence.”<sup>31</sup> Ames, bearing this in mind and in light of Scripture and migration, states that, “conflict-induced migration decreases the security of women, though the safety of every member of the community diminishes.”<sup>32</sup> When spouses and other family members die due to war or illness during conflict, a woman’s responsibilities and vulnerabilities increase.<sup>33</sup> Migration and trauma thus disproportionately affect women.<sup>34</sup> Carolyn Nordstrom, in her chapter on “Girls and War Zones” in *Engendering Forced Migrations*, notes “as girls often represent the most vulnerable and innocent members of society, their abuse renders the most terror: society is most undermined by the violation of those considered most ‘inviolable.’”<sup>35</sup> Yet, seeing how this continues today, our society (like that in Judges 20-21) also responds with further violence against women.<sup>36</sup>

In light of the contemporary context that besets refugees, the choice to read Judges 19 as migratory trauma literature opens up more possibilities in terms of what the author is trying to show his audience—and even for another potential meaning of the sin of Gibeah in Hosea 9-10. Many scholars have tried to figure out what this mysterious sin of Gibeah actually refers to as it is referenced in Hosea 9:9 and 10:9-10 but there seems to be little consensus. Patrick Arnold’s article on this subject concludes that the Syro-Ephraimite war is what is described as this “new sin of Gibeah,” condemning militarism, which he believes is the true evil.<sup>37</sup> Robert Alter connects this sin explicitly to the episode of the “gang-

---

<sup>31</sup> Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 42.

<sup>32</sup> Ames, “Forced Migration and the Visions of Zechariah 1-8,” 152.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Carolyn Nordstrom, “Girls and War Zones: Troubling Questions,” in *Engendering Forced Migration*, edited by Doreen Indra (Berghan Books: New York, 1999), 73.

<sup>36</sup> Frank Yamada, *Rape in the Hebrew Bible: A Literary Analysis of Three Rape Texts* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 2.

<sup>37</sup> Patrick M. Arnold, “Hosea and the Sin of Gibeah,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989): 459-460.

rape” in Judges 19,<sup>38</sup> and Daniel Fleming makes a connection to Judah’s new narrative of their Saul tradition.<sup>39</sup>

One could thus ask whether this “sin” is simply militarism, land commodification,<sup>40</sup> or a narrative for the Saul complex.<sup>41</sup> The goal of this study is to provide a fresh look at these two passages of Scripture through the lens of trauma hermeneutics. Hopefully this connection could bring biblical understanding to contemporary communities on the issue of forced migration that could lead to more safety and healing for survivors of displacement and exile.

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH STATEMENT

The primary research questions of this study are:

- In what way may Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 be understood as stories of refugees?
- How does insight into trauma hermeneutics inform the reading of these stories in the context of migration?

A secondary research question of this study is:

- In what way may these two stories, read through the lens of migration studies and trauma hermeneutics, offer insight into the lives of refugees, thereby contributing to a context of greater understanding, justice, and healing for both refugees and also those who are supposed to receive them?

Both migratory studies and trauma hermeneutics are necessary frameworks for reading these passages. To validate an exilic context for the passages’ authors, I will also utilize sources regarding dating, form, and redaction. This analysis of these passages understood in the light of trauma narratives opens up not only the biblical texts but also enables the texts to be instrumental in healing for current day victims and migrants. William Morrow, discussing the coping strategy of narrative in the healing process, highlights

---

<sup>38</sup> Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: Prophets* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019), 1226.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel E. Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 144-161.

<sup>40</sup> Alice A Keefe, *A Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 220-221.

<sup>41</sup> Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible*, 150.

that “collective narratives of trauma may reinterpret past traditions to make sense of current situations.”<sup>42</sup> The story in Judges 19 could thus be understood as a reconstructed meaning-making narrative that helped later Judeans who were exiled, and refugees themselves, to come to terms with their story through the very retelling of the old folklore Sodom story. As Hosea potentially wrote as a refugee fleeing from war, his indictment in chapters 9-10 references the literary “breaking apart” of Israel and Judah, imagined as the woman’s broken and torn body by the author of the addendum in Judges (19:29)—both spirits broken.<sup>43</sup> With chronological issues in mind, one of the questions to ask is, “who is reading who?” as the study makes the explicit connection between the two texts as migratory literature.

Furthermore, this study will argue by way of application that a better understanding of the horror in Judges 19 might also help survivors of war and exile to grow in healing through seeing themselves represented in the text. In a contemporary context, the reference to the sin of Gibeah within the context of Hosea and Judges could be another indictment regarding what the proper attitude towards refugees should look like. As Ames poignantly argues: “When the welfare of outsider and insider are linked, and each has a stake in the security and prosperity of the other, ideology shifts toward extension and inclusion.”<sup>44</sup> This study would help those on the “inside” and those on the “outside” understand issues of trauma in the biblical text, with the hope that reconciliation, mutual understanding, and empathy may be the result.

#### **4. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To read stories that reflect the experiences of refugees through the lens of trauma hermeneutics as part of the meaning-making process.
2. To explore the interconnectivity of trauma hermeneutics and migration studies in Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10.

---

<sup>42</sup> William Morrow, “Deuteronomy 7 in Postcolonial Perspective: Cultural Fragmentation and Renewal,” in *Interpreting Exile*, 283.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, “The Broken Spirit,” 110.

<sup>44</sup> Ames, “Forced Migration,” 159.

3. To give voice to the one who is given none in Judges 19, so that today's victims of violence against women and migrants also may not be forgotten (Judg. 19:30).
4. To provide a careful analysis of the texts that help bring healing, awareness, and ultimately, hospitality to the refugee—for both refugees and those who seek to minister to them.

These aims will be achieved through the examination of the intersection of gender, trauma, and migration in the Hebrew Bible. Although the main pericopes of the study will revolve around Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10, other texts from similar time periods will also be discussed. These include stories such as “Sin/Death of Sargon,” itself a retelling of Sennacherib by Esarhaddon during the Assyrian hegemony,<sup>45</sup> and stories from other Ancient Near Eastern societies<sup>46</sup> as telling in terms of how these cultures communicated and shared survival literature as acts of remembrance and mourning of trauma. Not only Ancient Near Eastern cultures will be studied in relation to how trauma is processed in text, but also modern cultures, in reading contemporary trauma narratives. Our understanding of biblical narratives of migration help to read contemporary narratives of migration, and vice versa. A further valuable resource for exploring the experiences of refugees concerns recent poetic and narrative treatments, including *Ink Has No Borders* by a plethora of authors and *The Map of Salt and Stars* by Zayn Joukhadar, in which migrants themselves use language and art to narrate their trauma.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

Reading these narratives as part of a body of literature particular to a group of migrants resonates with both trauma hermeneutics and migration studies. For example, Cathy Caruth who focuses on the language that is used to depict and retell traumatic experience(s), says:

If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect

---

<sup>45</sup> Ann M. Weaver, “The ‘Sin of Sargon’ and Esarhaddon’s Reconception of Sennacherib: A Study in Divine Will, Human Politics and Royal Ideology,” in *Iraq 66* (Nineveh: Papers of the 49<sup>th</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Part One, 2004), 61-66.

<sup>46</sup> Egypt’s *Akhenaten’s Revolution*, Anatolia’s *The Plague Prayers of Muršili II*.

that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet.<sup>47</sup>

Trauma hermeneutics is a valuable tool to make sense of both Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 which, as will be argued in subsequent chapters, were both born in a context of war and exile. When using trauma hermeneutics, we should keep in mind that, though it can be said to be a highly westernized analysis of trauma and disaster, understanding the original context of postcolonialism helps to correct our already westernized way of creating analyses that ignore the deep impact forced migration has on a people group.<sup>48</sup> In this regard, studies that outline the Assyrian and Babylonian forced migration of deportees from conquered lands will be helpful,<sup>49</sup> in addition also to a clear analysis of what is understood under the term “refugee” in these biblical narratives.<sup>50</sup>

Many stories in the Hebrew Scriptures are problematic in their treatment of women, especially as it pertains to stories of rape and violence. Even as the study argues that the text uses the horrific depiction of gang rape and dismemberment as a literary tool to portray the heinousness of war and exile, the broader context of the Bible regularly silences the female voice with little to no room for her to be regarded as more than male property. Mere property-management is also a theme in migration. Oded, giving a thorough account of not only the mass numbers of Israelites that were moved from their home to another place by the Neo-Assyrian Empire, also notes how they were accounted for: “the deportees are not said to be counted as the residents of Assyria, but the emphasis is on the deportees as booty.”<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Caruth, *Trauma*, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, “Trauma and the Old Testament: Some Problems and Prospects,” in *Trauma and Traumatization*, 233.

<sup>49</sup> Bustenay Oded, as previously mentioned and used, studies on Assyrian Warfare in the Sargonic Period (*Iraq*, 25), *Exile as Forced Migrations*, etc.

<sup>50</sup> John J. Ahn in *Exile as Forced Migrations* discusses at length the wide range of different kinds of migration and, in turn, kinds of refugees, 40-41. His studies on the different deportations that occurred during the Babylonian hegemony from 597-582 BCE show the many layers at which trauma can be transferred on socioeconomic status as well, bringing up the question of “what life is mournable?” from Judith Butler’s *Prekarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. The study hopes to take all of these into consideration while making conclusions.

<sup>51</sup> Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Weisbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1979), 90.

Other stories include The Rape of Dinah (Genesis 34), and, particularly relevant to our study, the tumultuous marriage between the prophet and Gomer in the context of Hosea (Hosea 1-2). The intersection of not only trauma and migration studies, but also the vast number of refugee women who experience sexual violence, provide an additional layer to the ethical issues in both the text and the contemporary context.

Feminist biblical interpretation is thus a further important approach for this study, as it refuses to justify the twisted sexual violence and marital abuse presented in Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10. The Septuagint translation of Judges 19 goes as far as absolving the Levite, making sure the Concubine is dead by gang rape instead of death by dismemberment.<sup>52</sup> It remains important to keep in mind that the Hebrew Bible was written in a patriarchal context, and patriarchy anywhere should raise questions and create pause. Yet, in the larger context within literary criticism, the clearly problematic scenes in both passages that will feature in this study could actually initiate discussion on the value of women, hence an indictment against pervasive androcentrism as one of the key ideologies the author tries to share as entirely unhelpful for their community. Keefe discusses this concept of using the women's bodies as a metaphor for the entire social body in Hosea, a metaphor that can also be argued for Judges 19, that "rape, the violation of woman's body, signifies the violation of the cohesion and the continuity of the social body."<sup>53</sup> The study will caution against romanticizing this kind of imagery and critique harmful interpretations from a feminist hermeneutical viewpoint.

## 6. THESIS OUTLINE

This study consists of seven chapters:

Chapter One introduces the study, presenting the background and motivation for the dissertation as a whole, which includes detail on the current issues facing displaced peoples. In clarifying the current climate facing refugees, this chapter will also lay a foundation of both migration studies and trauma

---

<sup>52</sup> Ilse Müllner, "Lethal Differences: Sexual Violence as Violence against Others in Judges 19" in *Judges, A Feminist Companion*, 133.

<sup>53</sup> Keefe, *A Woman's Body and the Social Body in Hosea*, 175.

hermeneutics to show how these will function and intersect as the methodology of the following chapters.

Chapter Two will give an overview of migration studies, making the case for Judges 19 and Hosea as being specifically stories of migration. Given the issues involving the gendering of migration, feminist ethical concerns will also be addressed in this chapter. Considering the polarized views on the response to migration from the context of evangelicalism, this chapter will discuss the current climate as it pertains to the treatment of refugee peoples in order to raise awareness and create space for moral reflection.

Chapter Three will highlight the interconnectivity of trauma and migration studies, especially by using the passages themselves. The chapter will outline the many parallels between the texts chosen, as well as the overlapping ideas and thoughts in trauma hermeneutics and migration studies. In doing so, the study will also address issues found in the claims made, such as being careful to not “westernize” trauma in these texts, the political separation between Israel and Judah, and others that may arise during the study.

Chapter Four will explore the passage of Judges 19 in terms of the framework of trauma hermeneutics to see the passage as a meaning-making narrative, a literary device that can change a reader’s interpretation. Employing historical and literary critical tools, including some of the detailed historical work already done on the passage (e.g., redaction criticism), this dissertation will help to show a community that has experienced the pain of war and exile.<sup>54</sup> The interconnected tools of trauma and migration studies will be aided also by feminist biblical interpretation, especially as it pertains to the violence and patriarchal values that characterize these verses. Andrew Hock-Soon Ng says of the Judges passage in light of his own studies in gothic literature, that, “the biblical story should be read against the status quo of androcentric hierarchies, as a tale that develops resistance in the readers to such societal

---

<sup>54</sup> Susanne Scholz, “Judges,” in *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 114.

habits and customs.”<sup>55</sup> We consider here the literary connection to the pain of refugees and the Judeans coping with their brokenness.

Chapter Five will discuss the passage in Hosea 9-10 in which the sin of Gibeah is mentioned but not defined, specifically in Hos. 9:9 and 10:9-10, also through the hermeneutical lens of trauma. Gale Yee’s book on *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea* is important as it pertains to the actual timing of Hos. 9:9 and 10:9-10,<sup>56</sup> hypothesized to have been added by a final, late redactor, emphasizing the author’s situation as a victim of the horror of migration. Yet, in light of the fact that the whole of Hosea takes place in a traumatic moment in Israel’s history,<sup>57</sup> the conflict of meaning-making arises in another similar light, with God as cosmic husband-abuser, and the victim, Israel, one who deserves it.<sup>58</sup> With these mentioned issues, the chapter will also employ feminist literary criticism as an interpretative lens, using Alice Keefe’s work in *A Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea* as well as Julia O’Brien’s *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor* for clarity and understanding.

Chapter Six will bring into conversation all the previous work by reading both Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migratory trauma narratives. The trauma of war and exile is processed and made sense of through and in the bodies of women, both the nameless Concubine and Gomer. Feminist interpretation allows the inherent trauma to speak boldly; and the combination of gender, migration, and trauma together in narrative make sense of the senseless for communities of readers for generations thereafter. It is here where the sin of Gibeah will be defined clearly.

---

<sup>55</sup> Andrew Hock-Soon Ng, “Revisiting Judges 19: A Gothic Perspective,” in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32/2 (December 2007), 199-215.

<sup>56</sup> Gale A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea: A Redaction Critical Investigation* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1987), 208.

<sup>57</sup> Gale A. Yee, “Hosea,” in *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 299. See also the comments from other commentators, Julia M. O’Brien stating, “in its ancient context, Hosea’s metaphor may have served as a retrospective explanation for the fall of the northern kingdom,” 74.

<sup>58</sup> This statement is a regular refrain that will be discussed as an option for interpretation, still through the lens of migratory trauma narratives, as a coping mechanism through self-blame, through the covenant. The trope tends to employ woman-as-prostitute in order to do so, using a negative cultural connotated persona to describe themselves.



Chapter Seven will conclude this study, consider the value of the research, and in particular answer the question, “where do we go from here?” I propose that it is important that this current research should not only benefit academia, but also those who see the Old Testament as something to learn from and be changed by. Through the “text of terror” told in the fullness of its context of migration and trauma, this study would “consider her, take counsel, and speak” (Judges 19:30), remembering *not* to commit the sin of Gibeah in the current context—against xenophobia, and towards mutual understanding between refugees and those currently residing in the host country.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PROCESS(ING) OF MIGRATION

*Migration is found in flora, fauna, and humanity. (Mark Boda, Frank Ames, John Ahn, and Mark Leuchter)<sup>59</sup>*

*Is it not true that the views of exile in literature and, moreover, in religion, obscure what is truly horrendous: that exile is irremediably secular and unbearably historical; that it is produced by human beings for other human beings; and that, like death but without death's ultimate mercy, it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family, and geography? (Edward Said)<sup>60</sup>*

*They separated the men from the women. There were pregnant women and women with small children at their feet. There were women nursing babies and older women, and young women. Nobody slept. We couldn't sleep because they never turned off the lights, and there were no windows. I lost track of time. I didn't know if it was day or night. No beds, just the floor. They called me into a room and sat me alone in front of a screen. They said a voice would ask me questions from the speakers. There was a camera pointed at me. They said I wouldn't be able to see them, but that they could see me. I answered their questions. I told them the truth and hoped they believed me. I went back to the large room and lay down on the floor. There was nothing to do but wait. (Marcelo Hernandez Castillo)<sup>61</sup>*

#### 1. NATURAL MADE UNNATURAL

Migration has always been a natural part of human life, both in ways chosen by and in ways decided for migrants. The Hebrew Bible includes an evocative reference to the ancestor, Jacob, “a wandering Aramean” in Deut. 26:5. As migration was experienced and narratives shared, so too, were metaphors created and shared to help others to understand something they may never have experienced. However, words are always contextual, and as people began to perceive migration as a problem, the language followed. Keith Cunningham-Parmeter, professor of law, studied the metaphors used by the U.S. Supreme Court to describe immigration in depth, and although the research is in a United States context, these metaphors have a more global, linguistic context, coming from lands and situations far away in

---

<sup>59</sup> Mark J. Boda, Frank Ames, John Ahn, and Mark Leuchter, eds., “Introduction,” in *The Prophets Speak on Forced Migration*, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile,” in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, and Cornel West (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1990), 358.

<sup>61</sup> Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, *Children of the Land* (New York: Harper Collins, 2020), 347.

order to describe the purported similar narrative of migration today. The negative metaphors of mass numbers of migrants began in 1755, but a distinct echo rings out of a rather horrifying statement by Edwin Erich Dwinger, a self-proclaimed fascist, following Germany's defeat in World War I:

The whole world poured out over Germany: Americans and New Zealanders, Australians and Englishmen, Portuguese and French. The bitterest pill to swallow was the stationing of blacks everywhere by the French: Moroccans and Senegalese negroes, Indochinese and Turks.<sup>62</sup>

With people “pouring out,” and into new places, the metaphor of immigration as flood, which connotes a negative occurrence, was born and continues to be used to this day by, as Cunningham-Parmeter reminds us, the U.S. Supreme Court. He adds that metaphors such as immigrants as *aliens*, and words like *invading*, use negative imagery, which show up in modern Supreme Court opinions, and, as words do, politicize and influence decisions that harm migrants. His argument proposes to use counter metaphors with positive connotations, or rather, accurate and factual connotations.<sup>63</sup> While this is a helpful contribution, it does not ask the questions that truly address the root of the issue. As briefly mentioned before, it begs the question as to what data is available to those who are defining migration at large as an issue or a problem. But more importantly, it asks questions of who gets to be the gatekeeper to a place, why is there a gate and/or gatekeeper(s), and what attributes define one as worthy to enter those gates, to belong to the place within? As migration becomes a “crisis,” Harsha Walia asks the simple question involving these negative connotations by a reframing and holistic understanding of the many moving parts: these representations depict “migrants and refugees as the *cause* of the *imagined crisis* at the border, when, in fact, mass migration is the *outcome* of the *actual* crises of capitalism, conquest, and climate change.”<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Erika Lee, *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 17-33. Benjamin Franklin was first quoted to have a problem with immigration, stating that “swarthy foreigners were flooding the colonies.” These people, being specifically the Germans, did not assimilate, and so he wrote, “why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of Aliens?”

<sup>63</sup> Keith Cunningham-Parmeter, “Alien Language: Immigration Metaphors and the Jurisprudence of Otherness,” *Fordham Law Review* 79/4 (2011), 1545-1598: <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4733&context=flr>.

<sup>64</sup> Harsha Walia, *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), 3.

This chapter will introduce the methodology of migration studies, offering standard definitions to work from, and, while this field is vast, will narrow the theories to the ones most pertinent for understanding the current study. As the introduction states, the chapter will discuss at length the current issues that beset migration studies and migration, including a look into the evangelical response, or reaction, to migration, as a lens that will be necessary to reference as we consider the implications of the biblical texts being studied. The chapter will also look at *current* migration narratives before considering *exilic* narratives in the text of the Old Testament. The chapter will conclude with a defense of current migration studies as an influence and aid to Biblical exilic studies and take a preliminary look at Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migration narratives. Ultimately, the chapter will serve as a foundation for those to come, as the study as a whole seeks to convince the reader of an intertextual, migratory trauma narrative reading of the two scriptures, and what that means for those who consider these scriptures as sacred.

## **2. WHO AND WHAT AND WHY ARE “THEY”: THE CURRENT CONVERSATIONS ON MIGRATION**

### **a) Defining the Muddled Terminology in the Categorization of “Those Who Migrate”**

There is no precise definition of migration, especially as migration has so many different variations that it is difficult to maintain one simplistic notion of the word. Michael Samers and Michael Collyer, in their dense, introductory monograph on migration, define it as loosely as possible, saying, “migration is a complicated, challenging, and diverse phenomenon involving changing statuses and multiple geographical trajectories.”<sup>65</sup> Other scholars define it as a condition, “migrancy”, mainly that which embodies fluidity.<sup>66</sup> Yet, designating it as just a phenomenon or a condition can still misrepresent the nature(s) of migration, in that it is less of a singular event with different essences, and more of a process. This is where the varied nature of the term creates difficulty and, once more, fluidity, as so much of the process of migration differentiates depending on the person and the place. There is no way to totalize the migratory experience, nor should it be attempted.

---

<sup>65</sup> Michael Samers and Michael Collyer, *Migration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge Press, 2017), 7.

<sup>66</sup> Nicholas Demaria Harney and Loretta Baldassar, “Tracking Transnationalism: Migrancy and It’s Futures,” *The Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33/2 (2007), 192: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830601154088>.

However, quite a few definitions for the varying types of migrants have developed based on not only humanitarian necessity or understanding, but also for the governments of countries who receive migrants in any stage of the process of migration. There is also much to say about the conflation with *being* a migrant rather than *doing* migration, and the consequences of perceiving migrancy as an identity instead of an action being done by a person. Unfortunately, as will be discussed later in this chapter, these slight but important differences in definitions and types of migration have also created a hierarchy, and thus, become discriminatory themselves. Narrowing the theories of migration are important in these definitions as well, as those who understand migration from an economic purview rather than simply a geographical one, will define it differently. This study will take on an intersection of theories, or an integrationist approach, as Samers and Collyer rightly describe it,

... migration is more than the summation of a balance sheet between a set of push/pull variables delineated by origin and destination countries. Migration researchers have emphasized the need to connect the multiple here's and there's in more complex and interwoven ways.<sup>67</sup>

The definitions necessary for this study pertaining to migration and its complexities are as follows: *Asylum seekers* are migrants seeking a stay in a different country, requesting sanctuary, and are in a liminal place as they await their status change. The status change most beneficial for an asylum seeker is legally becoming a *refugee*, a person who has fled their home country because of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a social group.<sup>68</sup> The confusion between refugees and asylum seekers is that, while all asylum seekers are technically refugees, their confirmation of status as refugee is determined by the governments of the countries to which they flee or are accepted by through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). People can also be born into refugee status or become *stateless*,<sup>69</sup> lacking a nationality or a

---

<sup>67</sup> Samers and Collyer, *Migration*, 157.

<sup>68</sup> While economic theorists would add new levels of different migrants in these categories, as John Ahn has taken this approach while applying migration to the Hebrew Bible, current and up-to-date studies on migration reject many of these unnecessary factions from a geographical and sociological perspective.

<sup>69</sup> Older definitions would define some of these notions as derivative forced migration (DFM) or static migration, taken from studies done in 2002 by the *Forced Migration Review*, the *Journal for Refugee Systems*, and the *International Migration Review*. You do not necessarily have to migrate in order for your status to change, but when borders shift or new states are created, you have technically “migrated” into a new place.

supposed home country, as gaps in nationality laws, discrimination, the emergence of new states and changes in borders, and even the process of migration itself can render a person without any sort of help or aid due to them in terms of the accountability governments must take for their people.<sup>70</sup>

However, the definition of refugee still leaves out a great number of migrants who leave their original homes for reasons that are not related to persecution, or for reasons that are new consequences in our world today, rendering them *voluntary immigrants*. Some migrants flee their home country not simply because of persecution, but because the situation in which they reside, which can be associated with their country, forces them to leave. This can be a home country government situation that is unfavorable or totalitarian, the start of war, poor economic situations, industrialization,<sup>71</sup> or lately, ecological disasters leading to famine, other disasters, and/or climate change.<sup>72</sup> Colonialist countries often cause such damage, and when migration occurs due to their negative, typically capitalistic actions, the country at fault often refuses to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. In the words of an NGO in the United States that lays out explicit principles for migration justice, “immigration is not only a domestic policy issue. We are here because you are there.”<sup>73</sup>

There are also migrants who have not crossed a border but who are fleeing or are purposefully displaced due to current affairs and persecution and hence can become *internally displaced people*, or IDPs. IDPs remain in their home country and are legally supposed to be protected by their government, even if the government is the cause for fleeing their regional home. Moreover, because the term refugee creates an underlying logic of governments taking responsibility for people or groups of people, this leaves out those who are forced to resettle from their homes without a choice, most often, in detestable

---

<sup>70</sup> Most of these definitions are well known but taken from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

<sup>71</sup> The term most used is development-induced displaced persons (DIDP). This renders most of these people without any protection as their government is responsible for this action, as most governments lack accountability, “abuses run rampant,” as found in John J. Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations: A Sociological, Literary, and Theological Approach on the Displacement and Resettlement of the Southern Kingdom of Judah* (New York: DeGruyter, 2011), 43. However, I would almost place this under PFM too (see footnote 83); we seem to be creating way too many subgroups that then have different “rights,” which creates a hierarchy of human pain and suffering as to who is more deserving of care and a home.

<sup>72</sup> Another older definition for this would be responsive forced migration (RFM), rendering it “voluntary,” which then begins the creation of hierarchy as to who is more deserving of migrating and creating a new home elsewhere.

<sup>73</sup> The Blue-Ribbon Commission, “Migrant Justice Platform:” <https://www.migrantjusticeplatform.org/the-platform/>.

places. The current situation of Uighurs in China, where they are discriminated against as a people group, taken and forced into concentration camps, would make them technically IDPs – they are persecuted based on the terms of what defines a refugee.<sup>74</sup> Yet, as they are also technically Chinese nationals, the Chinese government is responsible for them, so they are also not refugees, even as their basic rights are violated.<sup>75</sup> The study will continue to maintain the italicized definitions as the foundation, and moving forward, it will maintain person-first language to employ the distinction between identity and status, even though these are typically not distinctions made by those who work with migrants in our governmental systems.<sup>76</sup>

While some see migration itself as an event, migration should be seen as a process that involves systems and people within those systems; a process for which there is a high demand, begging for supply.<sup>77</sup> Patrick Manning introduces this idea in his book that gives an overview of migration from the earliest journeys of human beings, calling these systems “cross-community networks.”<sup>78</sup> Manning describes characteristics within these networks but, later in the monograph, changes the ways in which things are defined, writing that these networks look more like complex steps and stages. All of this confirms just how difficult it is to choose one, even loosely defined way in which to describe the many nuances of what happens within the process of, and the inner-connected networks within, migration.

---

<sup>74</sup> For most current information on the Uighurs, see Ted Regencia in *Al Jazeera*, “What You Should Know About China’s Minority Uighurs: China’s treatment of the largely Muslim ethnic group from Xinjiang has become a source of international tension with Beijing, which insists it is tackling extremism, accused of genocide,” July 8, 2021: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/8/uighurs-timeline>.

<sup>75</sup> The distinction here, created by economy theorists, is actually helpful as this can cause a horrifying number of issues. Purposeful forced migration (PFM) is coined by Alan James in, “Questioning the Terminology and Definitions of Forced Migrations,” in *The Politics of Forced Migration: A Conceptual, Operational, and Legal Analysis*, edited by Nitza Nachmias and Rami Goldstein (Baltimore: Publish America, 2004), 39-61; but introduced as types of migration in the sixth century BCE context in by John J. Ahn *Exile as Forced Migration*. I will use the definitions as portrayed in the study and not necessarily those in the footnotes.

<sup>76</sup> This decision is based on a conversation as well as research, and a campaign done by a local NGO I worked with called Treetops Collective entitled “more than just a status.” Sylvia Nyamuhungu, a woman with refugee status here in the Grand Rapids area, led this campaign: <https://treetopscollective.org/blogs/treetops-collective-blog/i-am-more-than-my-status>.

<sup>77</sup> In some circumstances, the opposite has occurred in that migrants have been hand selected by recruiters. But as the study narrows the focus on forced migrations (it would even include migration that occurs when looking for something better than what one has in their home country in this definition), I will be addressing how forced migrations have actually created and demanded systems through this migratory process, which has a separate economy and set of rules itself.

<sup>78</sup> Patrick Manning, *Migration in World History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge: New York, 2012), 10, 192.

However, the process of migration, no matter the differing length of time and challenges, has a beginning place, although the landing place where “home” is re-made, is difficult to navigate, or even obtain. Even if one who migrates, after being displaced, does return to what was home, regardless of what occurred in that time period, home will be different, as will the one who migrates. Every case of migration activity as it “ends” in a new place will lead to a whole new process, one of becoming part of the social fabric in a place. This then begs the question of how belonging happens, and what part the network of the receiving place plays in that equation. Nonetheless, this brief overview of how the study will move forward in discussing migration also necessitates a discussion of how an integrationist approach to the theories of migration will affect what is emphasized and discussed in the study, and what is left out.

### **b) Narrowing the Theories of Migration**

Samers and Collyer extensively explain the wide variety of theories and approaches to understanding migration. Due to migration’s nuanced nature, finding a lens to help explain can not and is not one-size-fits-all. Samers and Collyer, who personally vouch for an understanding of migration on a spatial and geographical level, thus call upon all scholars of migration to use an integrationist approach, as circumstantially theories fit different cases in different ways.<sup>79</sup> Due to the need for brevity, the study will not analyze all 19 migration theories presented by Samers and Collyer, nor simply advocate for a singular spatial theory as a blanket theory, but rather give an account of the few approaches that I propose may be helpful for the purpose of understanding the forced migration that is central to this study: structuralist, transnational, and gender-aware approaches.<sup>80</sup> The study will also incorporate Allison Wolf’s oppression-centered approach, which considers how colonialist systems have impacted immigration today, to interpret immigration from a feminist perspective.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Samers and Collyer, *Migration*, 154.

<sup>80</sup> The sixteen other theories include: Ravenstein’s Laws and push-pull theory, Neo-Classical economic approach, Behavioralist, New economics approach, Dual labor market/segmentation approach, Structuralist approaches (dependency theory, articulation of modes of production, world systems theory), Structuralist approaches (globalization), Structuralist approaches (global cities), Structuralist approaches (neo-liberalism), Social (migrant) network theory, Structuration theory and other agency-centric approaches, a temporal perspective, Migration-development nexus, A Theory of forced migration, Environmental change, and Social-transformation perspective. These are found in Samers and Collyer, *Migration*, 143-147.

<sup>81</sup> Allison Wolf, *Just Immigration in the Americas: A Feminist Account* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).



The first approach that will be helpful for the purpose of this study is a *structuralist approach* that considers systemic issues that take place on a global level. The structuralist approach can be seen as a theoretical “middle-way” of seeing structures, institutions, and actors as major players to make sense of the many changes that are happening not only globally, but also in economic and social arenas. Many of the politicized understandings of migration are grounded in this theory, as well as some overlap with Wolf’s oppression-centered theory. Samers and Collyer rightly point out that this theory lacks depth in terms of understanding human agency and poses a potential issue for reckoning with biographical narratives, which is a question that must and will be addressed in full in the study, highlighting again the need for exploring the intersections between approaches.<sup>82</sup>

A second approach that will be helpful for the purpose of this study, is the *transnationalist approach*, which seeks to address the shortcomings of the structuralist approach, yet continues to build on the pieces of identity touched on previously. In this approach, there is more of a focus on place, and even belonging to a place. Rather than emphasizing the larger networks and systems at play, the transnationalist approach focuses more on the intersectional identity social networks, especially as the theory discusses the notion of diaspora. The questions of who belongs and what one does when encountering the other, refers to this specific approach, as places shift and change beneath the feet of the migrant.

A final approach that is central to the objectives of this study, is the *gender-aware approach* that will emphasize an aspect of how gender affects migration, and vice versa, as there are specific issues related to its gendered nature. Critics have even called well known organizations such as UNHCR gender-blind,<sup>83</sup> indicating once again that the agency of those who migrate, must be discussed. Too often, there are pre-conceived gender roles within migration, which is ironic as migration itself is fluid. A postcolonial understanding even within this theory recognizes women as gendered “other”, and a significant aspect of this study is the question of what one should do when receiving, not perceiving, the

---

<sup>82</sup> Samers and Collyer, *Migration*, 150-151.

<sup>83</sup> As referenced in *Global Migration*, 46; however, the language itself is ableist.

other. As it pertains to testimony, story, and whether one receives that journey itself, Wolf reminds readers that, “we would be remiss and naïve to fail to recognize that who we believe and who we do not is raced, gendered, and influenced by geography.”<sup>84</sup>

These three approaches, structuralist, transnationalist, and gender-aware, are combined for the purpose of this study, but also extend to the way migration is viewed and understood in everyday life. We will see exactly how these approaches are used in the following sections as current migration studies will be discussed through these lenses.

### c) Current Underlying “Crises” of Migration

Based on the statistics provided by UNHCR, approximately 86.5 million people have been forcibly displaced, among them are 20.4 million refugees, 43.5 million internally displaced peoples, and 4.2 million stateless people; 1 percent of the world’s population is displaced from their home.<sup>85</sup> While these numbers are staggering and multiplying daily, the number of those who are no longer recorded on a specific piece of paper that designates quality of life, is also massive. In the United States context, with its great lag in data collection, an estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants reside in the country who are not accounted for in these UNHCR statistics, regardless of whether those who migrate claim asylum.<sup>86</sup> As has been mentioned before, there is also a lack of recorded statistics based on those who migrate voluntarily, no matter how desperate the situation was in order to induce the migration, or who is responsible for those circumstances.

---

<sup>84</sup> Wolf, *Just Immigration*, 102.

<sup>85</sup> These are the current up-to-date statistics by UNHCR in its Global Report for 2019, posted on June 18, 2020: <https://www.unhcr.org/globalreport2019/>. As of June 2, 2021, these figures have yet to be updated.

<sup>86</sup> This is, unfortunately, based on data that was released in 2018, but collected in 2015, and has since become a matter of dispute. For obvious reasons, the way collection was done to determine this number also means that some undocumented people did not want to be counted, and so this number is to be held loosely. Still yet, with the rhetoric becoming increasingly both restrictionist and racist, undocumented immigrants account for approximately only 3.2-3.6 percent of the population, with two-thirds of this number being those who have overstayed their visa past the ten-year mark, and only 38 percent of the number from crossing the United States/Mexico border. The trend for these numbers has been a steady decline year after year since 2007. More will be said about this in the study. These were all brought together and presented by Elaine Kamarck and Christine Stenglein on November 12, 2019, at a non-partisan fact finding organization called Brookings: <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/how-many-undocumented-immigrants-are-in-the-united-states-and-who-are-they/>. While the study has gone to great lengths to avoid the ever-abundant lens of economics, what is forgotten, is that undocumented people still tend to pay payroll and sales tax; but this should not determine worthiness.

While these numbers alone are overwhelming and must be dealt with, there are also a plethora of specific issues that people who migrate face as they seek basic human rights. Due to the structures in place that silence those who migrate, alongside xenophobic beliefs that are brought into places where policies are made, human rights are regularly up for debate. Not only do these oppressive structures succeed in marginalizing those who migrate, but they also place those who migrate under the thumb of cultural imperialism and refuse to see them as “a distinct ontological subject.”<sup>87</sup> These issues are especially evident in the church settings in the United States. Ironically, that is the place where one of the two basic and greatest commandments is to “love one’s neighbor,” or one could say *xenophilia*; yet, the response to people seeking asylum and/or a new life is met with resistance. In addition, beyond the debunked, false cry of fear that has led to what is called *securitization*, the United States’ response to immigration is now *crimmigration*, a term that describes how the process of migration has become carceral.<sup>88</sup> Migration also has specific challenges depending on different facets of identity. Gender leads to additional stereotypes; there are gendered aspects of migration which mean having to take extra precautions as a migrant. The final part of this section that outlines the current crises in migration, will address some of the complexities with reference to the conversation about agency; recognizing the problem that speaking on behalf of or speaking for a group of people does, in essence, take away some of their agency. Those who migrate have their own voice, we should hear it.

### ***i. Politicized, or rather, Weaponized***

One of the specific reasons this study advocates against an economic theory of understanding migration,<sup>89</sup> is due to the ways in which migration has been weaponized on both sides amongst those

---

<sup>87</sup> Wolf, *Just Immigration*, 18.

<sup>88</sup> See section on “crimmigration,” point iv.

<sup>89</sup> This study’s approach is not an economic approach. Like many of the older approaches to understanding migration, the economic approach is not humanizing to those who migrate. While it makes things much simpler to understand, it sacrifices a fuller picture of systemic issues and the faces behind migration in exchange for market-based, capitalistic (which, is ultimately imperialistic) views of migration, which, as will be discussed, is actually part of the reason behind false evangelical views of migration as well. Furthermore, Allison Wolf, who writes about immigration in the Americas with a feminist approach, advocates instead for seeing migration from an oppression-centered lens. The economic study of immigrants actually further makes them object and “other,” by valuing only due to benefits and weighing the supposed costs. Wolf argues that, ultimately, as the sixth face of oppression, this method and model creates the migrant as a “derivatized subject,” or not a subject that matters in their own right, *A Feminist Perspective*, 18.

who create and shape policies pertaining to migration, how it has been weaponized by those who have power. This oddity is pointed out by author and advocate Jessica Goudeau, in her book *After the Last Border*, which tells the tale of two women with refugee status now residing in the United States. While the history of xenophobic policies in the country is not new, what is insidious, is the ways in which the same rhetoric of old can still underline and overtake debates on the other side of the aisle. Goudeau shares this sentiment by discussing the interesting nature of the poem by Emma Lazarus that is often read when viewing the Statue of Liberty, called “The New Colossus,” specifically the words that speak to those from other countries, “give me your tired, your poor/ your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”<sup>90</sup>

A year before this poem was written, the Chinese Exclusion Act went into effect, and the portrayal of a massive wave of people hungry for jobs and the “benevolence” of the citizens of the United States continues to feed not only a hierarchy of worthiness for these “gifts of ours,” which sounds like imperialism, but also, the rhetoric of capitalism as god. Dina Nayeri, a refugee herself, adds that similarly, in making these economic arguments, the conversation on both sides becomes about how they will get a return on their investment, “glorifying the refugees who thrive according to Western standards... akin to holding up the most acquiescent as examples of what a refugee should be, instead of offering each person the same options that are granted to the native-born-citizen.”<sup>91</sup> Goudeau says, “the conversations raged as the American public decided not just which foreigners were welcome, but how the United States would define itself. Immigration debates have always been about American identity.”<sup>92</sup> The forging of a national identity has always been politicized, which means, as mentioned before, that basic human rights have always been up for debate.

Who defines what it means to belong to a place, or to a group of people? These decisions tend to be up to a series of gatekeepers—in the context of the United States, it depends on who is in power and what they decide to do with it. Harsha Walia describes in great detail the formation of borders as

---

<sup>90</sup> Jessica Goudeau, *After the Last Border* (New York: Viking, 2020) 95-96.

<sup>91</sup> Dina Nayeri, “The Ungrateful Refugee,” in *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives*, 146.

<sup>92</sup> Goudeau, *After the Last Border*, 96.

“productive regimes concurrently generated by and producing social relations of dominance,” not fixed or static, as there are ways in which the “right people” may cross them.<sup>93</sup> The previous United States administration run by former President Trump ran their entire campaign on xenophobic rhetoric, causing mass chaos in the general public while using language like “invasion,” and “floods” to describe the current state of migratory action into the United States. Right before elections began, his son posted a meme comparing some poisonous skittles to Syrian refugees, discussing immigration as a whole in the name of the Trump/Pence campaign, which depicts derivatization at its utmost.<sup>94</sup>

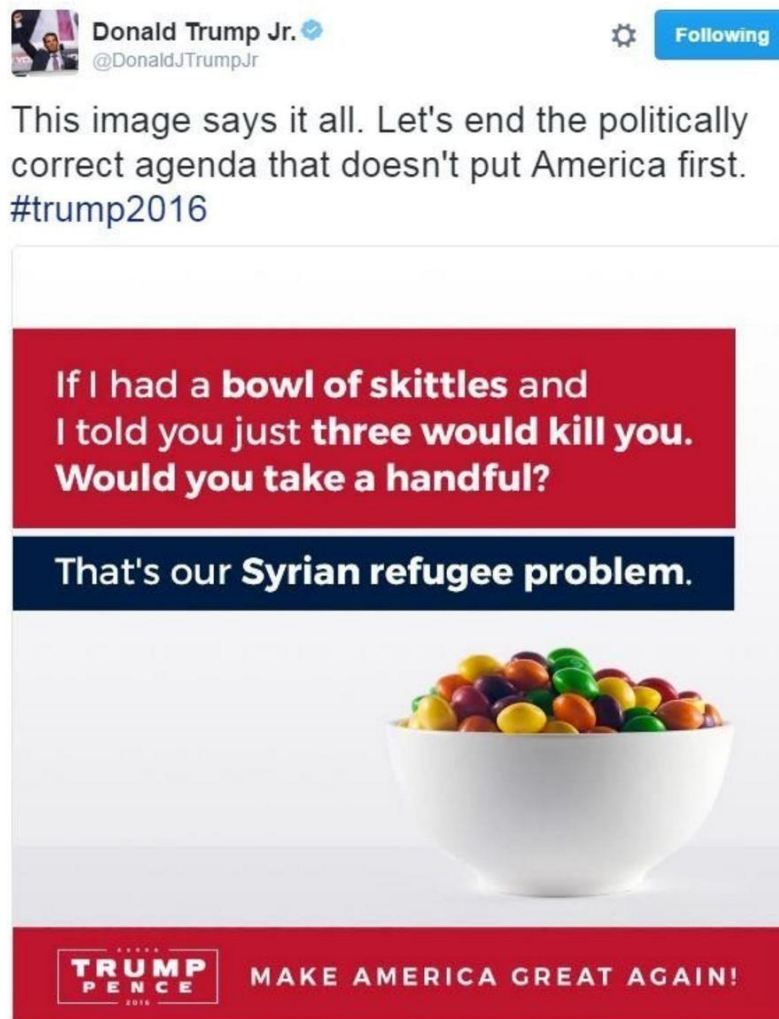


Figure 1.

<sup>93</sup> Walia, *Border & Rule*, 6.

<sup>94</sup> See Figure 1. Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37416457>.

Policy analysts Sarah Pierce and Jessica Bolter painstakingly worked through the 400 plus policies that have been part of the Trump administration changes to immigration in the United States during his singular four-year term, and summarize succinctly that,

in nearly four years, the administration of President Donald J. Trump has dismantled and reconstructed many elements of a U.S. immigration system that was last reformed in 1996. Humanitarian protections have been severely diminished. The U.S.-Mexico border is more closed off than perhaps any time in U.S. history. Immigration enforcement appears more random. And legal immigration has experienced a historic contraction... While it may be possible to rescind many of these changes, others cannot simply be unwound.<sup>95</sup>

The unfortunate reality involving the newest administration is that even though President Biden has promised to end deportations, family separations, and further reforms involving immigration, most of these promises have yet failed to materialize—in fact, a great number of these continue to occur. President Biden is sadly close to overtaking former President Barack Obama as “deporter-in-chief.” Thus, these behaviors are not an aberration in the history of the United States, but part and parcel of our country as a whole.

Johnny Miles’ reflection on the concept of Othering in his monograph *Constructing the Other in Ancient Israel and the USA* is helpful when it comes to considering the terms and imagery used to discuss the topic of migrants in today’s political context. Stereotypes provide a sense-making and ordering of the world. Even though these stereotypes are generally open to falsification, and may be used as a political tactic to move a specific agenda, such stereotypes

... become[s], in effect, the reverse image of the one stereotyping. For the deficiency within that one hates, or for the fear of becoming that which one mocks, or for the desire for that which one cannot but would like to attain, the projection lies latent within the stereotype. The stereotype will always reflect a bias though the precise rationale for the projection might require disentanglement. Such a process where projection fuels the stereotype that reduces, essentializes, naturalizes, and fixes does serve several functions, not least of which are to establish identity and boundaries.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> Sarah Pierce and Jessica Bolter, *Dismantling and Reconstructing the U.S. Immigration System: A Catalog of Changes under the Trump Presidency*, Migration Policy Institute, July 2020, 119-120.

<sup>96</sup> Johnny Miles, *Constructing the Other in Ancient Israel and USA* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 31.

It is telling that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) changed their mission statement on February 22, 2018, to specifically remove the phrase “nation of immigrants,” and focus instead on “protecting Americans,”<sup>97</sup> so divulging the Trump administration’s perception of the inherent need for a perfect enemy to oppose as an integral part of the United States’ identity.<sup>98</sup>

According to Katherine Benton-Cohen, a researcher on the Dillingham Commission and immigration history in the United States, the “problem” of immigration in America, is invented and deeply embedded.<sup>99</sup> As Nayeri formulates this challenge to our perception of immigration:

it is the obligation of every person born in a safer room to open the door when someone in danger knocks. It is your duty to answer us, even if we don’t give you sugary success stories... even if we remain ordinary, sometimes bitter, or confused.<sup>100</sup>

In response, this study will unpack the further notions of these fear-based, not factual, politicized agendas as they pertain specifically to securitization, and crimmigration. The United States identity measures the worthiness and the right to humanity of all migrants; most often non-white migrants receive little to no chance to even be measured.<sup>101</sup> In the light of these rebuttals, humanizing and welcoming the “other” is ultimately a matter of ethics, and asking specifically why there is such a gap between spoken values and acted practices.

---

<sup>97</sup> Sarah Pierce and Jessica Bolter, *Dismantling and Reconstructing the U.S. Immigration System: A Catalog of Changes under the Trump Presidency*, 95.

<sup>98</sup> This notion first came up in Erika Lee’s *America for Americans*, but also in Luis N. Rivera-Pagán, “Xenophilia or Xenophobia: Toward a Theology of Migration,” in *Migration and Public Discourse in World Christianity*, 200.

<sup>99</sup> Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Inventing the Immigration Problem: The Dillingham Commission and its Legacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 3. She writes: “Conceiving of immigration as a ‘problem’ in America was an invention, and one deeply embedded in the way that both bureaucrats and elites saw the relationship between social science and public policy in the Progressive Era.” She also encouragingly notes that, because it is a constructed issue, a human invention, it can be deconstructed, it can be changed.

<sup>100</sup> Nayeri, *The Displaced*, 148.

<sup>101</sup> The conversation here that the study lacks time and space to divulge in, is how white supremacy and xenophobia have been the foundation of the United States, and how that has played out against the non-white “other.” While the Germans and Irish, and eventually, even the Italians, were able to become “white,” an example of discrimination beyond the constant history of immigration quotas and bans is the current “Muslim ban.” Ambalavaner Sivanandan coined the term as xeno-racism.

## *ii. White Evangelical Embrace of Nationalism*

Advent season in 2019 sparked a huge debate on social media sites about whether or not Jesus Christ was a refugee following his birth.<sup>102</sup> Given how partisan, divided, and volatile the United States is, this debate should not have been surprising. Statistically, specifically white evangelicals are more conservative than the average United States citizen on the topic of immigration. Support for Trump as president both in 2016 and 2020 held strong amongst this group, approximately 81 percent of these believers voting as a large bloc. According to statistics provided by the Cooperative Congressional Election Study in 2018, white evangelicals are more in favor of eliminating family-based migration, increasing border funding, withholding federal funds from sanctuary city police departments, and imprisoning border crossers, and the least likely to support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).<sup>103</sup> Later in 2018, it was noted by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) that Republican white protestants were 75 percent more likely to say, with confidence, that “immigrants are *invading* American society.”<sup>104</sup> The Pew Research Center in the same year confirmed that 68 percent of white evangelical protestants believed that the United States does not have a responsibility to accept refugees.<sup>105</sup> The Cato Institute published another recent study comparing Trump voters who attend church to Trump voters who do not, and while the results are generally “more positive” towards immigrants, other damning data presented itself, such as that religious voters having significantly more disdain towards Muslim people, and in general, still high percentages of opposition to making citizenship possible.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> For a summary on how the debate began and the main interlocutors involved, see Tyler Huckabee’s article, “Yes, Jesus Was a Refugee: He Still Is,” in *Relevant Magazine*, December 26, 2019: <https://www.relevantmagazine.com/current/yes-jesus-was-a-refugee-he-still-is/>.

<sup>103</sup> CCES Common Content, 2018: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi%3A10.7910/DVN/ZSBZ7K>.

<sup>104</sup> PRRI, *From Impeachment to Issue Priorities, Democrats and Republicans Inhabiting Increasingly Different Worlds*, October 21, 2019: <https://www.prri.org/press-release/from-impeachment-to-issue-priorities-democrats-and-republicans-inhabiting-increasingly-different-worlds/>. Italics, mine.

<sup>105</sup> The Pew Research Center, Hannah Hartig, “Republicans Turn More Negative Toward Refugees as Number Admitted to U.S. Plummet,” May 24, 2018: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/24/republicans-turn-more-negative-toward-refugees-as-number-admitted-to-u-s-plummet/>.

<sup>106</sup> Cato Institute, Emily Ekins, “Religious Trump Voters: How Faith Moderates Attitudes about Immigration, Race, and Identity,” February 5, 2019: <https://www.cato.org/publications/public-opinion-brief/religious-trump-voters-how-faith-moderates-attitudes-about>.



These perceptions amongst a large percentage of white evangelicals offer a distinct challenge to some relief organizations, a number of which are Christian founded and operated resettlement agencies. Organizations such as World Relief, Church World Service (CWS), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and Catholic Charities, have all had to shutter some of their services and stations due to lack of funding and the continued lowering of the ceiling for refugees, meaning, lack of work. For CWS, the act of welcoming the refugee is a simple way of following the law of loving your neighbor as yourself, of following what they say is clearly outlined in Scripture.<sup>107</sup> Despite the rich perspectives in the biblical texts that have been described in terms of a “theology of migration,” there are still a number of (evangelical) Christians who hold very different views regarding migration, and, based upon the same scriptures, have weaponized the biblical text to convince others of the opposite. For those most concerned with safety, the main fearmongering technique used in order to stir up disdain for the “other,” is what has been called *securitization*.

### ***iii. “Securitization” or Righteous (Ir)rationality***

Gregory White outlines the general response to what is now a rising number of migrants both involuntarily and voluntarily leaving homes due to climate change as something that has always been an issue pertaining to migrants as a whole: securitization. Securitization is defined as “a process, then, the active practice of identifying a threat, specifying its character, tapping into a ‘social imaginary,’ of fear, and crafting a response that, presumably, is robust and effective in enhancing security.”<sup>108</sup> The unfortunate irony of securitization in climate induced migration, but also, migration in general, is that it does nothing to address the actual issue behind why people must migrate; there is little to no accountability for how industrialized, consumeristic, militaristic contexts create and contribute to the circumstances that people migrate from. Instead, the blame shifts as people attempt to make their home in the same country that caused the reasons for their original departure.

---

<sup>107</sup> <https://cwsglobal.org/about/history/>.

<sup>108</sup> Gregory White, “The ‘Securitization’ of Climate-Induced Migration,” in *Global Migration: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*, 23.

Securitization has become the main concept according to which not only the American identity is created. White rightly points out that, “pursuing security is a constructed process that facilitates the reinforcement of the sense of self as distinct from other.”<sup>109</sup> Securitization has also become a concept by which people take security into their own hands, especially as implied by the rhetoric of danger. Using words such as “invasive,” “overwhelming flood,” and “alien” has become the norm with policies that match the falsehoods. White continues that, “in its demagogic form, security is pitched as something the speaker alone understands as necessary, as well as other like-minded individuals if only they open their ears and eyes.”<sup>110</sup> However, the demagogic form which reveals itself as the apparent need for additional security to protect “us” against “those” who migrate is unnecessary: across the board, even with research done at well-known anti-immigration sites, it is clear that “all immigrants (both documented and undocumented) have a lower criminal incarceration rate and there are lower crime rates in the neighborhoods where they live.”<sup>111</sup> The addition of migrants in an area also does not increase crime or violence; in fact, the data shows there is a negative relationship between migrants and crime in the United States.<sup>112</sup>

What is factual, and confirmed by data, is the damage done by the carceral state and others who believe in this falsified rhetoric to and towards those who migrate. The recently published document by Dévora González and Azadeh Shahshahani explicitly lays out what they entitled *A History of Institutional Violence at the U.S. Border*, including the statement that, “border patrol has made a practice of keeping people in inhumane conditions: water is unavailable, the food makes them sick, the cells are freezing and overcrowded, medical care is so insufficient that children die in its custody,

---

<sup>109</sup> White, “Securitization,” 22.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>111</sup> While the anti-immigration researchers, who have also been known to doctor information, are of FAIR, NumbersUSA, and Center for Immigration Studies, Cato Institute’s recent information and a study released on March 4, 2019, gives an extensive report and breaks down the data for crime and immigration. There is no threat: <https://www.cato.org/blog/immigration-crime-what-research-says>.

<sup>112</sup> Michael T. Light and Ty Miller, “Does Undocumented Immigration Increase Violent Crime,” *Criminology* 56/2 (May 2017), 370-401: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111%2F1745-9125.12175>.

and pregnant women are mistreated without care.”<sup>113</sup> Since January 2010, at least 111 people have died due to an encounter with a border agent,<sup>114</sup> and there has been an outcry about the thousands who have gone missing.<sup>115</sup> This barely scratches the surface, not mentioning the general antagonistic behavior towards migrants amongst residents in the United States. Elizabeth F. Cohen’s recent report, *Illegal*, discusses in great detail the extent to which US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have operated illegally themselves—an ironic twist of words as many call undocumented migrants illegal.<sup>116</sup> After almost 200 pages of her report, she states, “the security threat at the border is CBP themselves.”<sup>117</sup> These issues also have a gendered nature to their illegality and (in)security.

An issue of the falsified need for additional security at any border is not just a United States issue, but has also reared its xenophobic head in Greece, a country through which many pass fleeing their homes in order to find refuge. Greece’s newly founded conservative government has begun to “crack down” on their “migrant issue.” By shutting their borders tightly, they ended up abandoning over 1000 migrants on the open sea, leaving them with only life vests. Najma al-Khatib, a fifty-year-old teacher from Syria, told the *New York Times* of her experience:

“I left Syria for fear of bombing—but when this happened, I wished I’d died under a bomb.”<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Dévora González and Azadeh Shahshahani, “A History of Institutional Violence at the U.S. Border,” *CEC Journal 7: Hurt and Repair*, by Bartos Institute for Constructive Engagement of Conflict, June 25, 2020: <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/cec-journal-issue-7/editors-note>.

<sup>114</sup> Southern Border Communities Coalition, San Diego: [https://www.southernborder.org/deaths\\_by\\_border\\_patrol](https://www.southernborder.org/deaths_by_border_patrol). Updated July 23, 2020.

<sup>115</sup> La Coalición de Derechos Humanos, No More Deaths, and The Abuse Documentation Working Group, *Disappeared: How the US Border Agencies are Fueling a Missing Persons Crisis*: <http://www.thedisappearedreport.org/uploads/8/3/5/1/83515082/disappeared--introduction.pdf>.

<sup>116</sup> As Cohen says herself, “Undocumentedness itself is a status that we legislated into existence – and one we can also legislate right back out of existence,” 4-5. Samers and Collyer also state in *Migration*, “The widely used term ‘illegal migrant’ is inaccurate since individuals may behave in ways that are technically illegal but they cannot *be* illegal,” 10.

<sup>117</sup> Elizabeth F. Cohen, *Illegal: How America’s Lawless Immigration Regime Threatens Us All*, 191.

<sup>118</sup> Patrick Kingsley and Karam Shoumali, “Taking Hard Line, Greece Turns Back Migrants by Abandoning Them at Sea,” *The New York Times*, August 14, 2020: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/14/world/europe/greece-migrants-abandoning-sea.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=HomepageHomepage/>.

If statistics are correct, why are policies not being made that reflect those specific issues? Instead of focusing on the plight of migrants themselves, why not center the conversation on the causes and possible solutions for their acts of migration? And furthermore, we should ask, what is the value of human life?

Securitization has become intertwined with the many caste-like issues we find in the United States, with severe discriminatory issues pertaining to race and also the carceral state. It is quite ironic to consider Walia's point that this function of Othering is not really a *new* crisis, particularly if one considers United States' history:

The migration crisis is declared a *new* crisis with *Western* countries positioned as its victims, even though for four centuries nearly eighty-million Europeans became settler-colonists across the Americas and Oceania, while four million indentured laborers from Asia were scattered across the globe and the transatlantic slave trade kidnapped and enslaved fifteen million Africans.<sup>119</sup>

Securitization is simply a tool and tactic to further discriminatory actions towards those who migrate, using constructed fear as fuel; yet, the very nation of the United States is founded upon a myriad of migratory acts. The real face behind this mask is that those who uphold securitization are looking for the "right kind" of migrant, not necessarily condemning migration itself.

#### ***iv. "Crimmigration" in Action***

While the term *crimmigration* was coined by Juliet Stumpf in 2006, César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, a migration and legal scholar, has written, taught, and practiced extensively on the way in which migration has become criminalized. His most recent book, *Migrating to Prison: America's Obsession with Locking Up Migrants*, not only makes the case for abolishing immigration prisons, but also shows the absolute madness of how criminal law is almost indistinguishable from immigration law, changing our perceptions, but also resulting in a small margin to migrants for any sort of mistake.<sup>120</sup>

Cohen makes a similar argument when she argues that

---

<sup>119</sup> Walia, *Border*, 6.

<sup>120</sup> César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, *Migrating to Prison: America's Obsession with Locking Up Migrants* (New York: The New Press, 2019), 108. For more, read the whole chapter entitled, "The Good Immigrant vs. The Bad Immigrant."

the majority of ICE detainees do not have a criminal record, and four-fifths of all ICE detainees have nothing more than a minor offense such as a traffic violation on their record. Of those with a serious “level 1” offense on their record, a large proportion is for infractions like possessing a small amount of marijuana, which isn’t even a crime in all states.<sup>121</sup>

Given the failure of the Trump administration to process asylum claims,<sup>122</sup> and with these policies still waiting to be reversed under the Biden administration, the numbers of those who will now have a criminal record as they cross the border to attempt to have a better life, continue to rise. It is not illegal to seek asylum, and yet, the United States has made it so. The “border crisis” is what is occurring *at* the border by CBP and ICE, not by the migrants. While the southern border of the United States is one place where asylum can be sought (and mainly where the media focuses its attention), the vast majority of undocumented people enter the country via airplane, by overstaying their visa.<sup>123</sup> The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) recently reported data shows the particularly criminalized migration acts for those who are black and migrate: in 2020, the United States consistently detained more Haitian families than any other nationality; the bail for black migrants is on average 54 percent more than for other migrants, and they face high asylum denial rates.<sup>124</sup> While the United States criminalizes the natural desire to want a better life regardless of the type of migration act, it acts criminally itself. This is not only seen in discrimination that is race based, but also, gender based.

#### ***v. Gendered Aspects of Migration***

Migration is a difficult process. Migrating while identifying as a woman or girl brings a whole new set of issues. Women have recently begun to outnumber the number of men who migrate, statistics showing

---

<sup>121</sup> Cohen, *Illegal*, 14.

<sup>122</sup> Pierce and Bolter, *Dismantling*, 68-69.

<sup>123</sup> Robert Warren, “US Undocumented Population Continued to Fall from 2016 to 2017, and Visa Overstays Significantly Exceed Illegal Crossings for the Seventh Consecutive Year,” *Center for Migration Studies*, January 16, 2019: <https://doi.org/10.14240/cmsesy011619>.

<sup>124</sup> RAICES, “Black Immigrant Lives are Under Attack,” July 22, 2020: <https://www.raicestexas.org/2020/07/22/black-immigrant-lives-are-under-attack/>.

that women are now 52 percent of all IDPs,<sup>125</sup> and 51 percent of all stateless peoples.<sup>126</sup> Many women on their journey know of what they will face, and preemptively use contraceptives as the assumption is that they will be raped sometime on their journey.<sup>127</sup> Statistically, this is more than likely to be true, and the real numbers may be higher, as some survivors may not disclose this information. Generally it is estimated that more than 50 percent of women who are refugees have been raped.<sup>128</sup> Further obscuring the statistics, is the fact that rape could happen at any point in the migration process. For some women, the reason for leaving their home country in order to seek asylum is gender-based violence (GBV). On the way to the new place of residence, those who migrate are often taken advantage of and targeted by smugglers to pay off debts. They may need to make money off trafficking or sex work as they wait to cross a border into safety.<sup>129</sup> Asylum seekers who wait for their claims to be processed, may find themselves stuck in a place that already has rampant femicide. Michelle Chen, in her chapter included in the anthology on rape culture, discusses these endless accounts and stories by migrant women, adding that,

we speak of rape in migration as an ‘unimaginable’ experience, a transgression relegated to the margins of civilization. But we can’t make sense of rape culture more broadly, or the meaning of gender in migration, until we understand that both the social order within borders, and the chaos outside them, fold into a single binary that cannot hold.<sup>130</sup>

Sergio González Rodríguez gives a substantial report of what he calls *The Femicide Machine* in Ciudad Juárez, published in 2012, a situation which has been progressively getting worse according to

---

<sup>125</sup> UNHCR, *Global Report*, 34 shows this shift happened in 2010.

<sup>126</sup> UNHCR, *Global Report*, 60.

<sup>127</sup> Angelika Abaladejo, “Care and the Caravan: The Unmet Needs of Migrants Heading for the US,” *BMJ*, December 19, 2018: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k5315>.

<sup>128</sup> Hannah Pearce, “An Examination of the International Understanding of Political Rape and the Significance of Labeling it Torture,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 14 (2002), 555.

<sup>129</sup> This is the story of Lupe in Gena Thomas’ book, *Separated by the Border*.

<sup>130</sup> Michelle Chen, “Bodies Against Borders,” in *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture*, 202.

reporter Jorge Ramos in 2020.<sup>131</sup> While the Mexican Government reported that in 2019, 1,010 femicides occurred,<sup>132</sup> both Rodríguez and Ramos acknowledge that in many instances, especially if the body was never found, women's murders are not classified as homicides, meaning that the number is likely exponentially higher. The United Nations has seen this issue not just in Mexico, but all over Latin America, as up to 98 percent of gender-related killings go unprosecuted, meaning that the reason why women may want to migrate can be GBV as well.<sup>133</sup> As the "remain in Mexico" policy created by the Trump administration leaves desperate people on the borderlands waiting to be received, the circumstances, and the context in which those who migrate are regularly deemed as disposable,<sup>134</sup> the atrocities can pile up. Rodríguez states,

Ciudad Juárez's femicide machine is composed of hatred and misogynistic violence, *machismo*, power and patriarchal reaffirmations that take place at the margins of the law or within a law of complicity between criminals, police, military, government officials, and citizens who constitute an a-legal old-boy network. Consequently, the machine enjoys discreet protection from individuals, groups, and institutions that in turn offer judicial and political impunity, as well as supremacy over the State and the law.<sup>135</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the deeply rooted issues that cause GBV tend to go unaddressed, including the harassment and meddling from Western nations that perpetuate these issues and are responsible for creating them. Not only is the current battle in changing migration laws one where the previous Trump

---

<sup>131</sup> Jorge Ramos, "In Mexico, Women Break the Silence Against Femicide," *The New York Times*, March 6, 2020: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/06/opinion/international-world/mexico-femicides-amlo.html>.

<sup>132</sup> Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, "Víctimas y unidades robadas, nueva metodología," *Gobierno De Mexico*, June 20, 2020: <https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp/acciones-y-programas/victimas-nueva-metodologia?state=published>.

<sup>133</sup> United Nations, "No Woman Should Die Because of Her Gender, Deputy Secretary-General Says at Event to Launch Latin American Regional Anti-Femicide Programme," September 27, 2018: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/dsgsm1224.doc.htm>.

<sup>134</sup> Part of the issue with supposed purity/disposability will be addressed later in the study as many are considered "unrapeable," but Sergio González Rodríguez in *The Femicide Machine* (Los Angeles: Semiotext, 2012) also addresses this in his context as the industrialization of the city, created by the United States, meant that women began to work, and once they established levels of independence, became not a "pure woman," and thus, dirty and hated, 34.

<sup>135</sup> Rodríguez, *The Femicide Machine*, 11.

administration also attempted to put an end to the validity of GBV asylum claims,<sup>136</sup> but the “pattern and practice” of ICE officials to sexually assault inmates is well-known.<sup>137</sup> The documents of these accounts are numerous and staggering, and this does not only happen to women,<sup>138</sup> but also to children. The ACLU Border Rights and The University of Chicago International Human Rights Clinic put out a 50-page document detailing such abuses: one quarter of the children reported physical abuse, including sexual assault.<sup>139</sup>

Chillingly, as the women have begun to tell the stories of these atrocities, an officer warned one woman that if she reported them, “no one would believe her.”<sup>140</sup> What is abhorrent is that somehow these issues became even worse while I was writing this study: while the detention center is now shuttered due to these crimes that are currently still waiting trial, it is reported that dozens of women were given hysterectomies without consent.<sup>141</sup> This is both gender-based *and* an issue of reproductive justice.

As mentioned, the number of women who are leaving their homes in order to start the process of family reunification in a new context is growing. This has created a new set of issues that are beginning

---

<sup>136</sup> Jane Freedman notes here as well that the fight to any asylum claim due to domestic violence is increasingly disregarded, as “private domains become protected and not under the grounds of granting refugee status,” 51. See also, the most recent and telling attack of this here: [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/immigration/the-history-and-future-of-gender-asylum-law/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/immigration/the-history-and-future-of-gender-asylum-law/).

<sup>137</sup> Lomi Kriel, “ICE Guards ‘Systemically’ Sexually Assault Detainees in an El Paso Detention Center, Lawyers Say,” *Pro Publica*, August 14, 2020: <https://www.propublica.org/article/ice-guards-systematically-sexually-assault-detainees-in-an-el-paso-detention-center-lawyers-say>. (The actual link to the publicly available document for the lawsuit: <https://newsroompr.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/filemarkedcomplaint.pdf>)

<sup>138</sup> “In 2014, a Border Patrol agent raped three women and CBP’s commissioner did not even issue a statement until an appeal was made to the secretary of Homeland Security at the time, Jeh Johnson... Since CBP is not obligated to record or document any interaction that does not lead to an arrest, we often don’t know exactly what they are doing and to whom they are doing it.” Elizabeth Cohen, *Illegal*, 21-22.

<sup>139</sup> University of Chicago Law School – Global Human Rights Clinic, “Neglect and Abuse of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children by U.S. Customs and Border Protection,” *Global Human Rights Clinic* 1 (2018): <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/ihrcl/1>.

<sup>140</sup> Lomi Kriel, “ICE Guards ‘Systemically’ Sexually Assault Detainees in an El Paso Detention Center, Lawyers Say,” *Pro Publica*, August 14, 2020.

<sup>141</sup> Project South: Institution for the Elimination of Poverty & Genocide, September 14, 2020: <https://projectsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/OIG-ICDC-Complaint-1.pdf>.



to come to light. Janice A. McLean-Farrell has specifically studied the lives of Afro-Caribbean women who migrate to New York City, and the different and yet, “invisible” factors not considered. As the process requires them to garner enough funds to move an entire family to a new place, and do so through the legal ways the United States has available, McLean-Farrell reminds us of “the impact of the woman’s departure on the rest of the family, especially on her children, the high concentrations of female migrants in service industries that offer limited job advancement or benefits and expose many women to exploitative and/or abusive practices, and the psychological and emotional burden female migrants grapple with as they strive to create a better future for their families and themselves.”<sup>142</sup>

Yet, even women bringing their families together, which used to be called reunification, is now called “chain migration;” once more changing the rhetoric to a negative, fearmongering tone that warns of growing numbers of migrants. Furthermore, in the case of the United States, the practice of family separation at the southern border has been scarring. Wolf notes that not only is “suffering the point of the family separation, to deter them,” but separation was not an issue until women and children began showing up at the border together, making this gender-based violence.<sup>143</sup> There is still much to be considered when it comes to the unique experiences that women face in migration as a whole.

Jane Freedman adds another complexity to this issue as it pertains to being both a woman and one who migrates—the issue of not only making claims of asylum based on gender-specific issues, but also of what it means to be found stereotyped in order to have a valid claim to safety. She notes:

The securitization of asylum policy, with asylum seekers being portrayed increasingly as a ‘threat’ to states of the global north, has meant that women seeking asylum have been forced to present themselves as idealized ‘victims’ of ‘barbaric’ other cultures in order to have any chance of receiving protection under refugee regimes... These dominant representations of asylum seekers and refugees push women in particular into stereotyped roles of ‘vulnerable victims,’ a role that reduces them to the status of passive victimhood and eliminates possibilities of political agency.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> Janice A. McLean-Farrell, “When Women Leave: Examining the Intersection of Personal Development in the Lives of Afro-Caribbean Women in New York City,” in *Migration and Public Discourse in World Christianity*, 118.

<sup>143</sup> Wolf, *Just Immigration*, 92-94.

<sup>144</sup> Jane Freedman, “Taking Gender Seriously in Asylum and Refugee Policies,” in *Global Migration*, 45.

The continued issues pertaining to false binaries continue; white feminism, which will be addressed later in this study, either creates a vast and unreachable gap between the “other” women or universalizes all issues. Recognizing power structures, especially in terms of not simply becoming “a voice for the voiceless,” but listening to the voice that is being silenced by removing the barriers that silence them is important for those who migrate across the board and beyond their many differences.

#### **d) Spectrum of Agency, Spectrum of Objectification**

A final complex issue informing this study, is the migrant’s agency, which tends to get taken away, silenced, or simply unacknowledged. Viet Thanh Nguyen, a writer who also insists on being called a refugee,<sup>145</sup> speaks to this concept of the seemingly “voiceless,” stating that,

many of the voiceless are actually talking all the time. They are loud, if you get close enough to hear them, if you are capable of listening, if you are aware of what you cannot hear. The problem is that much of the world does not want to hear the voiceless or cannot hear them. True justice is creating a world of social, economic, cultural, and political opportunities that would allow all these voiceless to tell their stories and be heard, rather than be dependent on a writer or representative of some kind. Without such justice, there will be no end to the waves of the displaced, to the creation of ever more voiceless people, or, more accurately, to the ongoing silencing of millions of voices.<sup>146</sup>

Freedman also comes back to agency, specifically to hearing the voices of those who migrate, as she notes that there is a great disparity in the response to gender-based issues within migration because of the power structures that remain in place. When we only listen to a certain “kind” of person who has migrated, when people are still excluded from using their own voice and marginalized, even if it is by a kind-hearted, humanitarian NGO, it is still being done *on behalf of*, or *for* them, the savior complex, instead of allowing them to represent themselves. The irony is that while treating those who migrate humanely is apparently up for debate and highly politicized, much of what women deal with is

---

<sup>145</sup> Viet Thanh Nguyen, “Introduction,” in *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives*: “I was once a refugee, although no one would mistake me for being a refugee now. Because of this, I insist on being called a refugee, since the temptation to pretend that I am not a refugee is strong. It would be so much easier to call myself an immigrant, to pass myself off as belonging to a category of migratory humanity that is less controversial, less demanding, and less threatening than a refugee,” 11.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

depoliticization, a forced framework of powerlessness as their activities are somehow not seen or viewed as political.<sup>147</sup> Chen also mentions this tension in her journalistic work: “the flip side of treating ‘victims’ or ‘survivors’ as subjects of a narrative is that the process of intellectualizing the issue also requires neatly transmuting the subject into the object.”<sup>148</sup>

In a sense, quoting Chen here in this study, could be said to be part of this objectification. These stories are not my exclusive right to tell. However, one should also note that the stories shared in Chen’s study have been offered up to the public and continue to be shared to a broader public by means of my study. Nevertheless, one should continue to keep in mind the question: Will we let those who migrate speak for themselves so that we might respond justly? This is particularly relevant in terms of this study’s objective to allow those who have migrated to share their stories, so that we may listen and respond to their narratives.

#### e) Receiving Migration Narratives

Christine J. Hong is a second-generation Korean American, born in Los Angeles, but connected to her family members near and far in South Korea through the power of story. Migration is full of loss, and beyond storytelling as a function of “religio-cultural meaning making,”<sup>149</sup> Hong writes about how the power of story brought a level of sustenance and self-worth. She shares that,

Immigrants and refugees who cross borders and those who are crossed by borders, carry with them stories and histories that sustain and affirm their human dignity in new and hostile lands even when they can bring little else. Their memories and stories, and the potential for the concretion of new stories and the intergenerational reinterpretation of stories is invaluable during what can be the trauma of settling in a new place. These memories and stories contribute to the fostering and nurturing of entire generations of people past the point of immigration, migration, and displacement, while acting as a form of resistance to the often white, colonist, and

---

<sup>147</sup> Freedman, 58-61: She does take a lot of her argument from L.H. Malkki, however, the whole argument has to do with representations being political, and as Angela Davis puts it, “the personal is political.”

<sup>148</sup> Chen, “Bodies Against Borders,” 190.

<sup>149</sup> Christine J. Hong, “Storied People: The Intergenerational Power of Story in the Lives of Immigrants,” in *Migration and Public Discourse in World Christianity*, 142.

Western lenses through which native and indigenous stories are filtered and diminished.<sup>150</sup>

As noted, in light of so many who leave little to no room for those who migrate to use their agency, listening and reading migration narratives written by members of different generations and stages in the migration process is important to any conversation that has to do with attempting to understand migration at all. Even as those who migrate are grouped and categorized, even in hierarchical ways, their stories are their own and as varied and different as people are in general. Heeding these particularities as well as understanding the power of someone's story to transform another, both migrant and non-migrant alike, is crucial to the study. Because of this, this study, while it will mention short snippets and pieces of other migration narratives throughout, will focus in on three important and recent stories and memoirs: *The Map of Salt and Stars* by Zeyn Joukhadar, *The Dragons The Giant The Women* by Wayétu Moore, and *Children of the Land* by Marcelo Hernandez Castillo.

*The Map of Salt and Stars* by Zeyn Joukhadar weaves two stories together with interspersed poetry of fantastic imagery—one story taking place in the year 2011 at the beginning of the crisis in Syria, and the other more than 800 years earlier. After the family loses their father to a battle with cancer, their mother moves them back to Syria from New York City, in order to be close to family. Things are not the same as they used to be, and as tensions rise, the shelling begins, and their family flees as refugees through seven different countries in the Middle East and North Africa in order to find safety. The main character, Nour, dreams and remembers a story she knows and loves as she herself travels, and from place to place, as the journey gets more and more difficult, this story from long ago is interwoven chapter after chapter: Rawiya, also a widow's daughter, on a journey of her own volition, following the identical path of Nour, is fighting ferocious beasts, battling the enemy, and finding her dreams all the way back home. The story of the heroine Rawiya's epic ends as a conversation between two characters as she herself tries to make sense of all that has happened:

'But what is the lesson?' Rawiya asked. 'What is there to learn from all this—this brokenness, this chaos? We saw the wounded, magnificent world, its mountains, its rivers, its deserts. Is there any making sense of it?' Al-Idrisi laughed and held the astrolabe out to Rawiya. The sun glinted off its engraved rete, the silver shifting like

---

<sup>150</sup> Christine J. Hong, "Storied People," in *Migration and Public Discourse in World Christianity*, 136.

lace. Rawiya took it. Just as it had so many years ago, the fat disk warmed her hand. ‘Must there be a lesson?’ al-Idrisi said. ‘Perhaps the story simply goes on and on. Time rises and falls like an ever-breathing lung. The road comes and goes and suffering with it. But the generations of men, some kind and some cruel, go on and on beneath the stars.’<sup>151</sup>

Joukhadar writes about this novel that, while it is fiction, he sees himself in the story, even as a second-generation migrant. In an interview about the novel, he shares, “in what ways is it possible for those of us who have lost home(s) to both grieve what the journey has cost us as well as to celebrate what cannot be taken away?”<sup>152</sup>

Wayétu Moore’s memoir, *The Dragons The Giant The Women*,<sup>153</sup> pieces together by memory her own journey as a child fleeing Liberia during the beginning of the first civil war, finally crossing the border into Sierra Leone with the help of a bribed and hired female teenage rebel soldier. She frames the tale of the devastation that came to them through the symbol of a dragon, and what a dragon does, as she as a child could not fully grasp the wild animosity and imperialism within and among those with power. After a serious breakup in her adult life, residing in the United States, things she had not yet dealt with, including the memory of the soldier, began to bubble to the surface, and part of her journey involves a return trip to Liberia, where her parents had returned. She seeks out the rebel soldier that saved her family years before, and in doing so, hears her mother’s version of the story for the first time as she records and writes in the first person, completing her own memoir. While she never finds Satta, the soldier, she does find a version of healing and even happiness.

Lastly, *Children of the Land*, written by Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, is a memoir of living most of his life undocumented in the United States. Castillo puts together this memoir in fragments, not following any sort of chronological order, but in a different way that also clearly shows what it means to live as “other,” what effects needing to hide and be invisible has on someone when they are

---

<sup>151</sup> Zeyn Joukhadar, *The Map of Salt and Stars* (New York: Touchstone, 2018), 348.

<sup>152</sup> Zeyn Joukhadar, “Jennifer Zeynab Joukhadar’s Playlist for Her Novel ‘The Map of Salt and Stars,’” in *Largehearted Boy*. April 30, 2018: [http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/archive/2018/04/jennifer\\_zeynab.html](http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/archive/2018/04/jennifer_zeynab.html).

<sup>153</sup> Wayétu Moore, *The Dragons The Giant The Women: A Memoir* (Minneapolis: Greywolf Press, 2020).

simultaneously attempting to better their life, and when doing so, are criminalized. He remembers brief moments of crossing the border with his family, but most distinctly, remembers going temporarily blind from the stress. As many who study migration, and even study “other” figures in Scripture, Castillo writes hauntingly, reminding everyone that there are humans behind headlines, behind words, policies, and reports.

The first time I read Edward Said, I wanted to take a vase and break it into many pieces. The idea of the “other” was a Western invention. And so, in order to define itself, it needed to define what it was not. I was that idea of not. When I showed up on paper, when I saw my real name finally authenticated by a government body, it was only by agreeing to their rules, by allowing myself to be screened for filth and disease.<sup>154</sup>

It is important for this study to put migration narratives in the center, not only because it highlights agency and the power of story, but also because of the many parallels that they offer to what are ancient Near Eastern migration narratives themselves. These contemporary migration narratives have been offered up to readers, and it is the readers’ agency that decides whether these stories, their selves, are not just sensed, but perceived, then received as they are.

### 3. BIBLICAL NARRATIVES AS STORIES OF MIGRATION

Robert P. Carroll in his own discussion on these exilic discourses in prophetic literature writes that, “the Bible is the great metanarrative of deportation, exile and potential return.”<sup>155</sup> When considering biblical narratives as stories of migration, it is important to consider the centrality of exile in the history of Israel, not only as it became a framework for dating (texts are often named pre-exilic, exilic, or post-exilic), but also constituting a thematic literary schema. The notion of exile confounds scholars with ongoing debates as to “what kind of migrant” different groups of Israelites and Judahites would be, and the effects of the exile on these various groups. In considering the two texts of Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 as post-exilic migration narratives, it will be important to give a brief overview of a post-exilic hermeneutic which has also been influenced by contemporary migration studies.

---

<sup>154</sup> Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, *Children of the Land*, 170.

<sup>155</sup> Robert P. Carroll, “Deportation and Diaspora Discourses in the Prophetic Literature,” in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott (Boston: Brill, 1997), 64.

When interpreting exile, many scholars not only address historical realities of the text as well as literary themes and devices, but also focus on sociological perspectives associated with the portrayal of exile.<sup>156</sup> In recent years, there has been a resurgence of scholarship on these texts that include new and creative ways of looking at the dating of texts as a whole, particularly with reference to what is considered exilic.

In order to do tangible work on exilic studies in the Hebrew Bible, this chapter will continue to explain those specific parts that make up this hermeneutic, starting with a brief timeline of the history of exile. The study will attempt to discuss the difficulty of some of the historical and sociological claims associated with exile and touch on the scholarly disagreement on dating these texts. Not only historically, but also in terms of literary representation, the event, or rather, the process of exile, has become an important theological theme. In centering migration narratives, the study will also make a case for reading Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 as post-exilic texts and interpreting Scripture within the exilic framework with a new understanding of migration narratives as a whole.

#### **a) Ancient Near Eastern Historical Discussions on Migration**

The starting point for exegesis of any text includes some historical understanding of the context from which those words were written and received in. Text reception will not be dealt with in detail in this chapter; instead, a focus on the broad time period of the three specific epochs of exile will be given as a framework for further discussion in the exegetical chapters to follow. Once again, even the full historicity of some of the myths surrounding exile as well as some dates are debated in scholarly arenas. Nonetheless, the study will offer a brief timeline of events from which to work, and address some challenges pertaining to the study of exilic narratives and literature, including “what kind of migrant” these ancient peoples would have fallen under in terms of modern category.

---

<sup>156</sup> John J. Ahn and Jill Middlemas, *By the Irrigation Canals of Babylon: Approaches to the Study of Exile* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 5.

### *i. Judean/Israel Exile Migration Story*

The history of exile starts with Assyria and Israel—despite what most scholars believe to be a predominately a Judean perspective in these texts. Bustenay Oded’s classic text *Mass Deportations and Deportees*<sup>157</sup> has long been disputed based on his lack of concern for the devastation that does occur when imperial powers invade and forced displacement takes place; however, his work in conveying the strategy behind these actions by Assyria remains important. Most scholars date these initial imperial invasions and forced displacements, primarily of the ten tribes of Israel by Assyria, around 745 BCE, with the main devastation and fall of Israel occurring in 722 BCE. The complexities within these time periods will be discussed in further detail in the exegetical chapters, but what is most important is the strategy behind these actions as Assyria wielded its power.

Oded describes one of Assyria’s main imperial policies in terms of mass deportation, which had the effect of breaking down the people groups they intended to subjugate, but in ways that could benefit the empire as a whole in economic, military, and political ways. Deportation was used as punishment, for instance, if kings broke treaties or covenants with the king of Assyria, if they did not pay taxes, or if they rebelled, as in the case of Hoshea in 2 Kings 17. Uprooting peoples from the land they had always known, their homes, also served to reduce the possibility of a nationalistic revival among them, as the mass deportations the Assyrians carried out would also place people near unknown neighbors.<sup>158</sup> According to Daniel Smith-Christopher, even “Assyrian propaganda was aimed at the demoralization of the enemy by claiming that their own god(s) had abandoned them,”<sup>159</sup> reinforcing the absence and rejection of their national gods to keep their spirits low. Although the king of Assyria would want these peoples to flourish to some extent, so as to build the grandiosity of the empire, the overarching position towards the behavior and obedience of the newfound subjects was a “calculated frightfulness.”<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Weisbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1979).

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-44.

<sup>159</sup> Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile*, 26.

<sup>160</sup> A.T. Olmstead, “The Calculated Frightfulness of Ashur Nasir Apal,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 38 (1918), 209-263.



At a certain point, which Oded places around 745-705 BCE, a shift in the general attitude towards these deportees is noted when these forced migrants were no longer referred to as residents of Assyria, but were counted as booty. As Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal followed one another on the throne, “deportees in greater numbers became state-defendants who lived under slave-like conditions, or were handed over to temples and private individuals.”<sup>161</sup> Besides Assyrian art that showed men bound in chains being led out of their homelands,<sup>162</sup> David Carr recalls many Assyrian texts and art that “depicted the Assyrian army as feminizing and raping their victims.”<sup>163</sup> While some Israelites simply lived under the imperial thumb, were counted as property and used as slaves, yet still remained in their homeland, many others either fled to Egypt to begin the גולה (*golah*) community there as voluntary immigrants, but most were forcibly displaced, either internally, or as refugees, and after being regarded as property, became potentially stateless according to modern interpretations of the word.

After Assyria’s reign came to an end, Babylon conquered not only the Assyrian empire, but also finally conquered the land of Judah. The last two tribes encountered three historical forced deportations that both Ahn and Albertz hold to have occurred in 597 BCE, 587 BCE, and 582 BCE. During the Babylonian reign, there was no uniform practice of exiling peoples, however, previously mentioned modern day labels can help to understand to some degree. John Ahn in *Exile as Forced Migrations* discusses “what kind of migrant” the Judeans could have been in each of these time periods, although this study disagrees with the labels given by Ahn, as they are from an economic standpoint. With the great amount of construction and development that Babylon immediately put into place, not only would the migrants have become labor, but the first deportation would have been stateless migration, migration that occurs as the cartology shifts. Babylon also chose to bring elite migrants to the capital, which can technically be internal displacement, although experienced as forced migrations. The second deportation in 587 BCE would have been of internally displaced people, having fully experienced the violence of war, and maybe joining relatives in new lands. Nonetheless, since Babylon had conquered and “colonized” Judah as theirs, it would have been internal displacement. Lastly, in 582 BCE, after

---

<sup>161</sup> Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees*, 91.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

<sup>163</sup> David Carr, *Holy Resilience* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), 33.

Gedaliah was assassinated, the poorest of the poor were brought to Babylon as both refugees and IDPs, becoming export commodities.<sup>164</sup> While Babylon's empire was short-lived, many argue that this *golah* community shaped most of post-exilic literature, including the return to the land of Israel during the Persian Empire.<sup>165</sup>

Similar to modern conversations on migration, different kinds of migrants are represented by different Hebrew terms that define groups of people who are “travelers”, “sojourners”, and “aliens.” Péter Jenei, who writes on “stranger inclusion” in the Biblical narrative, differentiates between what is seen as a non-assimilated stranger, נכר, and as a semi-assimilated stranger protected by Deuteronomistic law, the גר. While the law codes do not necessarily indicate how one might change their status, he uses the story of Rahab to show how the indigenous Canaanite, normally seen as unwelcome, represents a small segment of assimilated peoples as appropriate.<sup>166</sup> Yet, based on Mark Glanville's extensive work on the term גר, it is also clear that while protected, they were extremely vulnerable, often a laborer or servant.<sup>167</sup> Knowing this and the dating of Deuteronomistic law, it is of interest to note how their own experience potentially shaped these law codes and understanding of the spectrum of migration.

The acknowledgement that events shape ideologies, and could even shape laws, is part of the reason that Ahn calls forced and return migrations the *Mitte* of the Hebrew Bible. Simply stated, he adds that “from a ‘forced migrations’ point of view, the HB/OT is best understood as compromised texts from different communities in the diaspora.”<sup>168</sup> The many differing generations that were exiled and displaced, through a variety of modern-day categories, and then, generations later, returned to the land

---

<sup>164</sup> John J. Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations: A Sociological, Literary, and Theological Approach on the Displacement and Resettlement of the Southern Kingdom of Judah*, 41.

<sup>165</sup> This argument is given a strong case in *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible*, as well as scholars mentioned in the exegetical chapters of Hosea and Judges, i.e., James Bos, Grace Emmerson, James Trotter, etc. Arguably, the bulk of the texts in the Hebrew Bible are Second Temple Period literature. John Ahn and Jill Middlemas' edited monograph, *By The Irrigation Canals of Babylon: Approaches to the Study of Exile*, introduces the idea of *golah* as new ethnic marker.

<sup>166</sup> Péter Jenei, “Strategies of Stranger Inclusion in the Narrative Traditions of Joshua-Judges: The Cases of Rahab's Household, the Kenites, and the Gibeonites,” *OTE* 32/1 (2019), 127-154.

<sup>167</sup> Mark R. Glanville, *Adopting the Stranger as Kindred in Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 2-5.

<sup>168</sup> John Ahn, “Forced and Return Migrations as the *Mitte* of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament,” in *Christian Theology in the Age of Migration: Implications for World Christianity* (New York: Lexington Books, 2020), 59.

of their parents and ancestors, would have a variety of understandings and interpretations that make up these narratives. Ahn gives a brief overview of another side of this history of migration that hints at the complicated nature of what these communities went through:

After the North Kingdom's mass displacement, a portion of the community that were not taken by the Assyrians took flight to Egypt. When the 582 Judeans arrived in Egypt, the Judeans in due course would integrate with the Israelites and the Arameans already present in Egypt. This gives strong credibility to the fluid and syncretic community that worshipped YHWH with other deities. They would eventually become the community of Jews in Elephantine.<sup>169</sup>

The way in which migrations process itself plays out in communities is extremely varied.

### *ii. An Overreach or an Opportunity?*

The most challenging aspect, beyond the issues of dating and historical reconfiguration, has to do with how to consider the sociological aspects of the exile in a way that is not overreaching in terms of being wholly biased by modern-day conceptions. The questions that involve social sciences in tandem with traditional exegetical studies should be ones we are eager to ask, rather than shy away from and label as non-sensical. What is most challenging, is recognizing that while there will be similarities, which will be readily highlighted, and primarily why these connections are made; there will also be differences that need to be highlighted adequately.

The study does take time to look at migration from a global, humanizing perspective, but it is also focused mainly in the United States context, which is clearly not the same as an Ancient Near Eastern context. Daniel Smith-Christopher, who asks similar question, nevertheless argues that interdisciplinary study of the Bible is a worthwhile endeavor, but one that should be accompanied by thoughtful questions that must be considered in biblical studies' engagement with peoples' responses to disaster and trauma.<sup>170</sup> Probably the greatest difficulty concerns the dramatic differences across cultures

---

<sup>169</sup> Ahn, "Forced and Return Migrations as the *Mitte* of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament," in *Christian Theology in the Age of Migration: Implications for World Christianity*, 56.

<sup>170</sup> Smith-Christopher, "Reading Exile Then: Reconsidering the Methodological Debates for Biblical Analysis in Dialogue with Sociological and Literary Analysis," in *By the Irrigation Canals of Babylon: Approaches to the Study of the Exile*, 151-152.

as to how an event, or process of any kind, is perceived. It thus remains important to take note of cultural differences even while using the modern-day labels when reading biblical migration narratives.

However, it should be also noted that the very study of comparative literature arose from texts that came from displacement. David Kelman, who researches these texts, goes as far as to call displacement literature “the exemplary experience of comparative literature.”<sup>171</sup> Yet, in the same anthology, Basak Candar recognizes that the challenge is to bear the “particularities of historical density... and collapse distances to show that [the reader’s] ‘here’ is intimately connected to elsewhere.”<sup>172</sup> From a justice mindset, using Candar’s words, to live in this tension is to “expose borders.”

A further complication concerns the dating of literature that may fall in any one of the epochs surrounding the exile(s). While the purpose of the study is not necessarily to fully identify the sin of Gibeah with any specific historic time period, the historicity of these texts as migration narratives, as well as who the readers of these texts were, is important for this study. As we will see later in this chapter, when reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 together as two post-exilic texts that both may be described as stories of migration, challenges remain regarding the dating of books that continues to change and shift as new scholarship emerges. Albertz specifically argues against the justification for assigning as many books as possible to these epochs, stating that the chronology of the term itself is too “imprecise: it covers half a millennium!”<sup>173</sup> In addition to the variety of scholarly opinions on text redaction, the dating of specific passages within an edited book should be considered as well. However, the goal of the study is not to solve all of these challenges with regard to dating, but to build on the work done by scholars deeply immersed in this specific work as a foundation for reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migration narratives.

---

<sup>171</sup> David Kelman, “The Cut that Links: Paracomparitism in Caruth and Danticat,” in *Trauma and Literature in an Age of Globalization*, 37.

<sup>172</sup> Basak Candar, “Framing the World: Texts that Circulate and People who Cannot,” in *Trauma and Literature*, 143.

<sup>173</sup> Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003), 204.

## b) Towards a Theology of Migration

A further issue to consider regards the way in which authors and communities alike begin to make migration meaningful in terms of the literary representation of exile. A literary understanding of exile sees themes and theologies that come out of not only the time period of this horrific event, but also, of how later generations and readers make sense of employing the verbiage of exile to their own circumstance to continue to make meaning, even if their situation is not the same in any way. Furthermore, Ahn argues that while the Exodus was of utmost importance, the exile may have replaced it not only in terms of ethos, but as an ethno/religious marker for the followers of YHWH as a people group.<sup>174</sup>

As exile was foretold, experienced, and remembered, themes and theologies were created out of it. The literature itself created from these epochs took on different genres, between narratives, laments, prophecy, oracles, and sermons. The different *golah* communities emphasized different aspects of exile, reckoning in new ways of suffering, ethics, their respective communal identities, and how they perceived covenant and their relationship with YHWH. Some of these themes have been categorized through historical exegetes as well, for example, labeling exilic authorship and redactorship according to what most know as Deuteronomistic History, as coined by the biblical critic Martin Noth and readily adopted by most scholars.<sup>175</sup>

Hendrik Bosman reads the Exodus itself as a retelling of their migration, specifically their exile. Using the lens of memory and history as “past as remembered, and not as it supposedly happened,” he views the theology that emerges from both exodus and exile as a movement from oppression to freedom, from Egypt to the Promised Land. This vision as an ethno/religious marker for this specific community is not simply about the past, or even the present, but also, about future hopes for “continuity.” Bosman,

---

<sup>174</sup> John Ahn and Jill Middlemas’ edited monograph, *By The Irrigation Canals of Babylon: Approaches to the Study of Exile*, introduces the idea of *golah* as new ethnic marker. Ahn also writes about *golah* and their theology in his book *Exile as Forced Migrations*.

<sup>175</sup> As found in Daniel Smith-Christopher referencing Noth in *Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile*, Janzen in *The Violent Gift: Trauma’s Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History’s Narrative*, Mullen in *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity*. Other scholars will be discussed as referencing the Deuteronomist in relation to migration in the exegetical chapters of this study.

however, warns that by “remembering the initial exodus and the return from exile as migration resonates with the dynamic understanding of religious instructions embedded in the journey of human life and not snugly (smugly?) rooted in the settlement of a Promised Land.”<sup>176</sup>

With Bosman’s words in mind, the supposed theology of migration has affected readership into current contexts as well. A number of scholars have applied this tradition of “exile” in the Hebrew Bible to their own lives. Some instances of this application can be viewed as productive. Gemma Tulud Cruz’s monograph, *Towards a Theology of Migration*, employs the perspective of exile in the context of her Catholic upbringing to express her bias towards justice, which moreover encourages all who read the text to use “risk as a heuristic lens” over against the predominate route of fear-based living, thus “to hope against hope.”<sup>177</sup> Ahn also speaks of a *golah* hope in which the unfortunate space of liminality can still transform the present reality.<sup>178</sup> However, other interpreters, particularly in the United States context, have sadly appropriated the notion of exile and quite ironically consider themselves to be outsiders in a land where they have been the colonizers.<sup>179</sup> A healthy theology of migration and exile does not equate the suffering of those who have migrated from any time period with those who hold differing ethical positions in the most wealthy country in the world. When appropriating a theology of migration and/or exile, applying it to our own contexts, it remains important to center the stories of those who have migrated.

### c) Foundational Framing for Intertextual Connection

A central presupposition of this study is that migration is a process, and that the biblical narratives that represent this experience of migration may thus have been written during any point of this process or thereafter. These perspectives will be important when reading Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 together in

---

<sup>176</sup> Hendrik Bosman, “The Exodus as Memories about Migration: Examples from the Hebrew Bible and Deuterocanonical Books,” in *Christian Theology in the Age of Migration*, 43-46.

<sup>177</sup> Gemma Tulud Cruz, *Towards a Theology of Migration*, 55.

<sup>178</sup> Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations*, 167.

<sup>179</sup> The study will also address the challenge to resist the binaries of this kind of thinking, the boundaries of oppressed and oppressor not being so clear cut some of the time, and even the responses of those oppressed, while understandable, must sometimes be condoned. For more on this, cf. Johnny Miles, 182.

terms of defining the sin of Gibeah. What follows is a brief overview of why this study considers Hosea 9-10 as well as Judges 19 as stories that represent the process of migration.

*i. Judges 19 as a Migration Narrative*

The dating of the book of Judges is heavily debated, and yet, is located right in the middle of the actual narrative of Deuteronomistic history. Mark Brett locates these historical, nation-building texts as classic Deuteronomistic theology:

The Deuteronomistic theology found in the subsequent narratives of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, can therefore be understood as a response to the trauma of imperial invasions—when the northern kingdom was overwhelmed by Assyria, subsequently when the Assyrians also invaded Judah at the end of the eighth century, and then a century later, when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem.<sup>180</sup>

Some scholars have debated Judges as being too post-exilic to even be counted among any tradition that could be in discussion with, or affected by, these migrations. Yet, as the study continues in the following chapter on the sociological impact of migration in tandem with the psychological impact, it will prove this to be easily refuted, especially as the exile becomes the event and process necessary to remember in order to be a part of this community. Regardless of the discrepancies between the differing generations, Judges would have known the imprint of war and exile, even as the narrator of Judges 19 told the story of something that potentially occurred pre-exile. With specific reference to the gender-based violence found in this dark tale in which borders and boundaries are consistently crossed, Judges 19 makes for a complicated, migratory story.

*ii. Hosea 9-10 as a Migration Narrative*

Scholars typically do not challenge the context in which Hosea, as prophet, gave his many oracles, as presented by the narrative frame in Hos. 1:1. Hosea is generally viewed as a pre-exilic text with the oral judgments given around the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, and eventually preserved in what would become the book of Hosea. Yet, it is theorized that, once those horrifying prophecies became true, the Twelve Prophets as a whole, but more specifically, what has been described as the Four Prophets

---

<sup>180</sup> Mark G. Brett, *Political Trauma and Healing: Biblical Ethics for a Postcolonial World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 9.

(Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah) were not only seen as sacred and divine during the exilic period, but also underwent redaction and were viewed as a composite text. James Nogalski calls this composite the “Deuteronomistic corpus,”<sup>181</sup> picking up on the many literary themes in these texts. However, others see the work of the redactor happening as late as 550 BCE.<sup>182</sup> Therefore, Hosea may have taught divine words of fury over broken covenant to the ten tribes of Israel, and, after the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, also to Judah. These may have been preserved in an oral format as a pre-exilic book, the final written form may date to during the height of the Judean exile. The overwhelming debate involving this “great divide” between oral and written forms of communication will also be discussed as they are relative to the study. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Hosea himself, as well as potential redactors after the fact, had experienced war, displacement, and the subsequent grief it brought. The explicit nature of Hosea’s words and constant fixation on the exodus theme lay a groundwork for the prophetic poetry to be read as migration narrative.

#### 4. CONCLUDING AND CONTINUING

This chapter discussed current migration studies through the lenses of structuralism, transnationalism, and gender-awareness; discussing the difficulties of and about those who migrate, as these will be well considered given the immediate context of readership. The chapter also introduced contemporary migration narratives, making the case for restoring some semblance of agency and centering the voices of those who have migrated in a study that can be borderline in terms of speaking *for* people who migrate. In recognizing migration narratives, the study also showed how some biblical texts are just that, welcoming the conversation on an exilic hermeneutic. The chapter briefly discussed reading the texts of Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 as migratory narratives as an assumption well researched in the study as a whole, which will expound upon the historicity and literary aspects of these claims in the exegetical chapters. Lastly, this chapter advocated for a holistic theology of migration, using exile as a theme that guides those who see these texts as sacred, as a way of seeing life as well as seeing the “other.” As the study continues, connecting migration studies and migration narratives to another multifaceted, modern-day study of trauma, will be of great importance.

---

<sup>181</sup> James Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 278-280, and *Redactional Processes*, 274-275.

<sup>182</sup> Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 236.



As was said in the beginning of this chapter, interpreting texts as migration narratives involves a focus on the historical, literary, and sociological aspects of these texts. While this chapter has broadly touched on historical and literary perspectives of reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migration narratives, the sociological aspects are yet to be expounded. It will be particularly important to consider questions of agency, which include recognizing the challenge of migration and the importance of narratives in migrant communities as a way to create a semblance of home and identity when people have been uprooted. The reading of these words amidst challenge is central to their survival. Yet, as we will also see in the next chapter, trauma narratives are also a way to deal with the trauma(s) that differ among the generations of migration as a whole. In order to fully interpret Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migration narratives, it will be important to also read these stories as trauma narratives—an aspect that will be explored further in Chapter Three of this study.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE INTERSECTION OF TRAUMA HERMENEUTICS AND MIGRATION LITERATURE

*They don't like the damaged, especially if they think the disease is in your mind. Trust me, the Americans and the English, they like triumphant stories. They want to be a part of the stories. They want to find excellent people, luminaries, pluck them out of hell, knead them flawless. They want to congratulate themselves for something remarkable. Keep yourself undamaged. (Dina Nayeri)<sup>183</sup>*

*Long ago  
I was a child in a strange country:  
I was Irish in England.  
I learned  
a second language there  
which has stood me in good stead:  
the lingua franca of a lost land.  
A dialect in which  
what had never been could still be found:  
that infinite horizon. Always far  
and impossible. That contrary passion  
to be whole.  
That is what language is:  
a habitable grief. A turn of speech  
for the everyday and ordinary abrasion of losses such as this:  
which hurts  
just enough to be a scar.  
And heals just enough to be a nation. (Eavan Boland)<sup>184</sup>*

*Narrative is curative. (Irene Visser)<sup>185</sup>*

### 1. IS YOUR STORY “GOOD” ENOUGH?

Dina Nayeri, in her book *The Ungrateful Refugee*, recalls not only her own story, but the story of many others as they seek refuge in new lands, and the treatment that follows. Especially pertaining to the flawed system in receiving asylum, the interview processes many refugees recall as they share their own

---

<sup>183</sup> Dina Nayeri, *The Ungrateful Refugee: What Immigrants Never Tell You* (New York: Catapult, 2019), 162.

<sup>184</sup> Eavan Boland, “A Habitable Grief,” in *Ink Knows No Borders: Poems of the Immigrant and Refugee Experience* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019), 120-121.

<sup>185</sup> Irene Visser, “Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects,” *Humanities* 4 (June 2015), 255.

stories in attempting to begin their new life, can be damning and further damaging. While many Home Officers are uneducated about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), one of the most predictable features that haunts those who flee what was home to seek safety, is that the bureaucratic system continues to fail the people it claims to want to protect; protection seems to come mainly for those who have the more socially acceptable traits of PTSD, and the “right” stories. As Nayeri shares about the many humans rejected, accepted, and waiting, she states about the system as a whole that, “the biggest stretch of the imagination is that the underpaid [officers] have such profound insight into the human heart. Why was one believed, and the other sent away? How did each tell their story?”<sup>186</sup>

Making the connection between trauma and migration is paramount to understanding not only the event and complicated process of migration, but also the complexities that continue to follow. It will be important to acknowledge the lasting impact of trauma on a person’s memory, on their connections to others, and on their overall well-being.

In the context of migration, trauma is how we can begin to understand what happens in the wake of such an event—the meaning-making process necessary for survival taking place and shape in and through words, through story. Trauma is a vast field, so this study will be focusing on the most pertinent parts of this theory in order to best view and connect these migratory texts. This chapter is most explicitly concerned with the connections between the two different, yet similar, disciplines of trauma theory and migration studies, and how one cannot make sense of migratory texts without taking into account the traumatic effects associated with migration. In doing so, this chapter will take time to define what trauma theory is as it has evolved and changed over time, ensuring that this methodology is still interrogated using the lenses of feminism and postcolonialism in order to best see the power dynamics on display, not only in the texts but within the tool itself. The chapter seeks to convince the reader of how trauma reveals itself in narrative form, providing not only a communal myth as coping mechanism, but to be passed down throughout the generations, so that no one will forget what has been, in order to create a better future. Ultimately, the chapter will make the case for trauma as an accessible, helpful tool for reading the texts of Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10, and most importantly, the necessity for using the tool of trauma theory in tandem with migration in reading the texts together.

---

<sup>186</sup> Nayeri, *The Ungrateful Refugee*, 224-225.

## 2. THIS AGE OF CATASTROPHE

### a) What is Trauma?

Trauma is the emotional response to a traumatic event,<sup>187</sup> or, as poignantly described by Van der Kolk, “unbearable and intolerable.”<sup>188</sup> The simplicity of the definition of trauma can be deceiving, as trauma is anything but simple in both its nature and its numerous variables and expressions. While trauma is a more recent field being understood in psychological, sociological, and even literary studies, in just the United States alone, 70 percent of adults have experienced some level of traumatic event.<sup>189</sup> It is safe to say that this statistic alone merits a reckoning, not only with the events that cause these responses in order to stop them before they continue to further the damage done, but also pertaining to an overall awareness of these effects and an informed approach on how to respond as individuals and societies.

Traumatic events can either be a “short lived trauma,” or a chronic, ongoing and lasting traumatic event(s). These terms most often are known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in referring to a singular event, or complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD) and disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified (DESNOS) in referring to more long-lasting events, rendering the effects more serious and pervasive. The manifestations, or, in the words of the definition, emotional responses, of trauma vary depending on the nature and bodily reception of events. The manifestations of trauma also vary depending on the individual and community, not only in who the traumatic event affects, but also how one(s) responds thereafter, making the study of trauma far-reaching.

Psychologically, depending on the severity of the traumatic event and the individual and/or community’s consciousness of said event, a variety of coping mechanisms go into effect in order for one’s body and mind to process the event. These effects tend to be overwhelming, much like the event itself, and the processes normally capable of working through wounding, will also have been damaged due to the traumatic event. Different versions of flight, fight, or freeze affect sensory inputs, and affect

---

<sup>187</sup> American Psychological Association, “Trauma and Shock:” <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>. Accessed July 14, 2021.

<sup>188</sup> Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (New York: Penguin House, 2014), 1.

<sup>189</sup> National Council for Behavioral Health: <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Trauma-infographic.pdf?dof=375ateTbd56>.

people in different ways. Beyond the effects of anxiety, and depression, regulating these negative emotions becomes exceedingly difficult. Depending on the nature of the traumatic event, various feelings like shame and guilt can spill over into self-loathing and a lack of hope for the future, spiraling into suicidal ideation. Intrusive flashbacks are common among both types of disorders, including dissociation that describes the literal fragmentation due to the traumatic event, even potentially becoming dissociative identity disorder. Hypervigilance, especially due to triggers that remind one of the event(s), keep one's nervous system in a state of constant overdrive, or become somatic issues as "*The Body Keeps The Score*," as Van der Kolk entitled his book. The fragmentation or brokenness of the event and its effects of trauma on a person can alter associations with the self and others, resulting in attachment issues as one becomes detached. Trauma can seem to collapse time for those affected, a body constantly left in the wreckage of the past event at all times, with a body still living and breathing in the present, but not present, leaving the event as something that cannot be fully mourned.<sup>190</sup> As Van der Kolk continues, based on his research, these effects also tend to materialize literally throughout the body, with a correlation between trauma and physical health issues that can even become comorbid.<sup>191</sup> Not only the traumatic event, but the context in which one(s) lives, also have great influence on which of these effects manifest and how a person will respond.

In her studies on those having suffered through the gamut of traumatic events "from domestic violence to political terror," Judith Herman identifies three stages for recovery for those facing trauma and its effects: "establishment of safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection with ordinary life."<sup>192</sup> Yet, even the stages of recovery should not be taken too literally, as the process towards wholeness and "healing" oftentimes does not follow a linear approach. Herman recognizes in her study and monograph, however, that while many theorize about the wordlessness of the event, a key aspect of this healing is to "tell the truth" about trauma.<sup>193</sup> Part of the coping process, regardless of stage, requires the individual or community to search for reason, or a reason, to make meaning and sense of what seems senseless. Most can attest to wanting an answer to the question of "why?" in the face of disaster and

---

<sup>190</sup> Stef Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 34.

<sup>191</sup> Alexander C. McFarlane, "Assessing PTSD and Comorbidity: Issues in Differential Diagnosis," in *Broken Spirits*, 82.

<sup>192</sup> Judith Herman, M.D., *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, 153.

<sup>193</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1.

hardship, regardless of whether or not it is traumatic. The effects of trauma, however, will continue to play a part in even the meaning-making process for both individuals and communities alike. Nothing is left untouched.

Suffering under the heavy burden of the wake of trauma's effects is difficult enough, but this process can also involve the shattering of previously held beliefs or worldviews, imploding frameworks by which both individuals and communities live. Previously held beliefs that are inevitably broken in the process of the event can be extremely violating for a human being(s) and cause not only those worldviews, but also faith systems, to come into question and interrogation. As deconstruction of *weltanschauung* can be disturbing, reconstructing, which is paramount to healing, can also lend itself to creating either new, healthy foundations, or, unfortunately, faulty, frail foundations. Due to this understanding, Karen O'Donnell and Katie Cross, researchers on trauma theology, argue against using terminology like "recovery" and "healing," as many survivors have noted that this term is unhelpful, as it seems nothing will ever be the same. They instead choose to use the term "remaking," as it seems more accurate to describe the process after the traumatic event.<sup>194</sup>

The multitude of layers and possibilities within trauma theory both simultaneously broaden and yet narrow our understanding of how not only current traumatic events, but also previous traumatic events in history, left, and are still leaving their imprints on individuals and communities. While trauma is a quite large field to mine, this study will focus on specific aspects that most benefit our understanding of Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10. Trauma theory itself has encountered a number of changes in its reception and practice, as the hegemonic, western, initial theorists received much needed push back in light of the contradictions in research, and in how trauma plays out in societies throughout the world.<sup>195</sup> With this understanding, the chapter will take the time to dictate the necessity of not only an intersectional feminist lens for trauma theory, but also a postcolonial lens of trauma theory as a corrective that will be applied as a fundamental methodology throughout the study. Scholarship is not and should not be neutral.

---

<sup>194</sup> Karen O'Donnell and Katie Cross, "Traumatized People are Not Your Mission Field," in *The Shiloh Project*, April 1, 2021: <https://www.shilohproject.blog/traumatized-people-are-not-your-mission-field/>.

<sup>195</sup> Michelle Balaev, "Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered," in *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4.

## b) Corrective Lenses

### i. *Intersectional Feminism*

Feminism, if boiled down to its most simple definition, is “political activism by women on behalf of women.”<sup>196</sup> Some have shared how this should, in practice as a criticism, take the time to recognize the power differentials in not only life, but also texts.<sup>197</sup> Feminist theory and critique have taken on a wide variety of forms, recognizing together that the patriarchal society that has existed since the beginning of time is ultimately oppressive. Yet, like other models of thought, feminism too needs to be freed from the normative suppositions that it adhered to under the grip of a colonized mode of thinking.

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 that recognizes the multiplicative nature of many aspects of identities as it pertains to oppression.<sup>198</sup> Crenshaw rightly observes that typically we view issues of race and sex along a “single categorical axis,” which then tends to erase and exclude most specifically in her study, black women, but also many who do not fit these compounded expressions. To embrace intersectionality simply means to acknowledge the many facets of interplay when discrimination crosses lines of age, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity, and physical or mental ability. This should be understood and applied regularly in feminist practice if one were to maintain the definition of feminism; many have rightly called out the hierarchical ignorance of what is deemed “white feminism” in both everyday life and in scholarship.

White feminism is when feminists assume, operate, and only advocate from a place of privilege; the default then is typically white, heterosexual, and cis-gendered women. Most typically, white feminism often seeks to achieve the status of equality alongside the most powerful, being white men, a quest which is still built on oppressive structures and systems that ignore the plight of others. It also

---

<sup>196</sup> Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim, eds., “Introduction: Feminist Theory, Local and Global Perspectives,” in *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1.

<sup>197</sup> Gale A. Yee, “Introduction: Definitions, Explorations, and Intersections,” in *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*, 1.

<sup>198</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policy,” *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): <https://philpapers.org/archive/CREDTI.pdf>.

ignores intersectionality, considering all issues that white feminism sees and experiences as the norm, invalidating the different pain and oppression of other races and sexual orientation may face, which are greater. While feminism is about dismantling the patriarchal mantle that deems male as normal to hold all and any power, white feminism can still benefit from patriarchy and will sometimes fight to maintain it. Power should not necessarily be something that is continuously grasped at or achieved but restructured and/or dismantled.<sup>199</sup> Audre Lorde in her book of essays and speeches on the failure to address intersectionality within these white feminist spaces, shares succinctly that,

There is a pretense to homogeneity of experience covered by the word sisterhood that does not in fact exist... Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is our refusal to recognize those differences.<sup>200</sup>

These differences birthed new lenses of intersectional perspectives under the banner of feminism, such as *womanist*, *mujerista* or *feminista*, and *queer* biblical interpretation. To be feminist, one should, in theory, make sure to be in dialogue with perspectives that do not simply see through one identity. In critiquing the power structures that feminism is calling to be dismantled, feminism should be, in the words of Crenshaw again, facilitating “the inclusion of marginalized groups for whom it can be said: ‘When they enter, we all enter.’”<sup>201</sup>

Applying this lens to trauma theory ensures that women’s voices and experiences are heard, and even centered. As it seems most psychological notions of trauma start with what is outside the range of usual human experience from the perspective of the dominant class,<sup>202</sup> understanding written and lived traumas from *herstory*, as coined and explained by Sonya Andermahr and Silvia Pellicer Ortín,<sup>203</sup> is

---

<sup>199</sup> To read more on the topic of white feminism, see Koa Beck’s recent release, *White Feminism: From the Suffragettes to Influencers and Who They Leave Behind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021). Another option is Mikki Kendall’s *Hood Feminism*.

<sup>200</sup> Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 115-116.

<sup>201</sup> Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersections,” 139.

<sup>202</sup> Laura Brown, “Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 101.

<sup>203</sup> Sonya Andermahr and Silvia Pellicer-Ortín, *Trauma Narratives and Herstory* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 2.



imperative. Through a feminist lens that chooses intersectionality, this study recognizes that as one moves further away from what is deemed normative, the everyday occurrences of trauma multiply and are held bodily. The study will consider this notion of what is called insidious trauma in continuity with the many possible different identities in this chapter as well. Yet, a feminist perspective for this study may not be enough when considering these intersections. From here, this study will also include the lens of postcolonialism to address a different avenue of looking at history as a whole.

## *ii. Postcolonialism*

Postcolonialism looks at history past and present using the lens of the effects of colonization, occupation, and imperialism. In Johnny Miles' book entitled *Constructing the Other in Ancient Israel and the USA*, he writes, "postcolonial critiques do not eschew history, but rather they advocate a different way of looking at history."<sup>204</sup> While there is some overlap with recognizing power dynamics from a feminist lens, postcolonialism looks at communities from the perspective of who is doing the colonizing, and who is being colonized, and how these devastating behaviors continue to be legitimized. This lens challenges the idea that there is a master narrative that tells the whole truth. In centering postcolonial scholarship, one would typically look for and re-present those who would typically be called the "losers" in history. As Kwok Pui-Lan writes in her work on postcolonial imagination and women's representation, or lack thereof, within it, "[we] stubbornly refuse to accept that history is only written by the winners."<sup>205</sup>

Postcolonial scholarship has much to say to trauma theory, especially as one recognizes that the tools being used are colonized themselves. Cathy Caruth, speaking from a literary and Freudian perspective, notes that "trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available."<sup>206</sup> She argues that although the unconscious is aware of the traumatic event, trauma's effects render the traumatized person unable to grasp or deal with

---

<sup>204</sup> Johnny Miles, *Constructing the Other in Ancient Israel and the USA* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), xii.

<sup>205</sup> Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 37.

<sup>206</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narratives, and History*, 4.

the full reality of the event, using the title of her book to describe trauma as “unclaimed.” Yet, post-colonial scholars such as Michelle Balaev, Irene Visser, and Stef Craps deny the supposed unknowability of trauma, referencing Caruth, argue for a hopeful new perspective of history through her version of trauma theory, and concluding that this unknowability would necessitate a “dissolution of historical factuality.”<sup>207</sup> Trauma and history’s intersections do not always have to be propagandistic or perceived as falsified information, because it will remain “unclaimed.” There must be room for nuance in trauma theory, as it can and is predicated on concrete historical events, even though some histories are written over and represented in favor of the oppressor. Taking note of the traumatic realities of Native Americans both past and present, and transgenerational as this study will further discuss, immediately provides a defense, as the history we have been fed is actually one that brushes aside these traumas and heralds the “victors,” while the subaltern and affected are told to be silent about the truth. Trauma is unclaimed, in one sense, to those who hold a worldview and belief system that praises the supremacy of white peoples; but it is very much claimed in the bodies and lives as well as within folk and real stories of the native peoples.

Balaev notes in her edited compilation of essays in *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*, that, “a pluralistic model of trauma suggests that criticism may explore trauma as a subject that invites the study of the relationship between language, the psyche, and behavior without assuming the classic definition of trauma that asserts an unrepresentable and pathological universalism.”<sup>208</sup> Visser, following on Balaev’s assertion as her acknowledgment of trauma happening outside the non-western context, states that in order for trauma theory “to be truly effective and productive, it must take into account material and ideological circumstances and incorporate a cluster of influences (political, social, economic, ideological, historical).”<sup>209</sup> This study keeps in mind not only trauma, but in general, the lens of an intersectional feminist, recognizing the fatal power hierarchies in scholarship, scholarship’s tools, and the world as it is known and as it must take precedence, especially in dealing with multiplicative levels of oppression and discrimination as this is discussed in context with migration. This lens will also help to maintain an awareness of what is insidious trauma throughout

---

<sup>207</sup> Irene Visser, “Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects,” in *Humanities*, 255.

<sup>208</sup> Balaev, “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered,” 4.

<sup>209</sup> Irene Visser, “Trauma in Non-Western Contexts,” 134.

history as well as in the present, in both an understanding of authorship and text reception. Postcolonialism and feminist lenses of trauma will offer a corrective to a highly westernized trauma theory, especially as it will be used and applied to Ancient Near Eastern texts.

### c) Persistent Trauma, Not Post

#### *i. Insidious Trauma*

Ibram X. Kendi's popular book on anti-racism acknowledges trauma in minoritized and oppressed communities but disagrees with the fields of insidious and generational trauma. After describing Joy DeGruy's theory on post-traumatic slavery syndrome (PTSS), he says:

There is a thin line between an antiracist saying individual blacks have suffered trauma and a racist saying Blacks are a traumatized people. There is similarly a thin line between an antiracist saying slavery was debilitating and a racist saying Blacks are debilitated people.<sup>210</sup>

The correlation he makes seems to imply he believes that DeGruy defines *only* inferior behaviors thereafter as transgenerational and genetic, solely as those that define African American characteristics, and trauma as only showing up in socially negative ways. While recognizing Kendi's logic as helpful, he continues to add that PTSS as a broad stroke over a people group actually erases "whole swaths of history," mentioning the plethora of positive, powerful things that Black people have done throughout history. Kendi is correct: people are complex and not simply limited to pain and trauma, nor should we only focus on their pain and trauma as we can thus create a narrative in which peoples need to be "fixed," a further point of colonization. But trauma theory as a whole would not refute these historically notable things. Trauma theory must and has also taken into consideration the effects of trauma also being resilient, becoming an advocate for change, saying to the future, "never again," using words, using rage, using silence. Yet, in order to consider through the lens of intersectional feminism and postcolonial studies the deep and lasting effects of trauma depending on identity and situation, the study must take insidious trauma into consideration, or else it ignores oppression and power dynamics.

---

<sup>210</sup> Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* (New York: One World, 2019), 97.

Psychologist Maria Root describes the intersection of the many different, multiplicative levels of oppression and the toll that follows it as “insidious,”<sup>211</sup> recognizing that the nature of being the “other” in terms of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity can also produce traumatizing effects on top of what is already traumatizing in general. This does not have to be deemed PTSS, but a thoroughly anti-racist posture would be to consider how colonizers have left lasting trauma on those that do not fit the normative that have and can move through the generations. Kendi cites many facts and figures but leaves out the fact that ethnic and racial groups “experience higher rates of PTSD as compared to White Americans... an explanation for this being the experience of racism, which is traumatic.”<sup>212</sup>

In her most recent work, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, Cathy Park Hong writes about the nature of the title of her book in action, taking from Ngai who coined the term: “Minor feelings occur when American optimism is enforced upon you, which contradicts your own racialized reality, thereby creating a static of cognitive dissonance.”<sup>213</sup> While this is used in the context of the United States, it is a kind of insidious trauma that can occur when “lived experiences of structural inequity are not commensurate with their [white] deluded reality.”<sup>214</sup> Resmaa Menakem in a recent podcast discussing his new book on this very subject, talks about not only this insidious nature of trauma, sharing that, “for my black body to be born into a society by which the white body is the standard is, in and of itself, traumatizing.”<sup>215</sup> From an intersectional feminist, postcolonial perspective of trauma, grasping the concept of what is insidious trauma, and now, seeing these lenses coincide, grants a better view for understanding the implications of the connections of trauma and migration.

---

<sup>211</sup> Maria P.P. Root, “Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality,” in *Personality and Psychopathology: Feminist Reappraisals*, edited by Laura S. Brown and Mary Ballou (New York: The Guilford Press, 1992), 229-266.

<sup>212</sup> M.T. Williams, I.W. Metzger, C. Leins, and C. DeLapp, “Assessing racial trauma within a DSM-5 framework: The UConn Racial/Ethnic Stress & Trauma Survey,” *Practice Innovations* 3(4), 242-260: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pri0000076>. See also that within this study, UConn came up with a tool to use in therapy with BIPOC called UnRESTS to discuss the effects of explicit and obvious racism by both outsiders and loved ones to then deal with culturally sensitive ways of handling these aggressions.

<sup>213</sup> Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* (New York: One World, 2020), 56.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>215</sup> Resmaa Menakem, “Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence,” *On Being with Krista Tippett*, June 4, 2020: <https://onbeing.org/programs/resmaa-menakem-notice-the-rage-notice-the-silence/>.

With this, the challenge is to ensure that, while we recognize these different traumas, especially as they fall along social identity lines, we do not live in the danger of the “single story.”<sup>216</sup> Trauma is not the whole tale of people’s lives or fates, and even as people live into different identities, this does not mean that they are a monolith within those differing and multiplying identities. In showing the difficulty in people’s lives as they experience challenges based on characteristics that they did not choose, the study must also recall that we give agency to these voices and remember that they do not all have to be the same in order to be celebrated and studied. People do not simply inherit trauma alone, but other collective traits and beauty that is not to be trivialized within such a difficult topic.

## *ii. Collective Trauma*

In the midst of protests against the constant unwavering police brutality in the United States, Jemar Tisby writes about what he calls “the familial language of Black grief,” by sharing that,

Under the constant surveillance, suspicion, and violence of law enforcement in America, black people share a kinship of calamity. A brotherhood and sisterhood of suffering. Like any family, it is not something we choose. This sense of solidarity through hardship is forced on us by the oppression we endure in a white-supremacist society.<sup>217</sup>

What Tisby is describing here without using the words, is not only insidious trauma at work, but also what is called collective trauma. While much is known about trauma on an individual level, cultural trauma is defined by Alexander as something that, “occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.”<sup>218</sup> Or, as Palestinian author Budour Hassan remarks: “Collective memory is a strategic battlefield.”<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>216</sup> Taken from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED Global Talk in 2009, “The Danger of a Single Story:” [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript).

<sup>217</sup> Jemar Tisby, “The Familial Language of Black Grief,” *The Atlantic*, June 10, 2020: <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/06/familial-language-black-grief/612847/>.

<sup>218</sup> Jeffery C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (New York: Polity Press, 2012), 6.

<sup>219</sup> Budour Hassan, “Fighting to Bury Their Children: On the Necropolitics of Occupation,” in *Rebellious Mourning Anthology*, 223.

While individuals also process trauma, as this study has already mentioned, collective trauma happens and is marked as “all members share the mental representations of the tragedies that have befallen the group.”<sup>220</sup> Volkan describes this using an excellent metaphor to describe why and how collective trauma remains a steadfast part of a person, potentially compounding the trauma itself, as it pertains to large-group, or collective identity:

Large groups in conflict appear to wear two layers of ‘garments.’ The first one fits them snugly and is their individual identity—the basis of their inner sense of sustained sameness. The second layer is a loose covering made of the canvas of the large group’s tent (the large-group identity) through which the person shares a persistent sense of sameness with others in the large group. Both garments provide security and protection. But because both are worn every day, the individual hardly notices either one under normal circumstances. When there is a storm, however—that is, during times of collective stress such as economic crisis, drastic political change, social upheaval or war—the garment made of the tent canvas takes on greater importance, and individuals may collectively seek the protection of, and also help defend, their large-group tent.<sup>221</sup>

Volkan uses this descriptor for those who experience the “persistent sense of sameness,” with one another in terms of different identity markers like ethnicity, religion, etc. When collective trauma happens, not only does it have effects on an individual level, but, using both Tisby’s and Volkan’s descriptions, there is an essence of not only, “it could have happened to me,” but also a grief and a rage on behalf of this “family.” If a trauma happens collectively to an entire group and not simply individuals within it, similar yet different processes of the emotional response are embodied in the collective.

As with individual trauma, it is necessary to claim the traumatic experience in order to experience healing, to make meaning as collectives are made up of individual meaning makers. Yet, Ron Eyerman, in discussing what collective trauma looks like from a sociological perspective, explains that “cultural traumas are not things, but processes of meaning making and attribution, a contentious contest

---

<sup>220</sup> Vamik D. Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity” *Group Analysis* (34)1 (2001), 87.

<sup>221</sup> Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions,” 83-84.

in which various individuals and groups struggle to define a situation and to manage and control it.”<sup>222</sup> Individuals, typically, only have themselves to contend with in making sense of the senseless experience of trauma, while collectives include many perspectives despite their “sameness.” In the same way that previously held beliefs can be shaken as they no longer fit the worldview within which a traumatic event occurred, core beliefs held within a culture can also be damaged, which can, as Eyerman continues, “entirely destroy a collective or at the very least demand a re-narration of the myths and beliefs which ground that collective.”<sup>223</sup> Eyerman would argue that cultural trauma is different from a collective trauma, yet he often uses the terms interchangeably, while not necessarily defining what is so “abstract” about their differences. Nonetheless, this study will use the term collective trauma as a consistent term, understanding that collective can embody notions that are also cultural as an umbrella term.

Erikson also observed in his research with those in communities harmed by human-caused disasters, that the main rupture that occurs is, “an understanding that the laws by which the natural world has always been governed as well as the decencies by which the human world has always been governed are now suspended—or were never active to begin with.”<sup>224</sup> This notion alone can be traumatizing. In meaning-making, rebuilding a foundation on which the collective will continue to live and which can take a number of different forms, may leave the proverbial foundation with cracks and fissures between the members of the collective, or without normalizing a trivial view of trauma, can strengthen the foundation and the bonds between the members of the collective. While it can be argued that the narrative and/or foundation is collectively decided upon, what happens bodily is not something that one can choose.

Yet, there are variables when considering the whole of cultural trauma. Laurence Kirmayer advocates that we need to recognize the instances by which trauma happens in degrees, and how communities can create these differences as,

Registration, rehearsal, and recall [of traumatic events] are governed by social contexts and cultural models for memories, narratives, and life stories. Such cultural

---

<sup>222</sup> Ron Eyerman, “Social Theory and Trauma,” *Acta Sociologica* 56(1) (2013), 43.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

<sup>224</sup> Kai Erikson, *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 240.

models influence what is viewed as salient, how it is interpreted and encoded at the time of registration, and, most important for long-term memories that serve autobiographical functions, what is socially possible to speak of and what must remain hidden and unacknowledged.<sup>225</sup>

This is important to remember in this study as this ensures a value on the intersectionality and postcolonial nature of trauma theory instead of generalizations. Different collectives, depending on those collectives' sets of values and even the ways in which they choose to reset a foundation post-trauma, will respond in varying degrees to the event. But, even if a collective chooses to be silent about the trauma, trauma always finds a way to be embodied, regardless of if it is accepted or not. Narratives can be shared, but also cortisol levels, and these can be passed through the generations to follow.

### ***iii. Intergenerational Trauma***

While the above discussed collective trauma, there is great potential that trauma can be passed down from generation to generation. As stories are passed down from generation to generation in remembering and retelling, so too can trauma. In dealing with trauma, transmission through the generations can happen, especially if the large group does not mourn the loss or reverse the humiliation. This is modeled well in Daneli's research of the legacy of trauma in Holocaust survivors and their families. She uses the term "osmosis"<sup>226</sup> to describe the generations that may not even have experienced the trauma as still impacted, as trauma may very well become their legacy. She saw this not only in the very settings of family therapy with survivors and their offspring, even if they chose silence,<sup>227</sup> but also in the stories and narrations of these children, and their children's children.

Volkan sees this in his research as well, remarking that, "over generations, these traumas become more than a memory or shared piece of the past. Their injured self-images associated with the mental

---

<sup>225</sup> Laurence Kirmayer, "Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Narrative, and Dissociation," in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 191.

<sup>226</sup> Yael Daneli, *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York: Plenum Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>227</sup> She shares that, "other survivor parents welcomed the conspiracy of silence because of their fear that their memories would corrode their own lives and prevent their children from becoming healthy, normal members of society. But despite a family-stated tenant that 'everything was alright,' the children grew up in painful bewilderment; they understood neither the inexplicable torment within the family, nor their own sense of guilt." Ibid, 5.



representations of the shared traumatic event are ‘deposited’ into the developing self-representation of children in the next generation.”<sup>228</sup> Volkan even goes as far as to say that these traumas can be so embedded in a collective makeup, that it can become an ethnic marker.<sup>229</sup> While the notion of epigenetics does not have much of a place in this study, and brings up quite a few ethical implications, Menakem puts it aptly, “If my mom is born, as a black woman, into a society that predicates her body as deviant, the amount of cortisol that is in her nervous system when I’m being born is teaching my nervous system something.”<sup>230</sup>

However, Balaev makes a crucial distinction: there is a massive conflation in intergenerational trauma between “a personal loss experienced by an individual and a historical absence found in one’s ancestral lineage.”<sup>231</sup> Dominick LaCapra adds that the degrees by which people deal with trauma also can exacerbate this tendency to claim transgenerational trauma over an ethnic group, and if there was an absence for one generation, then it “cannot be experienced as lack or loss,” in another.<sup>232</sup> Park Hong describes this concept in her book as she parents her four-year-old daughter, describing the memories, or lack of them, in her own childhood as the child of immigrant, survivor parents:

Because my parents never read to me, I first felt a deficit of weight instead of being flooded with nostalgic memories when I began reading to my daughter at bedtime. There should be a word for this neurological sensation, this uncanny weightlessness, where a universally beloved ritual tricks your synapses to fire back to the past, but finding no reserve of memories, your mind gropes dumbly, like the feelers of a mollusk groping the empty ocean floor.<sup>233</sup>

Caroline Randall Williams, writing in the growing tension in the United States as confederate statues were either torn down or protected, describes her very person as “a relic of slavery and Jim Crow.” She starts with the sentence: “I have rape-colored skin.” As she reckons with the knowledge of

---

<sup>228</sup> Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas,” 87-88.

<sup>229</sup> Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 45.

<sup>230</sup> Menakem, “Notice the Rage; Notice the Silence:” <https://onbeing.org/programs/resmaa-menakem-notice-the-rage-notice-the-silence/>.

<sup>231</sup> Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory,” *Mosaic* 41/2 (June 2008), 152.

<sup>232</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2001), 43.

<sup>233</sup> Park Hong, *Minor Feelings*, 67.

the whiteness in her genealogy, knowing well via story and fact that “White Southern men... took what they wanted from women they did not love, over whom they had extraordinary power, and then failed to claim their children,” she claims herself as a confederate monument.<sup>234</sup> This, in essence, holds LaCapra’s claim in paradox, in that she has no white people in her genealogy in living memory, but bears the marks of these traumas in her very melanin.

Balaev continues spelling out the issue of intergenerational trauma, stating that, “the assumed causal link between collective and individual experience obscures the different forms of violence, torture, and abuse that can produce different responses in different individuals, blurring the boundaries between the categories of ‘victim’ or ‘perpetrator.’”<sup>235</sup> As many argue within this trend in trauma theory, the supposed “trick” of recognizing this well is located within understanding narrative in fiction. There can be differences between the narratives that come out of trauma from generation to generation, with degrees by which it may happen, as well as the variables within them. Trauma unprocessed and unspoken for generations can still be transferring in new or rewritten narratives, and can be trauma held in even later generations, as those narratives can become triggers for what are deemed “chosen traumas.”

#### *iv. Chosen Trauma*

While the term “chosen trauma” can be confusing, because for the most part, no one chooses to undergo a traumatic event, it refers mainly to the processes that involve how a collective decides that something was traumatic, changing them, leaving a wound(s). The argument can be made that in the same way that individuals can dissociate themselves from what has happened, communities can fail to fully grapple with the trauma, and this can be “re-activated” at any time with a specific trigger creating a “time-collapse,” which “refers to the fears, expectations, fantasies, and defenses associated with a chosen trauma that reappear when both conscious and unconscious connections are made between the mental representation of the past trauma and a contemporary threat.”<sup>236</sup> Volkan’s research mainly deals with

---

<sup>234</sup> Caroline Randall Williams, “You Want a Confederate Monument? My Body is a Confederate Monument,” *The New York Times*, June 26, 2020: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/opinion/confederate-monuments-racism.html>.

<sup>235</sup> Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory,” 154.

<sup>236</sup> Volkan, “Transgenerational Traumas,” 89.

how these time collapses tend to escalate conflict between different ethnic groups and even intra-ethnic. However, he states that the time-collapse can either result in revenge or revictimization, harping on one difference intra-ethnically (as identities are multifaceted), and continuing the vicious cycle of Othering. This study refuses to see these as the only two options as a response to having old wounds freshly reopened through history.

We must resist the colonial binaries of responses as other cultures can show us otherwise. LaCapra confirms alongside Visser that instead of the typical “weak” responses that come post-trauma, we must affirm other themes we see such as “social activism, recuperation, and psychic resilience.”<sup>237</sup> As the study will show, most often this advocacy comes in the form of bearing witness, telling the truth of the traumatic event, even in symbolized forms, un-freezing time so that all might learn from the past in order to make a future that does not continue the trauma. How all of these characteristics can come into play in migration is understood well as the study connects trauma to migration.

### **3. THE CONFLUENCE OF MIGRATION AND TRAUMA(S)**

Migration is, simply put, an act of travel between what is typically called “home” to another geographical place (or, the reverse). But, as the last chapter has shown, it is a process with varying degrees of difficulty and dislocation. Also, as was considered in the previous chapter, there is a plethora of different kinds of migratory action. We also need to recognize the discrimination that tends to follow before, during, and after “settling” as multiplicative, now that we have language for these insidious forms of trauma that may ensue at any point in the process. While many have acknowledged migration as a traumatic experience, and PTSD is assumed to be experienced in the aftermath by those who have migrated in any sort of manner, the interconnection between the two different disciplines of migration and trauma has not been discussed at great length. Frank Ritchel Ames, in his own commentary on forced migration in the Bible, recognizes clearly that, “displacement alters the identities of individuals and, over time, the corporate identities of communities.”<sup>238</sup>

---

<sup>237</sup> Visser, “Decolonizing Trauma Theory,” 254.

<sup>238</sup> Frank Ritchel Ames, “Forced Migration and the Visions of Zechariah 1-8,” in *The Prophets Speak on Forced Migration* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 155.

Wilson, recognizing PTSD and the damage that ensues, coined a term elaborating on this damage as he researches peoples affected by war, forced migration, and torture:<sup>239</sup> “broken spiritedness.” While this study will not use this term often as it can be inflammatory, often taking away agency when describing a victim, the study instead will choose the word “survivor.”<sup>240</sup> However, the term itself is an emotional description of what often goes hand in hand with the experiences of those who have been traumatized, even amidst the nuance of the traumatic event not necessarily being one that threatens a life. It is difficult to determine when exactly this “brokenness” becomes applicable, as the varying factors that contribute to migrating are complex as well.

Yet, most postcolonial scholarship also gives an emphasis to place, making the literal migratory act of traveling from and out of “home” to a place to actually settle and be safe—safety being a key step of “healing” in any case as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—one of the most traumatic pieces itself. As resettlement, whatever that may look like, happens in a new place, factors for continuous and further traumatization may simply take on a different nature than at “home.” Recognizing insidious trauma, the many different intersections of identity being a potential factor for leaving and seeking asylum, as something that can continue in a new place, can also freeze trauma, as safety becomes impossible to find.

Exile is fundamentally a discontinuous state of being. Exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past. They generally do not have enemies or states, though they are often in search of these institutions. This search can lead exiles to reconstitute their broken lives in narrative form, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people. Such a story is designed to reassemble an exile’s broken history into a new whole.<sup>241</sup>

The connection between the two theories of migration and trauma is mainly causative: what causes what is a difficult distinction, as the two muddle together—trauma can create reason to migrate

---

<sup>239</sup> John P. Wilson, “Broken Spirits,” 110.

<sup>240</sup> This campaign which I was a part of at Treetops Collective entitled “I am more than my status,” by a refugee voice, Sylvia Nyamuhungu (<https://treetopscollective.org/blogs/treetops-collective-blog/i-am-more-than-my-status>), was mainly a push to change terminology in not only refugee/migratory communities but also in sexual survivor communities, where some of this simply calls for nuance in asking the person affected what term they would prefer. This also is discussed in the recently published *Texts After Terror*, as Rhiannon Graybill calls for additional clarification on the ongoing challenges and differences between survivor and victim terminology.

<sup>241</sup> Edward Said, “The Mind of Winter,” *Harpers* (September 1984), 51.

but can also be the emotional response after the process.<sup>242</sup> Migration, then, as a traumatic process, can be multiplicative in nature as insidious trauma can occur depending on the situation in which one both left and where one settles or resettles, be it under a colonizing power, as an oppressed minority in any of the intersections of identity, etc., and can also be transgenerational—the stories told or untold, carried in migrants’ bodies and imprinted onto their children and children’s children. Yet, in order to avoid the slippery slope of being racist in giving a broad label of “traumatized” to an entire group of people, one must recognize that the response to trauma is widely varied, and consider the notion of chosen trauma in narrative, in order to contextualize the issue. Ultimately, focusing on migratory trauma narratives as these connected theories take place in text will be of utmost priority.

### **a) Current Traumas With/In Migration**

While this has been discussed at length in the previous chapter, in the United States—the country where I reside, work, and study—xenophobia is either at an all-time high, or it is simply becoming more visible on the many social media platforms. Furthermore, research has clearly shown that xenophobia does not simply stand alone as a separate issue that has become politicized, but it is what the nation has been founded upon.<sup>243</sup> In considering the insidious trauma that migrants experience, remembering that this is mainly dependent upon place, we consider even the terminology that is used in the United States for most migrants, whether it be true or not: illegal. Former President Trump’s rhetoric validated xenophobic behaviors to be enacted in a myriad of forms.<sup>244</sup> As it pertains to immigration in general, comments made by Trump have been relevant examples of being threatened by the “other,” such as: “What can be simpler or more accurately stated? The Mexican Government is forcing their most

---

<sup>242</sup> As Visser puts it succinctly: “The basic and uncontested notion of trauma, then, is that it is a period of aftermath rather than a traumatic event or experience; it is a process following an experience that defies integration.” In “Trauma in Non-Western Contexts,” 126.

<sup>243</sup> Erika Lee, *America for Americans*: She argues the entirety of this nation’s history has been built on Othering.

<sup>244</sup> Coined the “Trump Effect” as found in Griffin Sims Edwards and Stephen Rushin’s essay and empirical research in “The Effect of President Trump’s Election on Hate Crimes.” They state, “We hypothesize that it was not just Trump’s inflammatory rhetoric throughout the political campaign that caused hate crimes to increase. Rather, we argue that it was Trump’s subsequent election as President of the United States that validated this rhetoric in the eyes of perpetrators and fueled the hate crime surge.” This was found to be true even when controlling for alternative explanations.

unwanted people into the United States. They are, in many cases, criminals, drug dealers, rapists, etc.”<sup>245</sup> Walker-Barnes pushes back on this comment, stating that “he was invoking the trope of Black and Latinx men as dangerous to White women.”<sup>246</sup> Besides the US/Mexico border, a travel ban created by President Trump added six countries with substantial Muslim population, the first ban in 2017 already being called the “Muslim ban,” for ensuring that no “radical Islamic terrorists”<sup>247</sup> threaten the United States’ safety, invoking the attack on 9/11. Yet, the ban does not include the countries from which the hijackers came during this attack, specifically targeting and discriminating against a religious group and people of color. Using validation theory, the link between the rise in hate crimes and speech in the United States suggests a causal relationship with Trump’s xenophobic rhetoric and actions being electable, thus validating these biased beliefs as something to act upon as acceptable. After making the statement about Mexican immigrants being rapists, Roof went into Emanuel AME in Charleston, North Carolina, shooting and killing nine African American women and men. At his trial, he directed his comments at Tywanza Sanders saying, “Y’all are raping our white women. Y’all are taking over the world.”<sup>248</sup>

Trump’s name has been invoked in justifying actions towards the “other,” white men in Boston stated that, “Donald Trump was right. All these illegals need to be deported,” in a statement after beating a homeless Mexican man sleeping near a train station with a metal pipe and urinating on him.<sup>249</sup> A white

---

<sup>245</sup> Michelle Ye Hee Lee, “Donald Trump’s false comments connecting Mexican immigrants and crime,” *Washington Post*, Fact Checker, July 8, 2015: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/08/donald-trumps-false-comments-connecting-mexican-immigrants-and-crime/>.

<sup>246</sup> Chanequa Walker-Barnes, *I Bring the Voices of My People: A Womanist Vision for Racial Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 109.

<sup>247</sup> Michael D. Shear and Helene Cooper, “Trump Bars Refugees and Citizens of 7 Muslim Countries,” *New York Times*, Politics, January 27, 2017: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/us/politics/trump-syrian-refugees.html>.

<sup>248</sup> Kristen McFann, Steve Osunsami, and Emily Shapiro, “Prosecutor: Accused Charleston Church Shooter Dylann Roof Stood Over Victims, Shooting Repeatedly,” *ABC News*, December 7, 2016: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/prosecutor-accused-charleston-church-shooter-dylann-roof-stood/story?id=44031417>. Walker-Barnes also states, and this point should be known, that “a patriarchal bias has led many antiracist advocates to overlook the fact that depictions of sexual aggression among both men and women of color have been critical to defending systems of social control such as slavery, mass incarceration, and anti-immigration laws. It is certainly true that accusations of rape have been used as a form of social control and a tool of terror against men of color. But it is also true that actual rape has been (and continues to be) used by men to police, punish, and control the bodies of women of color.” 111.

<sup>249</sup> K.S. Clauss, “Southie Brothers Jailed for Trump Inspired Hate Crime in Dorchester,” *Boston Magazine*, 2016.

businessman in New York assaulted an airline worker in hijab while telling her, “Trump is here now and he will get rid of all of you.”<sup>250</sup> These issues have not ended with the inauguration of a new administration: the most recent news in migration and politics involves Vice President Kamala Harris telling people in Guatemala, “do not come” to the United States.<sup>251</sup> Once more, Lee’s point is proven—“Xenophobia has thus never been fully excised from the United States. It has merely evolved.”<sup>252</sup> It is not lost that in the process of Othering and the stereotyping that helps the cause along, the truth is revealed: “The stereotype becomes, in effect, the reverse image of the one stereotyping. For the deficiency within that one hates, or for the fear of becoming that which one mocks, or for the desire for that which one cannot but would like to attain, the projection lies latent within the stereotype.”<sup>253</sup>

As we apply the additional lenses included in this chapter of intersectional feminism and postcolonialism, there are additional wounds and discriminatory behavior to address. The previous chapter mentioned gendered migratory issues, but these become compounded when adding the different layers of identities people hold. Because these humans have been given a specific type of label of being a “migrant” of any kind, they are seen according to skills-based achievements and statuses, rather than who they are as person. Antje Ellerman in her most recent article in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* goes into great detail as to how discrimination happens not only at any point in the migration process, but also occurs in the process regarding who gets to become a citizen. Ellerman sees this clearly along the boundary lines that are typically drawn in regards to social identities, and access continues to be barred.<sup>254</sup> Ellerman, discussing the intersections of differing identities and classes, states that, “the deeply racialized nature of global income inequality, itself the legacy of colonialism and imperialism, is maintained through migration controls that close off legal immigration pathways from the Global South

---

<sup>250</sup> L. Bever, “Trump ‘Will Get Rid of All of You’: Man Allegedly Attacks Muslim Airline Employee.” *Washington Post*, 2017.

<sup>251</sup> Sabrina Rodriguez, “Harris’ Blunt Message in Guatemala: ‘Do Not Come’ to U.S.” *Politico*, June 7, 2021: <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/06/07/harris-message-in-guatemala-do-not-come-492047>.

<sup>252</sup> Erika Lee, *America for Americans*, 335.

<sup>253</sup> Miles, *Constructing the Other*, 31.

<sup>254</sup> Antje Ellerman, “Discrimination in Migration and Citizenship,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46/12, 2463-2479: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1561053>.

to the Global North to all but a select few.”<sup>255</sup> The weaponized rhetoric continues to shape policy as well, with the US Commission on Civil Rights dedicating its 2019 briefing report solely to the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers, specifically at the southern border of the United States. It states that, “currently, in conjunction with xenophobic rhetoric about who crosses the southern border, the implementation of zero tolerance, family separation, Migration Protection Protocols, and metering at the southern border raise civil rights issues as to whether these policies target certain groups based on national origin and language status.”<sup>256</sup> Once again, little has been changed or is now different, although there is a differing party in power with promises of these changes specifically in immigration policy.

### **b) Can We Call it Trauma? Migration in Biblical Context**

We must apply what is currently happening to inform our reading of the biblical text, but also to understand, to apply what may be happening on a traumatic level in these texts. Many scholars have fractioned the Hebrew Bible into three epochs regarding timing: pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic. A holistic approach in working through these texts must honestly deal with the historical realities within as becoming traumatizing for the authors and readers. Trauma as response indeed has a lasting effect throughout Scripture. Reading the text with the lens of trauma theory has been employed in reading post-exilic texts in the Hebrew Bible for at least the past few years, but never explicitly connected in this manner.

Ahn, a scholar mentioned in the previous chapter as well known for his work on migration and the Bible, shows much of this process in his book *Exile as Forced Migrations*, giving a thorough account by appropriating sociological studies of the three and a half generations of Judahites in Babylonian exile through the analysis of migration as well as the types of displacement and resettlement better grasped with modern day verbiage and terms. In connecting texts’ historical backgrounds with these new sociological findings, Ahn remarks in his own work on migration studies and Ezekiel 15,

---

<sup>255</sup> Antje Ellerman, “Discrimination in Migration and Citizenship,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46/12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1561053>, 2474.

<sup>256</sup> U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Trauma at the Border: The Human Cost of Inhumane Immigration Policies*, Briefing Report, October 2019, 4.



work must continue engaging “cultural or social trauma, and disaster and survival literature.”<sup>257</sup> Yet, while Ahn probably lacks the space within this monograph to go into details about trauma, the study itself touches on certain sociological aspects. He does go into detail about the sufferings and hardships of the first, second, and third generations of displaced Judahites, referencing the historical realities the collective faced, but this study goes further in recognizing trauma in the literary text. As noted previously, Ahn calls migrations in general the very *Mitte* of the Hebrew Bible.

The Hebrew Bible is rife with war, violence, degradation, and displacement, and while we start with the historical realities that each text encounters, trauma should be the obvious and logical next step if texts are to be wholly considered. Acknowledging these realities within the text are also important for reckoning with the impact in theologies within the very authors and receivers, and previously held interpretations involving migration both then and now. This has also been briefly touched on in the previous chapter and will continue to be discussed in the light of the migratory trauma narratives this study researches. The variations of trauma and the responses to traumatic events for both individuals and communities also colors and creates differing ideas and opinions about migrations in the ancient Near East by those who are affected. In combining transgenerational and even insidious trauma to literary production in these generations, Ahn calls the works a “tapestry of counterpoints and counternarratives” to say that texts marked by trauma call for fluidity in interpretation.

These [transmissions by the first and one and a half generations down to the third and fourth] stories and memories have become the hallmarks of faith and inspiration in the HB/OT, the sectarian literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament. Through canonical consciousness, texts produced by diverse and competing communities on the move or those scattered in the diaspora offered their contextual understandings of faith, hope, and resistance, through negotiated integration, adoption, acculturation, and assimilation or, conversely, when required, by separation and isolation extending an apocalyptic worldview. This is the forced and return migrants’ generational consciousness.<sup>258</sup>

As literary works have been analyzed in biblical research pertaining to the post-exilic time period of Deuteronomistic history, David Janzen recognizes in research of trauma literatures that even “the

---

<sup>257</sup> John Ahn, “Ezekiel 15: A מַשַּׁל,” in *The Prophets Speak on Forced Migrations*, 112.

<sup>258</sup> Ahn, “Forced and Return Migrations as the *Mitte* of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament,” in *Christian Theology in the Age of Migration*, 54.

literary manifestations of trauma in the works of second and third generation descendants of trauma survivors are just like those in the works of the survivors themselves,” as was mentioned in the quote above by Ahn as well.<sup>259</sup> When survival literature is discussed at a later point in the chapter, as the transmission of trauma through the generations happens through narrative and in the body, Janzen rightly deduces that trauma theory as a necessary tool within biblical studies greatly helps us to make sense of the historical. In fact, as Janzen makes the case for in his most recent monograph, *Trauma and the Failure of History*, overlooking the trauma that makes itself known in the text erases the terrible reality of actual history, making those whom we are supposed to see rightly as scholars, an “abstract element.”<sup>260</sup> This study’s task is, in another sense, a version of revisionist history.

Some are of the opinion that making use of the lens of trauma hermeneutics is reading into the text too much, especially as we are not able to understand what an ancient Judean would think of trauma, or, as Carr succinctly asks, “what constitutes an ancient Judean vocabulary of trauma?”<sup>261</sup> While we have case studies and both individuals and communities that are alive and have been studied for some time to give us an appropriate understanding of trauma both currently and through previous decades, we cannot sit down and have a conversation with the Ancient Near Eastern people. Some words in the texts can be translated as harm, such as חָלַל (*chahal*), but not much is known about the full semantic range of this other than in the context of military defeat.<sup>262</sup> Yet, many studies have been done on trauma alongside their narratives years after they were written, and the fact that there are no living people who experienced these traumas, does not disqualify them. Attempting to understand trauma from a lens more similar to an ancient Judean’s context is all the more important; as well as an understanding

---

<sup>259</sup> David Janzen, *The Violent Gift: Trauma’s Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History’s Narrative* (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 25.

<sup>260</sup> Janzen, *Trauma and the Failure of History*, 8. The full quote: “The difficulty with ignoring or overwriting trauma is that this denies the existence of the trauma associated with the events, the events’ key reality for trauma victims. The victims then become not victims but an ‘abstract element’ of the pasts that the worldviews of modern or ancient writers prompt them to create. The reality of their trauma then disappears entirely, replaced by the pasts that the writers, ancient and modern, prefer to see, pasts without trauma and so without trauma victims.”

<sup>261</sup> David M. Carr, “Reading into the Gap: Refractions of Trauma in Israelite Prophecy,” in *Interpreting Exile*, 301.

<sup>262</sup> The semantic range of the specific word mentioned has been explored in David G. Garber’s, “A Vocabulary of Trauma in the Exilic Writings,” in *Interpreting Exile*, 309-320. It is of important notice that while it can mean things such as pierced, killed, etc., it has also stood in Leviticus 21:7, 14, as deflowering. The semantic range of other words, such as rape, will be explored later in the study.

of trauma with a postcolonial corrective. A bend and even bias towards trauma hermeneutics as a lens can do *more* justice to the historical text, by actually asking the question what the impact is or was of the events that are written about, not only on the people who write them, but also on the communities that interpret them.

What is difficult in biblical text, beyond the pieces of reconstructing a history based on psychological differences that may affect the literature we read, is that, once more, through a postcolonial lens, we have to recognize that the lines between the oppressed and the oppressor are sometimes blurry. In resisting the binaries, the words read in these texts are not so clear about who is at fault. Especially within books like Joshua, located post-exilically but describes destroying entire ethnic groups in order to preserve their pure identity and land claims, can actually be explained by their trauma; but we cannot condone the actions. Holding the tension of both colonizer and colonized at once is a challenge, and one that must be accepted in order to be faithful to the text. Here, there is great value in applying what Rhiannon Graybill offers up as her own paradigm for interpreting the so-called “texts of terror” in her recent publication, *Texts After Terror*. Instead of using interpretive lenses that are clear cut, Graybill leans into the ambiguity and difficulty within the passages. She uses the terms “fuzzy, messy, and icky” to describe the rape texts in Hebrew Scripture, terms that capture the complexity, the uncategorizable, untidy, and sticky characteristics that can and should readily be used in texts of not only trauma, but of migration and trauma.<sup>263</sup>

Others see this lens as a westernized lens being used as a corrective for yet another westernized lens. Again considering this from a postcolonial and intersectional feminist approach will center and listen to the voices of those closest to the context in which our texts reside. This means placing a high value on historical analysis, part of due diligence in scholarship, as making a hypothesis can still make this a helpful, potential connection; using the trauma lens does not have to canonize it. There must be room for embracing more possibilities for interpretation, including within the scholarship of trauma hermeneutics. Cause for interrogation of all lenses used while studying text is necessary hard work; the main concerns with this lens are noted and will be reckoned with. Nonetheless, the importance of taking

---

<sup>263</sup> Rhiannon Graybill, *Texts After Trauma: Rape, Sexual Violence & The Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 11-14.

into consideration the impact of history's events on people and communities instead of simply describing the events themselves, is the task of reading migratory trauma narrative. However, as we work with words and not a case study in therapy, this chapter must also include the influence of how trauma affects narrative, and in turn, migratory trauma narratives.

#### 4. MAKING SENSE OF WHAT MAKES NO SENSE: MIGRATORY TRAUMA NARRATIVES

As we make sense of trauma, which in and of itself is senseless, narrative, in turn, shows how many *do* that very work. Trauma, then, as a hermeneutical lens, reveals itself not always in a straightforward way, but in more of a “heuristic framework,” as experts Elizabeth Boase and Christopher Frechette in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma* write:

Fundamentally, a hermeneutics of trauma is attuned to the fact that language can encode and respond to traumatic experience in ways that correspond to the effects of trauma as well as to the mechanisms of survival, recovery, and resilience.<sup>264</sup>

While the last section emphasized an understanding of how trauma works in and amongst peoples, this section will attempt to show how trauma can be and is used as a hermeneutical lens to read Scripture, or migratory trauma narratives post-exile—how trauma works its way out through words.

In his presidential address in 2014 to the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society, Louis Stulman redefined the Bible as a whole as “essentially a record of the broken and marginalized.”<sup>265</sup> While a postcolonial lens will and does offer a bit of nuance on the conversation of who is oppressed and who is the oppressor, seeing as Israel has been both in its history, Stulman rightly orients biblical scholarship to take the time to consider that a record of those treated unjustly might actually change the meaning of the words they use. This theory calls for an understanding of historical background in order to deduce any sort of hypothesis on what traumatic event could have occurred to incur such a response—making it not a lack of context that trauma theory works with as a hermeneutical lens, but a correction of the many

---

<sup>264</sup> Elizabeth Boase, *The Bible Through the Lens of Trauma* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 13.

<sup>265</sup> Louis Stulman, “Reading the Bible as Trauma Literature: The Legacy of the Losers,” *Conversations with the Biblical World* 34 (2014), 3.

works on biblical texts that leave no room for what that history may have done to the very peoples who wrote it. While historical exegetes have been writing away the many teeming issues and contradictions within the Hebrew text, they have been ignoring the very reasons why the authors they study could write such things, that is, their own interpretation of history. As this study has shown in part, and will continue to show, Stulman adds that an interpretation of the Bible that lacks this lens actually creates a host of ethical issues, most often, creating violence towards and against the marginalized in the name of the god on these pages.<sup>266</sup> This hermeneutical lens offers an exciting journey to rediscover the text once again, to rediscover how one might rightly read and even apply it to one's life.

### a) Trauma in Narrative

As some general effects of trauma have already been listed, these same effects can show up in their own ways throughout the text as well. Some of the effects of trauma can literally be spelled out for readers as the protagonist or even other characters either endure or walk through an event and experience trauma. Yet, direct effects such as fragmentation, dissociation, identity fissures, or even calls to advocacy, resilience, and healing can all be found narrated in texts that bear trauma. Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín in their research on trauma narratives, found within texts written by females that had gone through or experienced either individual or cultural trauma, that, “trauma fictions typically exhibit formal features of temporal dislocation, narrative rupture, compulsive retelling, and a resistance to closure.”<sup>267</sup> However, taking note of the many intricacies within a text using this lens leaves room for a plethora of interpretations, as trauma itself will not *only* use these characteristics or features. This fluidity is also due in part to the nature of this ever-moving concept of not only migration, but also of trauma,<sup>268</sup> in what is known as comparative literature, or literally put, the study of literature (or other cultural creations) across borders and boundaries. Ballengee and Kelman, in their study focusing on comparative literature in such an era of expanding globalization, comment that this focus is best for,

---

<sup>266</sup> Stulman, “Reading the Bible as Trauma Literature,” *Conversations with the Biblical World* 34 (2014), 3-4.

<sup>267</sup> Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín, *Trauma Narratives and Herstory*, 15.

<sup>268</sup> More on this concept of the theory of trauma that *moves* in David Kelman's interview with Cathy Caruth found in *Trauma and Literature in an Age of Globalization*. She argues that “the term could be said to theorize itself. And that's partly why it's never just a concept, because it's always moving,” 12.

a way to work through problems of national and imperial growth and dissolution by addressing the effects of traumatic events on cultural products including literature, but also by providing the literary space in which to work through these traumatic events via the imagination.<sup>269</sup>

Graybill offers a space of imagination as she asks the question of what happens *after* these texts of terror, or rather, after how we interpret them as terror or horror, resisting binary categorization on both sides of the proverbial aisle. While Graybill will argue that Judges 19 follows the categorization of “an unhappy story,”<sup>270</sup> her perspective allows for more imaginative “afters” to be thought of in the grey matter that involves sexual activity. Allowing readers to feel that unhappiness is part of this after, a provision of literary space to both see and work through trauma. Along similar lines trauma researcher Shelly Rambo, while she advocates an understanding of trauma from a Christian perspective, pushes for many who find themselves uncomfortable with these texts, to not simply rush from death straight to resurrection, but to remain in the icky space in the middle, even “always in its dislocation, its distance, and its fragmentation.”<sup>271</sup> In some places she calls it trauma, but Graybill does suggest affect theory as parallel and similar, in that this place of remaining, or the after, is one that needs to be flexible, capturing more of the nuance and “contours of feeling and felt experience.”<sup>272</sup>

Specifically using this lens to not only understand the biblical text but seeing the lens through literal migration (trauma) narratives as known in the current context, will continue to be mutually beneficial. Because of such similarities in migration stories and history, while cultures are different, using one to read the other and vice versa will help to understand all around.<sup>273</sup> As this section will demonstrate, in some modern and ancient texts that this study will use as parallels, trauma has also been shown to use symbolism. Trauma passed down through narrative, or even through silence/loss in the

---

<sup>269</sup> Jennifer Ballengee and David Kelman editors, *Trauma and Literature in an Age of Globalization* (London: Routledge Press, 2021), 4.

<sup>270</sup> Graybill, *Texts After Terror*, 144.

<sup>271</sup> Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 8.

<sup>272</sup> Graybill, *Texts After Terror*, 10.

<sup>273</sup> Which is also why all three of the texts chosen for comparative analysis come from differing contexts, yet “settle” in the United States; as the study focuses on the issues of migration in the United States, the texts are important for variety and emphasizing the differences *and* similarities.

generations to follow, can also create what is called survival literature. However, coming to terms with not only the authorship of traumatic narratives, but also how those texts are received and understood in different generations depending on their context, can influence how these texts are wielded, or not.

### **b) Safety in Symbolism**

The steps to recovery and healing, while not linear, have been mentioned earlier in the chapter, citing Herman's description as, "establishment of safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection with ordinary life."<sup>274</sup> Herman goes further to assert that recovering from trauma involves "reconstructing the trauma narrative."<sup>275</sup> This becomes ultimately problematic in cases where trauma leaves a person without words, as is asserted by many trauma theorists, making this seem virtually impossible to accomplish or attain. However, as those same theorists would attest, trauma always finds a way to come out and show itself, one way or another.

In narrative, even if one has not been able to establish a semblance of safety, it has been seen that it can be extremely beneficial to use symbolic language, de-symbolization and symbolization,<sup>276</sup> in order to provide a safer encounter<sup>277</sup> with what is entirely unsafe, or, inverting Caruth's statement on trauma, being able to "claim unclaimed experience."<sup>278</sup> Ultimately, as Herman remarks, "remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims."<sup>279</sup> In order to "tell the truth" of what has happened, creating a distance in language by making it symbolic enables safety, regardless of whether or not it fully exists or even can to be established. Juliana Claassens in her work on reading trauma narratives furthermore

---

<sup>274</sup> Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 153.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

<sup>276</sup> Richard Lasky, "Introduction," in *Symbolization and Desymbolization: Essays in Honor of Norbert Freedman* (New York: Other Press, 2002).

<sup>277</sup> Ronald Granofsky, *The Trauma Novel: Contemporary Symbolic Depictions of Collective Disaster* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 6-7.

<sup>278</sup> Juliana L. Claassens, *Writing and Reading to Survive: Biblical and Contemporary Trauma Narratives in Conversation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020), 7.

<sup>279</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1.

argues that when stories that are unspeakable are retold “in symbolic terms, traumatic memory is transformed into narrative memory... which forms an important part of moving towards recovery.”<sup>280</sup>

Within this symbolization, however, is also the question of memory. How can one symbolize if one does not remember, or purposely leave out key details in order to keep that safety from re-traumatization? Many who lack full understanding of trauma in general fixate on this point of memory, mainly from the stance that those who are traumatized are inaccurate, questioning their accuracy or even virtue. But, even history is not necessarily concerned with what really happened, but how do *I*, or my *community*, interpret and remember this event?<sup>281</sup> Bosman, using this interpretation of history, argues that “memories are crucial for identity formation—we are indeed what we remember (and forget?).”<sup>282</sup> Many prefer clear answers instead of the nuance and fluidity of effects that occur due to traumatic events in history, regardless of what “really” happened. Reframing the question instead to ask why the author would choose such symbolization, gives insight into the very trauma one or one’s community may be feeling.

Moore’s book *The Dragons The Giant The Women* explicitly uses symbolization for most of the book, and the author herself explains how she was able to write so distinctly about these traumas without it completely destroying her. Although her book is a memoir, walking through being a child in the middle of Liberia’s civil war, she used symbolism in order to make sense of what was occurring. In reckoning with the current president, Samuel Doe, imperialism, and what was about to come, she compared it to a folklore she knew about the Hawa Undu dragon.

The Hawa Undu dragon was once a prince with good intentions, who entered the forest to avenge the death of his family, all buried now in the hills of Bomi Country. He was a handsome prince, tall with broad shoulders, high cheeks, and coarse hands marked by the victory of his battles. He entered the forest and told the people that he would kill the dragons who left mountains of ashes in Buchanan and Virginia, who left poisoned eggs in Careysburg and Kakata. But the prince became a dragon himself. One with asymmetrical teeth, taloned elbows, and paper-thin eyes. One with a crooked

---

<sup>280</sup> Claassens, *Writing and Reading to Survive*, 10.

<sup>281</sup> Jan Assman, *Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in the Book of Exodus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 34. This is further discussed by Hendrik Bosman in his chapter, “The Exodus as Memories about Migration,” in *Christian Theology in the Age of Migration*.

<sup>282</sup> Bosman, “The Exodus as Memories,” 46.



back, coarse like the hollows of the iron mines where many sons were still lost, always dying. One rich enough to fly, yet too poor to know where to go. He humbugged the animals, killed for food, forgot his promises. And now, Hawa Undu was president of Liberia, once a prince with good intentions. Ol' Ma said everybody was talking about him because there was another prince who wanted to enter the forest and kill Hawa Undu, to restore peace. This prince was named Charles, like my Ol' Pa. Some thought he would be the real thing—that he could kill Hawa Undu and put an end to the haunting of the forest and the spirit princes who danced throughout—but others feared he would be the same, that no prince could enter the forest and keep his intentions. The woods will blind, will blunder. Hawa Undu would never die.<sup>283</sup>

At a recent interview about her book, fellow author Brit Bennett asked Moore how she was able to write about something so clearly traumatizing. Moore responded succinctly, sharing that when she recalled her memories, it was incredibly painful, so she placed herself as a fictional author in the shoes of her five-year-old self, creating distance, removing herself. Furthermore, she explained that she needed to give the extremely painful events symbols, visuals, and devices instead of using only her memories. She wrote in fragments, listening to her body as it wore out with the loss, stepping away when she needed to. Yet, the image of the dragon was a way to fully describe what was happening without actually talking about it.<sup>284</sup>

This is similar to what is seen in Joukhadar's *The Map of the Salt and Stars*. While his book is not a memoir, the parallels between Joukhadar's own life and the two lives within the book describe a similar journey. As has been mentioned, the tale involves one of a little girl fleeing from Syria as a refugee, while using folklore to cope with her current journey. The character, Nour, holds tightly on to this piece of fiction through the old narrative of Rawiya in order to tell her story the way she wants to, but also, in order to find hope as her situation seemed absolutely hopeless. Joukhadar himself would also identify with some key sections in the fiction he wrote, but with some symbolic distance as well. Joukhadar lost his own father at the age of eight to cancer. Growing up in America with an Arab father

---

<sup>283</sup> Wayétu Moore, *The Dragons*, 10-11.

<sup>284</sup> Wayétu Moore and Brit Bennett, *At Home with Literati: Wayetu Moore & Brit Bennett* (Literati Bookstore), recorded August 12, 2020, uploaded November 1, 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLcfmxXRLH4>.

and white mother left no answer to the question of “where is home?” as, “despite being born in America, my adopted country would never adopt me.”<sup>285</sup>

Despite what is happening in my country, despite the white people who claimed to love me and yet told me to my face that people like me—Syrian, Arab, Muslim—can never be American, I am here. Grief and exile and oppression: these are things communities of color, particularly black and indigenous communities, have survived in this country since its inception. They are things my ancestors survived, too.<sup>286</sup>

Joukhadar shares honestly about the violence that he has now forgiven his father for, and the ways in which no one understood that violence, although it was clearly passed down from the generation before. In understanding trauma, not only is the current trauma of being Othered in a place that is supposed to be home because of ethnicity and sexuality, something to write from, but the trauma handed down to him, also made an impact. While we share the benefits of the artistry enjoyed in the novel created, there is something to be said of the pain it is born out of.

Still, to sing is to tell a story, and to tell stories is to bear witness to the joy and the pain of what happened, of what we saw, of what we lived. This is the gift at the heart of music and of storytelling: the refusal to forget.<sup>287</sup>

### c) Naming, Story, Testimony as Re-Making

While the use of symbolism can create a safe distance, beginning the recovery or re-making process through trauma, other scholars have also noted that, “where trauma unhinges victims and their loved ones from existentialist ground of their being, narrative offers the promise of repair.”<sup>288</sup> As survivors begin to tell the truth, many have noticed these healing properties, naming it in a number of ways. For

---

<sup>285</sup> Joukhadar, “Stitching wounds with heirloom thread: Home, loss, and forgiveness,” *Salon*, May 27, 2018: <https://www.salon.com/2018/05/27/stitching-wounds-with-heirloom-thread/>.

<sup>286</sup> Joukhadar, “The Night in My Hair: Henna, Syria, and the Muslim Ban,” *The Paris Review*, February 21, 2018: <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/02/21/night-hair-henna-syria-muslim-ban/>.

<sup>287</sup> Zeyn Joukhadar, “Jennifer Zeynab Joukhadar’s Playlist for Her Novel ‘The Map of Salt and Stars,’” in *Largehearted Boy*, April 30, 2018: [http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/archive/2018/04/jennifer\\_zeynab.html](http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/archive/2018/04/jennifer_zeynab.html).

<sup>288</sup> Janet Ruffelt, “Reversing Fortune: War, Psychic Trauma, and the Promise of Narrative Repair,” in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, edited by Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011), 325.

instance, Hilda Lindemann Nelson calls this process or using literature to recreate fractured identities “narrative repair.”<sup>289</sup> Kathleen M. O’Connor demonstrates how authors and communities have used post-traumatic literary intervention (PTLI) in order to bridge the emotional and mental splitting of trauma.<sup>290</sup> However, Suzette Henke’s term, “scriptotherapy,” probably best captures this “process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic re-enactment.”<sup>291</sup>

This process of “scriptotherapy” also forms the base of Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín’s edited monograph on trauma narratives which they describe as follows:

One of the main goals of ‘writing through’ a traumatic experience would be, then, to articulate an unbearable psychic wound that the subject or group is not able to communicate or exteriorize, that is to say, what cannot be spoken may be at least represented and mediated through cultural practices... Contemporary literature and art have become increasingly interested in the potential of trauma narratives to disclose silenced accounts of history, experiment with the ways in which trauma can be represented, and attempt to deal with these experiences of human suffering.<sup>292</sup>

In her study on trauma narrative in non-western contexts, Irene Visser states that “storytelling reduces fragmentation, dissociation, and other trauma symptoms,” as it can be a source of re-connection with the community and even ancestors after the event.<sup>293</sup> A decolonized ideal of trauma theory in narrative calls for centralizing “oral modes of narrative and their ritual function in Indigenous communities,”<sup>294</sup> as well as understanding that “narrativization is empowering to individuals *and* their communities, and is in fact crucial to cultural survival.”<sup>295</sup> As the study seeks to understand what is an Ancient Near Eastern context of coping through trauma in narrative, folklore and its continued retelling and also re-presenting through generations in ritual, can be beneficial for recognizing other contexts that

---

<sup>289</sup> Hilda Lindemann Nelson, *Damaged Identities, Narrative Repair* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), xiii.

<sup>290</sup> O’Connor, “How Trauma Studies Can Contribute,” 213.

<sup>291</sup> Suzette A. Henke, as found in *Trauma Narratives and Herstory*, 3.

<sup>292</sup> Sonya Andermahr and Silvia Pellicer-Ortín, *Trauma Narratives and Herstory* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 3.

<sup>293</sup> Visser, “Trauma in Non-Western Contexts,” 128.

<sup>294</sup> Visser, “Decolonizing Trauma Theory,” 259.

<sup>295</sup> Visser, “Decolonizing Trauma Theory,” 257, italics mine.

share similarities. Trauma, inherently, needs narrativization. Claassens poignantly remarks in her own work on writing and reading of trauma narratives that “trauma victims need trauma narratives in order to become trauma survivors.”<sup>296</sup>

While those who are not the directly affected cannot be the ones that outline or “save” others, a colonizing act, it is important to note that testimony has produced help in a myriad of ways for refugees. Inger Agger and Søren Buus Jensen specifically encounter this in their case study with political refugees and the western therapist. As was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, it is actually testimony that is asked for when asylum is sought, a narrative is asked, for that answers the question of “why are you here?” Although this has also created a plethora of issues, it is in this space that Agger and Jensen have seen that a testimony, the trauma story, can actually give meaning to the horror people have incurred, reframing their pain: “private pain is transformed into political dignity.”<sup>297</sup> As it is shaped into something new, it also becomes a place where injustice is condemned. One example of contemporary migration narratives helping individuals and communities deal with the trauma associated with the migration experience, is in the form of *Children of the Land*, the memoir written by Marcelo Hernandez Castillo. In this memoir, Castillo writes honestly about his experience of being undocumented in a land where no one wants him. Castillo describes the time where he went temporarily blind while crossing the United States southern border, feeling the stress of the occasion in his body even as a child in 1993. The book itself is in fragments as “movements,” describing migration as different things; the account is not chronological but placed together in a way that can yet be followed. This book can be described as writing through trauma, even as the story is not finished yet, his life still one to be lived. The ending describes his “fifth movement,” as he takes all of the documents he has acquired through the years that he could never throw away, dissolving them into pulp, creating things out of these documents that held his life as a means of control over it, instead of it continuously being determined and defined by other people.

I wanted it to become something more than the sum of its parts—a rearrangement of the details of my life into a better outcome. Everything that went into that bucket was still there, nothing had gone away: the paper, the cotton in the paper, the dye in the

---

<sup>296</sup> Claassens, *Writing and Reading*, 2.

<sup>297</sup> Inger Agger and Søren Buus Jensen, “Testimony as Ritual and Evidence in Psychotherapy for Political Refugees,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 3 (1990), 199: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00975139#citeas>.

ink, the glue, and the chemicals that gave the paper its clinical whiteness. In the vat, the pulp would never return to what it was before. It was irreversible. There was a time I wanted to exist as a series of cyphers, to live in that impossibility of ever being put back together, by which I mean I wanted to not have a past.<sup>298</sup>

Castillo not only offers a candid reflection on migration; he also looks to the future ahead which is best represented in his thoughts on meeting his newborn son. His story does not end with a sigh of relief, but a sadness, unhappiness, that can actually be a political testimony as well.

#### d) “Survival” Literature

In some sense stories of migration written by those who have survived the traumatic process of migration can be said to be survival literature. Kali Tal writes in her book *Worlds of Hurt* how

Survival literature tends to appear at least a decade after the traumatic experience in question. As the years pass and the immediacy of the event fades into memory the process of revision begins to occur in the mind of each survivor. The dislocation of trauma, which removed meaning from the world, is gradually replaced by new stories about the past that can support a rewritten personal myth. The survivor’s perception of community is a crucial element in the shaping of her new myth.<sup>299</sup>

With reference to the biblical text, this would, in effect, make just about every text that is written post-exile, in fact, survival literature, essentially what is implied by Stulman in the beginning of this section. As mentioned, this is also a key and crucial part of the process of those who have been victimized by traumatic events into being survivors—being able to name and narrate what happened. By definition, this study will also call the literature of those who are living with transgenerational trauma survival literature, as Janzen himself mentions seeing the effects in even the second or third generation.<sup>300</sup>

In a contemporary context of migration, Wayétu Moore writes about how these specific things are passed down through the generations, the stories, the proverbs, the memories. She says:

---

<sup>298</sup> Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, *Children of the Land*, 351-353.

<sup>299</sup> Kali Tal, *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 125.

<sup>300</sup> Janzen, *The Violent Gift*, 25.

The griots and the djelis do not write down their stories. They are divine tellers with memories that span thousands of years of our history. They never needed to write. Their memories are scripture. They tell the Ol'Mas all that is and all that ever was and, on some occasions, what will be. Those Ol'Mas tell their grandchildren, and when those grandchildren become Ol'Mas, they tell their grandchildren, and so on. This is how we recite scripture. This is how the truth was kept, how some decisions were made, and so I paid attention when the Ol'Mas told stories they had heard from their griots and djelis.<sup>301</sup>

Moore's memories of ancestors' memories being passed down from generations before aligns well with what researcher Christine Hong has noticed in narratives of immigration. Hong finds that there is dissonance, which is intentional, especially between the generations that hear them and pass them on. Hong describes three different kinds of dissonance we may see in survival literature: first, a "creative liminal dissonance, which is actively re-negotiated between generational transmission and makes for alternate meanings placed over the first generation;" second, a "dissonance produced through silence or modulated disclosure as the pain may be too great to share, creating a before and an after, but with no reference to the in-between;" and lastly, a "dissonance between what is directly transmitted by the community and the stories produced by colonial and dominant culture perspectives."<sup>302</sup> This begs the question, what narrative will we claim?, and circles back to the issue of the problem of a single story. These stories make what probably was a rich tapestry of stories, transforming as they are passed down, and allowing for polyvalency.

While the term "polyvalent" is one not normally used in the field of biblical studies, it can be used to emphasize linguistically the numerous interpretative possibilities associated with a particular meaning. This understanding of "polyvalent" measures up quite well with the very fluidity that trauma and trauma narratives signify. As trauma narratives move between generations, intergenerationally, taking on new meaning and form, this also means that these "narratives" can assume different genres. As Joukhadar's own novel moves between poetry and narrative, it is not as if the trauma that he is attempting to portray stops once a different textual form is being used. As trauma effects people

---

<sup>301</sup> Moore, *The Dragons*, 199.

<sup>302</sup> Hong, *Intergenerational Power of Stories*, 144-146.

differently, once again, intergenerationally, so too will the supposed “narrative” show up in both similar and distinct ways that transcend the boxes we desire to place them into.

And yet, Graybill comments helpfully on this concept of survival, in that the desire to resolve the pain can, in fact, be an ableist notion. She comments that “survival is not something to overcome but rather an ongoing process of learning, living, and remembering.”<sup>303</sup> To reframe survival into something that desires a thriving life but not necessarily a “cured” one, is to remain in the tension of the after, in the middle and threshold of what trauma creates for those who endure and live it. The reminder from O’Donnell and Cross holds firm, that the supposed after is most often a re-making, resisting the binary of things and/or persons being either “fixed” or “broken,” and allowing the nuance to be complicated and messy. In the context of biblical and contemporary migration narratives alike, receiving texts as they are instead of offering up repair, honors the individuals and communities who created them.

When trauma happens, making sense of it through deconstruction and reconstruction in a community tends to happen through a narrative on a symbolic level. Volkan describes it as a “shared mental representation of the tragedy.”<sup>304</sup> A leader of some sort manages and interprets this event to the community. Volkan, using the imagery shared in the concepts of collective trauma, states that individuals within the collective will look to a leader “who helps keep the tent [large-group identity] erect like a tent pole.”<sup>305</sup> As Tal argues in her own findings in traumatic literature, “representation of traumatic experience is ultimately a tool in the hands of those who shape public perceptions and national myth.”<sup>306</sup> Biblical authors would then be the ones who “interpret events to their followers with socially-mediated attribution.”<sup>307</sup>

---

<sup>303</sup> Graybill, *Texts After Terror*, 137.

<sup>304</sup> Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmission and Chosen Trauma,” 87.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid*, 84.

<sup>306</sup> Tal, *Worlds of Hurt*, 19.

<sup>307</sup> Alexander, *Trauma*, 13.

The author of these texts would have acted as a mediator of sorts in order to communicate what can seem incommunicable for their community; often taking from what is already known in culture to fit in the new framework of this trauma. While these narratives can be used as a weapon to Other, as seeking out a reason amidst the unreasonable can create blame-shifting or scapegoating, scholars across the fields have seen the power that narrative has in healing the grievances and wounds of trauma. As the identities of large groups are threatened, community members and leaders work to rebuild a new identity with the pieces of their “tent” that they have left. This means that reconstructions of identity often take old traditions and remake them, as they have been deconstructed—not of their own doing or choice—and no longer hold. Morrow’s findings in Deuteronomy through traumatic storytelling notes that “collective narratives of trauma may reinterpret past traditions to make sense of current situations.”<sup>308</sup> In fact, according to O’Connor, for communities in the brokenness of traumatic events,

simply reasserting old truths does not usually revive faith and trust after traumatic violence... they need to transform beliefs of the past. To the extent that biblical texts address wounds of traumatic violence, they do so in non-medical ways, through artistic and intuitive literary approaches, using resources already available in the culture.<sup>309</sup>

For this study specifically, looking at folk stories previously told, then re-membered with specific, purposeful changes, will be meaningful for the connections of the passages exegeted.

Acknowledging the difference between an orally transmitted and written story in the context of ancient Israel, scribes were people who could read and write and would have had great privilege within their communities. However, acknowledging that although the scribes would have had privileges does not immediately mean that they must then all have agreed with all nationalistic and hegemonic ideals; even the privileged can act as ally through subversive means. Amongst the oppressed, a phenomenon known as “hidden transcripts,” can be a helpful option, as a “critique of power spoken behind the back

---

<sup>308</sup> William Morrow, “Deuteronomy 7 in Postcolonial Perspective: Cultural Fragmentation and Renewal,” in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, edited by Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritzel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011), 283.

<sup>309</sup> O’Connor, “How Trauma Studies Can Contribute,” 211, 218.



of the dominant,”<sup>310</sup> created by the subaltern, “a partly sanitized, ambiguous, and coded version of the hidden transcript is always present in the public discourse of subordinate groups.”<sup>311</sup> As Israel returned and found itself still under the oppressive thumb of a colonialist power, as they made sense of what had happened after years in a different land, both notions of insidious, collective, and transgenerational could find a place in remembering history to make for a better tomorrow.

Claassens writes in her recent monograph, called *Writing and Reading to Survive*, that recognizing how this lens also affects text reception is more than worthwhile, these researched texts serving “as a means by which we as readers may bridge the vast divide in space and time that exists between our own context and that of the biblical writers so many centuries ago.”<sup>312</sup> We see something of this sentiment also in Hong’s explanation that not only through her own experience, but also through research, through these narratives, stories are shared and hence,

shape and form entire generations culturally, communally, and spiritually, carrying with them lessons, warnings, and a thousand hopes. Sometimes the stories that are birthed in immigration and migration change as they are told and shared, becoming imbued with new meanings for new generations; they are stories and memories that become living co-formed histories... Even in the North American context, storytelling is in its essence about the cultivation and deepening of personhood and peoplehood, often over and against a national white supremacist narrative that seeks to diminish any foreign affiliations or transnationally constructed identities, including and especially of immigrants, migrants, and refugees. Stories facilitate the building up of personhood and peoplehood in an inhospitable land and against all odds.<sup>313</sup>

In seeing the effects of trauma in survival literature, especially in discussion with the generations thereafter, it is necessary to recognize the effects of not conflating absence and loss, as has been discussed with transgenerational trauma. What has been seen is that the protagonist in the survival literature narrative represents can become an “everyperson:” not only can this be a “representative

---

<sup>310</sup>James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xii.

<sup>311</sup> Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, 19.

<sup>312</sup> Juliana Claassens, *Writing and Reading to Survive*, 5.

<sup>313</sup> Christine J. Hong, “Storied People: The Intergenerational Power of Story in the Lives of Immigrants,” 137.

cultural figure,”<sup>314</sup> but, it could be you, attempting to place yourself in their shoes regardless of your own place and time. Because of this fact, the multiplicity of meaning within the text itself in the interplay of not only the author, but of text reception as a whole, as the experiences and even memories of traumatic events, are “revised and actively rearranged according to the needs of the individual at a particular moment.”<sup>315</sup> According to Balaev, who researches literary theory and has advocated for the postcolonial lens in order to correct the westernized ideologies, the protagonist,

brings into awareness the specificity of individual trauma that is often connected to larger social factors and cultural values or ideologies... the imaginative return to, or evocation of, the historical past in the novel does not indicate that every person associated with that historical group has experienced trauma, or that the historical event is the sole defining feature of a collective or cultural identity.<sup>316</sup>

The idea of a hidden transcript again makes sense as it is can be received by different communities in different times, repurposing a folk tale for new meaning in the light of their own circumstances for a variety of purposes. As we ourselves are receptors of this text, the study will consider how these texts have been wielded and understood depending on context, and how the text and its characters continue to speak, whether intentionally created or unintentionally. Furthermore, recognizing the differences that can occur between differing generations, Hong states that, “the dissonance produced by stories challenges the way we hold onto interpretative and experiential particularity and lifts them up to nuance and enrich the stories we tell across places and generations.”<sup>317</sup> Whose story is it? And in this question again asks the question that Graybill warns of when re-colonizing their story: in our interpretation either *in sympathy with or on behalf of*, can we resist speaking *in place of*?<sup>318</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> Balaev, “Trends,” 55.

<sup>315</sup> Balaev, “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered,” 163.

<sup>316</sup> Balaev, “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered,” 155.

<sup>317</sup> Hong, *Intergenerational*, 148-149.

<sup>318</sup> Graybill, *Texts After Terror*, 121.

## 5. CONCLUSION: THE “GRITTY” STORIES OF TRAUMA

In her recent publication called *YHWH and Israel in the Book of Judges*, Deryn Guest makes a point that Judges cannot be understood well from a trauma hermeneutic lens; an attachment theory lens would best suit contemplating it. While their scholarship is to be applauded, they state specifically, as they refute trauma’s lens for the text that, “it is hard to imagine a numbed, harrowed and overwhelmed survivor, or immediate descendant of a survivor having the energy and available wit to produce a book like Judges.”<sup>319</sup> It is quite unfortunate that the only perspective of one who has been affected by trauma of any kind has to be one who is despondent, and then inevitably, uncreative. This study shows that trauma has a plethora of degrees and different reactions, and that what we have seen throughout the epochs is also resiliency, strength, and courage in telling the truth about terrible events and doing so boldly, even with subversion.

This chapter sought to describe both individual and collective trauma, as well as the degrees to which it can show itself. The chapter introduced intersectional feminism and postcolonialism as a necessary lens to use when employing trauma theory, as well as unpacking the different kinds of trauma that can affect people due to different situations. The chapter also discussed why we read migration narratives as migratory *trauma* narratives; while seemingly logical, it is also a necessary next step for understanding biblical texts post-exile. This chapter also briefly looked at trauma in narrative as it becomes symbolic, healing, and is wielded in a variety of ways by both authors and collectives in an assortment of contexts. This study deals honestly with written stories and populations through generations who view these stories, no matter how atrocious their collective history has been, as sacred. Ultimately, this study hopes to prove the connection between the two texts mentioning the sin of Gibeah through the tools provided in not only a historical hermeneutic, but mainly in migration studies and trauma theory, reading both passages as migratory trauma narratives.

---

<sup>319</sup> Deryn Guest, *YHWH and Israel in the Book of Judges: An Object Relations Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 56.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE MEMORY OF GIBEAH, THE SPLITTING OF HER(THEIR) BODY

*You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive. (James Baldwin)<sup>320</sup>*

*And those of us for who these texts are scripture, who believe God is somewhere in this collection of texts that includes pornotropic violence needs must articulate a theology of God that accounts for these texts and a world that looks just like them in some places. For me, that is a God who accompanies, God with us. God with us in horror. And God with us in grief. God with us in the rapine and butchery. God with us in the rationalization and weaponizing of trauma. God who refuses to abandon us no matter what is done to us or what we do, to ourselves or to others. (Wilda Gafney)<sup>321</sup>*

*There are things that can only be understood retrospectively, when many years have passed and the story has ended. In the meantime, while the story continues, the only thing to do is tell it over and over again as it develops, bifurcates, knots around itself. And it must be told, because before anything can be understood, it has to be narrated many times, in many different words and from many different angles, by many different minds. (Valeria Luiselli)<sup>322</sup>*

### 1. HOW NOW SHALL WE READ?

Judges 19 together with the two chapters that follow, is one of the infamous “texts of terror” found in the Hebrew Bible. Yet, the terrible reputation that many Hebrew Bible scholars know of may be completely unknown to others, as the text itself is scourged from liturgies in Christian and Jewish traditions alike. For many reasons, this may be related to the hypothesis of scholar Mieke Bal about the whole of the book of Judges, in that it is “about power and its dissymmetrical distribution, the conflicts and competition it generates, its consequences for those who have it and for those who lack it.”<sup>323</sup> One can read Judges either through a lens that perpetuates status quo, or upends it, and silence about the text can

---

<sup>320</sup> James Baldwin, “Doom and Glory of Knowing Who You Are,” *LIFE Magazine* 54/21 (May 1963).

<sup>321</sup> Wilda Gafney, “A Pastoral Epistle on Texts of Terror,” February 7, 2020: <http://www.wilgafney.com/2020/02/07/a-pastoral-epistle-on-texts-of-terror/>.

<sup>322</sup> Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2017), 96-97.

<sup>323</sup> Mieke Bal, *Death & Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 17.

certainly keep structures that cause disruption intact. Reading Judges through the lens of a migratory trauma narrative challenges previous interpretations to listen to a potentially subversive one; the sin of Gibeah could very well be a hidden transcript calling to account abusive power structures. Underneath an assumption of subversion, it also calls to account those who have chosen to avoid the text for what it confronts in the modern reader.

After a translation of Judges 19, this chapter will discuss the historical difficulties around authorship, the layers of text redaction, and many different levels of intertextuality found beyond Hosea 9-10 that may exist to serve ideological ends. Debating the reception of the text will also involve an awareness of the literary segments that occur in the text, from understanding genre as well as what little is known of the characters involved in the narrative. A literary critique is one that sees the ways in which words are used; a feminist lens will be applied in this chapter to both clearly condemn the behaviors as found in Judges 19, and also attempt to hear and amplify the women's voices that are silenced in the text. From the intersections, the chapter will use the lens of a migratory trauma narrative, adequately applying what was found in the portions before, as valuable insight in adding a sociological aspect crucial to the meaning. Lastly, the chapter will not only make clear the implications of this reading and interpretation, but also, what the sin of Gibeah is, which is the ultimate purpose of the study as a whole.

## 2. TRANSLATION

And it happened in those days there was no king in Israel.

A Levite man sojourning in the far reaches<sup>324</sup> of the hills of Ephraim took for himself a concubine woman from Bethlehem in Judah. And she, his concubine, felt a dislike against him<sup>325</sup> and she went away from him to her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah. And she was there four months. Her husband rose to go after her, to speak to her heart to return to him<sup>326</sup> and his servant, young boy, and paid of donkeys with him.

---

<sup>324</sup> This word can also be translated as sides, extreme parts, flank, and others call them the remote parts, but this translation appreciates Robert Alter's interpretation of far reaches, *The Hebrew Bible: Translation with Commentary*, 148.

<sup>325</sup> *Zonah* will be discussed at length in context later in the study. However, the Hebrew lexicon by Holloway specifically distinguishes this verse and formation of the verb (p. 90) as "feel a dislike." NRSV translates this as "becoming angry." The Septuagint (LXX) does not use the translation of the Hebrew *zonah*, but *orgizo* (to be angry).

<sup>326</sup> Helen Paynter makes mention that, "The Masoretes marked verse 3 with a *ketiv-qere*. This means that they made a marginal note suggesting that the text as written (*ketiv*) is corrupt and should be read (*qere*) differently. The *ketiv* says the Levite went after Beli-Fachad 'to speak to her heart to bring him back'. However, the marginal note suggests that this should

She brought him to her father's house, and when the father of the girl saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. The father-in-law, the father of the girl, strong-armed him, and he stayed with him three days. They ate, and they drank, and they lodged there.

And it happened on the fourth day they rose early in the morning, and he rose to go, but the father of the girl said to his son-in-law, "sustain your heart with a piece of bread and after, you go." So the two of them together sat, and they ate, and they drank. The father of the girl said to the man, "please, be willing to stay overnight and merry your heart." When the man arose to go, the father-in-law pressed him to return and stay overnight there. On the fifth day, he rose early in the morning to go, and the father of the girl said, "please, strengthen your heart," so they delayed until the day stretched out, and the two of them ate. The man rose to leave, he and his concubine and his servant, and the father-in-law, the father of the girl, said to him, "please, behold! The day sank to sunset. Please, behold! The day is gone. Spend the night here, be pleasing to your heart, and you can rise early tomorrow to go on your way to go to your home/tent."

But the man was not willing to stay overnight, so he rose, and he went, and he got as far as in front of Jebus, which is Jerusalem, with him the pair of saddled donkeys and his concubine. When they were near Jebus, the day was nearly done, and the servant said to his master, "please, let's go, let us turn aside to this city of Jebusites and stay overnight here." But his master said to him, "no, we will not turn aside to the city of foreigners who are not of the sons of Israel. Behold! Let us pass through to Gibeah." And he said to his servant, "come, let's go near to one of the places to stay overnight, in Gibeah or in Ramah." So they passed through and they went, and the sun came down on them beside Gibeah, which is in Benjamin. So they turned aside there to go spend the night in Gibeah.

He went and he sat in the square of the city, but no one took them into their home to spend the night. Behold! An elderly man came from his work in the field in the evening, and the man was from the hills of Ephraim, and he was a sojourner in Gibeah; the men of the place were the sons of Benjamin. And he lifted his eyes and he saw the man, the traveler in the square of the city, and the old man said, "where are you going and where do you come from?" And he said to him, "we are passing through from Bethlehem in Judah to the far reaches of the hills of Ephraim, from which I come. I went to Bethlehem in Judah and I am going to the house of YHWH, and no man has taken me into their home. Also there is straw and feed for our donkeys and also there is bread and wine for me and my handmaid and the servant with your servants, there is no lack, we do not need anything." And the old man said, "peace to you, all your needs are upon me, only do not stay overnight in the square." So he brought them into his house and he fed the donkeys and he washed their feet and they ate and they drank.

---

be read 'to bring her back'. Most English translations accept the qere without even a footnote. But this interpretive decision has stripped Beli-Fachad of her agency which is expressed in the consonantal Hebrew text. He is, it implies, begging that she will take him back," 37.

They were pleasing their hearts and behold! The men of the city, sons of wickedness surrounded the house, pounding upon the door, and they said to the man, the old master of the house, they said, “bring out the man who came into your house so we can know him.” And the man, the master of the house, went out and he said to them, “no, my brothers, please do not do evil, since this man has come to my house, do not do this disgraceful thing. Behold! Please, let me bring my virgin daughter and his concubine, rape<sup>327</sup> them, do to them whatever is pleasing in your eyes, but to this man, do not do this disgraceful thing.” The men were not willing to listen to him, so the man strong-armed his concubine and he brought her outside to them, so they knew her and they acted severely to her all night until the morning, and they sent her away when the dawn arrived. And the woman came to return in the morning, and she fell at the door of the house of the man where her master was until light.

Her master rose in the morning, and he opened the doors of the house, and he went out to go on his way, and behold! The woman, his concubine, had fallen at the door of the house and her hands were upon the threshold. And he said to her, stand and walk, but there was no answer, so he took her upon the donkey, and the man rose to go to his place. And he came to his house and he took a knife and he strong-armed his concubine and he cut her by the bone into twelve pieces and she was sent in all the borders/territory of Israel.

And it happened that all saw, and he said, “never has this happened, and never has this been seen from the day the sons of Israel went up from the land of Egypt until this day. Commit your cause upon her,<sup>328</sup> Seek counsel, and Speak.”

### 3. DIASPORA AS A DISMEMBERED WOMAN: JUDGES 19 EXPLORED

#### a) How Exile was Remembered

The book of Judges is grouped together in the Hebrew classification with the prophets as a former prophet in title alongside Joshua, Samuel, and Kings; later, these books were also called the Deuteronomistic History. Essentially, the role of a prophet was that of community mediator, between YHWH and their people, which is terminology borrowed from transgenerational trauma studies. In reading the text as a migratory trauma narrative, and thus, defining what the sin of Gibeah entails, much will be studied on this supposed mediator and author(s), as well as what history itself does and who it is

---

<sup>327</sup> This word could be translated as oppress, humiliate, or afflict. Pamela Gordon and Harold C. Washington in “Rape as a Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* add, “The technical term for rape in the Hebrew bible derives from the root ענה—from a basic sense of ‘to be bowed down, afflicted,’ in the G stem. The verb takes a meaning of ‘to abuse, exploit,’ in the D stem. It’s also used to denote military assault, or the defeat and exploitation of one nation by another,” 313. Mieke Bal remarks that, “The two verbs (rape and torture) are presented as durative and repetitive at the same time,” 124.

<sup>328</sup> This translation is as found in combination with *divarim* or “words” as well in Job 5:8.

*for*. This section will continue to elaborate on these specific points as they show themselves in the book of Judges. First, the section will discuss the authorship and redactors/redaction, especially as it pertains to the supposed label of Deuteronomistic History and the “great divide” between oral versus written narratives. Moving beyond dating of the writing of the text, the section will speculate on text reception to the audience of a post-exilic Israel, and the text’s reception in light of the many it seems to derive from and allude to intertextually. This section hopes to uncover the reality of the “text behind the text,” giving adequate reason for the creation, a *when* that shows the *why*.

### **b) The Community Mediator(s)**

As it pertains to questions of authorship, there is very little consensus, not only on who is the author, but if there are multiple. There is no narrative framework that introduces an author, rather, a prelude that ties the preceding book, Joshua, to it. Jewish tradition reasons that the prophet Samuel is the author for this book, while others debate the true redactors to be those who either hold to Deuteronomistic or Priestly traditions, invoking again the ongoing conversation involving the “great divide.” Furthermore, Judges 19 itself is argued to be an appendix, separate from what is viewed as a unified set of stories. Although these many differing opinions are daunting, the section will outline these possibilities before arriving at a well-informed conclusion about the authorship and historicity of the text.

It is of utmost importance to address the “great divide”, especially since it involves what many scholars still debate needs to be bridged between the oral and written narratives of Hebrew Scripture and other ancient texts. Many scholars assume that the stories that are found in Judges were first of the oral tradition, then transcribed at a later time. Susanne Scholz, of this opinion, writes that, “the narratives were transmitted orally and written down only during the Babylonian exile of the sixth century BCE, perhaps to instruct exilic and post-exilic Israelites about their political, cultural, and religious heritage in a foreign country, Babylon.”<sup>329</sup> Daniel Fleming makes a similar argument in his monograph *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible* on the depiction of the kingdoms from a Judean perspective that,

The entire amalgam of Judges stories seems to be drawn from Israelite lore, or built around it, at least. This means that the notion of a period of life in the land without kings—or at least without a fixed institution for all of Israel—likewise derives from

---

<sup>329</sup> Susanne Scholz, “Judges,” in *Women’s Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 113.



Israel. Judah adopted it and incorporated it into the larger narrative that now spans Genesis through Kings, but Judah's contribution to such a portrait is secondary, relatively shallow, and late.<sup>330</sup>

While these two quotes represent similar positions with reference to dating, they also show that there is a preconceived notion that these were previously told stories before they were compiled into a "historical" account. Jacqueline Vayntrub introduces this in her book *Beyond Orality*, describing this sentiment of what she calls the "great divide" framework that centers on dating based on modern day assumptions of what is considered "primitive," and then dating in terms of what is "sophisticated." Vayntrub writes that often literature is dated based on the presumption that, simply put, older texts were oral as they were "simple," and newer texts were more innovative. While new scholarship is moving towards a place of lessening these divides, it seems that the binaries often still hold. The risk, as Vayntrub argues, could be that many "obscure claims [are] encoded in the text's very arrangement." While one can speculate what could have been in regard to the oral traditions of Judges, "earlier iterations do not fix a text's meaning once and for all." Therefore this study will continue to hold a polyvalent approach to receiving the text as was introduced in the previous chapter.<sup>331</sup>

While Vayntrub continues her study using final-form literary claims, this chapter will still start with an attempt to look at the world behind the text, as part of adequately reckoning with the potentiality of Judges 19 as migratory trauma narrative. Whoever the author(s) could be, is often debated and decided by the apparent themes or dating of the Hebrew itself in Judges 19. Scholars most often deliberate between two of the categories created by Wellhausen via the well-known documentary hypothesis for dating: Deuteronomistic sources or Priestly sources.<sup>332</sup> Setting aside the concept of speculative orality until a discussion on folklore in the literary section of the chapter, the current discussion on authorship will examine the two sources as editors of Judges 19 and their concurrent effects.

---

<sup>330</sup> Daniel Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible*, 59.

<sup>331</sup> Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality*, 4.

<sup>332</sup> While much of this will be discussed in relation to which scholars are debating these points on either side, main interlocutors are Cynthia Edenburg, David Janzen, Theodore Mullen, and Daniel Smith-Christopher.

### *i. Authorship as Potential Deuteronomist*

As mentioned, Judges is part of what is called the Deuteronomistic History, placing it alongside the former prophets of Joshua, Samuel, and Kings, with the proverbial flavor of the book of Deuteronomy. These authors wrote around the eighth and seventh century BCE, with other redactions following (Dtr1, Dtr2). Within the Deuteronomistic focus is a focus on suzerain-vassal covenant with YHWH, as well as the blessings and curses that are associated with said covenant. David Janzen, writing on the Deuteronomistic account, says that this “is a narrative that is pro-monarchic, anti-priest, prophet, and judge.”<sup>333</sup> The so-called Deuteronomist, as coined by Noth, is this supposed second redactor, or Dtr2, writing from what could be the sixth century BCE. The timing of writing by these potential authors spans a wide range of events and changing identities for the Israelites.

Because of this, and the inability to fully narrow down the dating of this text, we must remember the concept by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza of history *for*. Schüssler Fiorenza, in conversation with Hayden White and Claude Lévi-Strauss, purports that these discourses are not simply a history of, but a *history for*. In biblical studies this means that interpreters are encouraged to not only be aware of their own biases, but also to recognize that those who were writing these histories were not writing only to record their past, but that they too had biases and lenses different from the historical period of which they were writing. She writes that,

historical knowledge is not only ‘history for’ but also knowledge dependent on the self-image of the social group for which historians speak and to which they belong... thus, historical discourse is not only ‘narrative-laden’ but intrinsically linked to the specific sociopolitical reality in which it arises and to the sociopolitical location of the historian who produces it.<sup>334</sup>

In further using the term history *for* throughout the study, the reiteration will be a reminder that from both sociopolitical positions, author and receptor(s), history, the creation of it, and use of it, is not neutral. It is used *for* specific ideological reasons and purposes.

---

<sup>333</sup> David Janzen, *The Necessary King: A Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic Portrait of the Monarchy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>334</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 101-104.

Vanessa Lovelace on the Deuteronomistic History writes, “despite the categorization of the DH as ‘history,’ it is less a historical work in the modern sense of a dispassionate report on dates and events, than theological and ideological revisions and additions to received traditions.”<sup>335</sup> While genre will be considered later in the chapter, Lovelace points out what exactly it is the authorship and source is writing *for*, which is a history that is biased in some sense. In this regard, Mark Brett’s view that these theologies are ultimately a response to the trauma of imperialism is important when he argues that,

the social vision of ‘Deuteronomistic’ history... reflects a classical model of nation-building: a violent territorial claim, assertions of sovereignty, and exhortations of national unity, including specific concerns for the administration of justice and religion, and special care for the socially marginalized ‘widow, orphan, and alien.’<sup>336</sup>

The confusion underlying the authorship of the DH is that there seems to be some overlap with priestly authorship, especially as the Dtr2 could potentially have been writing in the sixth century, around the same time as the Priestly source. Theodore Mullen, who writes on the Deuteronomist and the ideological formation of an Israelite identity, says that it is well known among scholarship that the writer(s) of DH were also of the elite class, adding here that it could be the priestly class itself.<sup>337</sup> Lovelace continues that these authors “composed the DH from ‘archaic originals’ written in response to the threatened assimilation and ethnic dissolution of the exiled community. DH functioned to establish ethnic boundaries based on shared memories of common history.”<sup>338</sup>

These overlaps involve the war, exile, and occupation for both the Deuteronomist and the Priestly source. Ensuring that a national identity is secured in the midst of a traumatic fissure relocating those for whom land is a source of their identity to different, foreign lands, would necessitate the creation of a narrative to latch onto, which could be the concept of this specific covenant itself. Moreover, the caution in placing the authorship in the Deuteronomist’s hands leaves one wondering

---

<sup>335</sup> Vanessa Lovelace, “Intersections of Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, and Nation,” in *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*, edited by Gale Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 76.

<sup>336</sup> Brett, *Political Trauma and Healing*, 78.

<sup>337</sup> Theodore Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 14.

<sup>338</sup> Lovelace, “Intersections,” 76.

where YHWH is in the narrative and at the severe lack of justice, especially if these are the themes by which scholars create such schema. Yet, justice seems to be a word that evolves and changes definition over time and per context. Is this simply a self-blame narrative, “reinscribing [colonial hegemony] to promote the status and privileges of the colonized elite... acknowledging their own status as wicked subalterns who need Davidic rule if they wish to return to and prosper in the land”<sup>339</sup>?

## *ii. Authorship as a Redacting Priestly Source*

The Priestly source was written approximately between the sixth and fifth century BCE, and as the title betrays, theologically focuses on “priestly” matters, such as sacrifice, law, genealogies, and the Levites themselves. Cynthia Edenburg, author of *Dismembering the Whole*, which focuses on the exact “textual artifact” of Judges 19-21, noting the many language parallels and usages that seem to be late Biblical Hebrew, writes that “the narrative was composed in the Babylonian period or perhaps even at the beginning of the Persian period.”<sup>340</sup> This places the context of editing and formation in the midst of traumatic *dislocation*.

Similarly, Brett writes of trauma in the priestly imaginary as well—while there is a focus that seems to be more transfixed on those characteristics involving law and temple, it is also one that attempts to make sense of loss and remaking an identity. He writes as it seems the Priestly source is located in “Persia and figuring out how to live without political sovereignty and yet with the sense of God’s providence.”<sup>341</sup> In fact, it re-makes exile, as “the sojourner status in the priestly imaginary is not just a transitional arrangement, but an enduring form of life before God.”<sup>342</sup> If the text is located while in exile, it “exchanges political hegemony for a divinely given identity that is free to engage with strangers in the same social space.”<sup>343</sup> However, this position can be difficult to completely identify with, unless one views the text with the bias that the Levite in the story, including the Levite in Judges 17-18, as the

---

<sup>339</sup> Janzen, *The Necessary King*, 235.

<sup>340</sup> Cynthia Edenberg, *Dismembering the Whole: Composition and Purpose of Judges 19-21* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 161.

<sup>341</sup> Brett, *Political Trauma and Healing*, 100.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid*, 103.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid*, 109.

“good guy.” Although this seems a bit unbelievable, many scholars and early Church Fathers did take the side of the Levite in the text, so from a patriarchal worldview, it is not difficult to perceive. From a priestly perspective, one would have to also be betraying the very institution and those within it that this source seems to want to uphold. Robert Boling in his commentary on Judges, while not mentioning the Priestly source, rejects the notion that this text is at all related to the Deuteronomistic narrative, saying that

The fact that only Judah and Benjamin figure prominently indicates that the account was neither pragmatic nor Deuteronomistic in origin. Rather, it was probably appended during the Babylonian exile, when Judah and Benjamin had been, until recently, all that remained of the old federation. The reconciliation of Benjamin and the other Israelites was used by the exilic redactor specifically to show Israelites living together and with foreigners as stemming from Judah’s success in capturing the western hill of Jerusalem, whereas Benjamin had failed to oust the Jebusites from the old city on the eastern Hill. The redactor in lively narrative form thus reminds discouraged exiles that Israelites had throughout their entire history lived among other nations. He was then able to plead for a united Israel according to the Mosaic ideal, while showing how the loosely organized tribal confederation had become antiquated and been replaced by the monarchy. In his day, he believed, God had dismantled even the monarchy.<sup>344</sup>

More will be explained relative to how trauma narratives, quite often in the communal space, are used to bring about reason in the midst of great suffering and unknown. These two positions, deuteronomist and priestly, are often debated as to the text’s authorial origin. However, authorship can also be argued as it pertains to history *for*, which may be more of a concern in text reception, but nonetheless remains valid. Trauma itself moves beyond boundaries and borders, so while dating is necessary to hypothesize, it may well be that the authorship simply does not fit our predefined boxes. Yet, in discussing trauma, scholars must ask the question of what traumatic event may have occurred that calls previously held ideologies to be re-worked.

### ***iii. A Transitioning Member, In-Between Authorship***

While speculations on Deuteronomistic or Priestly levels of authorship or even redaction could continue indefinitely, there is yet another way in which one could view the mediator of said text. Isabelle Hamley’s monograph on Judges 19-21, *Unspeakable Things Unspoken*, states that Judges 19 itself

---

<sup>344</sup> Robert Boling, *Judges*, Anchor Bible Commentary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1975), 278.

works, “as disruptive and disturbing of the equilibrium of the tribes.”<sup>345</sup> While Hamley notes that the destruction that occurs disrupts kinship ties, some scholars believe what is potentially disturbed is the covenant not only between one another, but also, the covenant between the Israelites and YHWH. In all of this, however, is a general recognition that Judges operates in a way that is instructive through this devastation, or an “extant attempt to shape historical memory, to write this as a memorial in a book, and to educate by its means future generations.”<sup>346</sup> What is dis-membered regarding communal ideals and identities will be re-membered in order to not simply heal, but to survive.

Hamley argues that this text was created at a time when Israelite systems were transitioning, the main focus being to create kinship ties. By showing what can possibly go wrong when these ties are unbound, the texts use fear in order to create a new identity. On the notion of kinship ties being disrupted, Hamley says that what is in transition is, “a dispersed household-based system... morphing into a tribal system with an embryonic national identity.”<sup>347</sup> The gang rape and dismemberment of the Concubine in Judges 19 leads to further violence as the Benjaminites are subjected to *herem*, then the bringing back of Benjamin into the fold through the kidnapping and rape of the women at Shiloh. The *herem* ban is not explicitly stated in the passage, but all of Gibeah is put to the sword, using language very similar to that used in passages that endorse the Deuteronomy 13 law, but most often is commanded by YHWH towards “unclean” foreign nations.

Susan Niditch continues explaining why kinship is of importance in the passage by explaining what is the misuse of the *herem* ban:

When the ban is used as a technique to keep in-group miscreants in line by a nervous and insecure leadership with the power to enforce its will, it becomes a divisive ideology, destructive of the body politic. Implicit in the biblical ban as God’s justice is the notion that the uncleanness passes from the guilty ones to the members of their family or to their town... The ban-as-God’s-justice ideology when applied inside the

---

<sup>345</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable Things Unspoken*, 109.

<sup>346</sup> Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 383.

<sup>347</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 109.

group pits one sort of unity against another and can lead to disintegration and disaster.<sup>348</sup>

This transitioning period that Niditch also deduces in the text, is one that she “hypothesize(s) that the author of Judges 19-21 writes during a time when people are reflecting upon the political implications of a transition from a system based on kinship relationships to one that is not.”<sup>349</sup> Alongside this sentiment, Boling maintains in his own study that the whole of Judges is a book that “clearly presents the period as one of fluctuating solidarity.”<sup>350</sup> While it may be more traditional to assume dating of authorship based on simple, categorical themes, the book of Judges itself seems to depict a insecure foundation not only in the light of the nations around them, but also among themselves. If the authorship itself resists categorization, does scholarship allow for an in-between, liminal identification?

When a supposed historical account of a nation’s beginnings also has an obvious ideological bent, does it not make the text propaganda? History *for*, then, becomes a difficulty to reckon with. Minhele Nomalungelo Khumalo likewise asks this in combining the story as part of the Deuteronomistic History: “But what happens when rape fantasy also functions as founding fantasy? When sexual violation is the foundation of the nation?”<sup>351</sup> Scholars have seen the text as one that, while focusing on the breaking, disturbing of covenant, is also pushing forward a narrative containing anti-Saulide and/or anti-Benjaminite flavors, accompanied by pro-Monarchic, pro-Judahite messaging. Many of these claims have everything to do with the passages that are claimed to be intertextually related to Judges 19, which complicates the matter entirely. While the chapter will explore these relationships in full to understand the potential message the author is attempting to convey, the warning from Hamley is one to consider in light of the woman’s ravaged body, that as many scholars simply speculate, even about the

---

<sup>348</sup> Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 70.

<sup>349</sup> Niditch, *War in the Bible*, 15-16.

<sup>350</sup> Boling, *Judges*, 15.

<sup>351</sup> Minhele Nomalungelo Khumalo, “Judges 19 and Non-Con: Sado-Kantian Aesthetics of Violence in the Tale of an Unnamed Woman,” in *Rape Culture and Religious Studies: Critical and Pedagogical Engagements*, edited by Rhiannon Graybill, Meredith Minister, and Beatrice Lawrence (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 101.

potential authorship, “this focus on political/historical coherence and issues thereby systematically erases women.”<sup>352</sup> She calls this methodology, while necessary at some level, “sanitization.”

### c) Speaking to Each Other: Judges 19 and Intertextual Allusions

The study is most interested in the direct connection between Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19. However, the vast number of texts that seem to be referenced in Judges 19 are worthy of exploration, especially when these texts could be and are used to bolster specific ideological arguments as briefly mentioned above. Not only these allusions, but also the placement of the book itself in both the Hebrew Bible and the LXX are helpful for understanding what could be emphasized in Judges 19. Klaas Spronk in his commentary on the book of Judges particularly notes this piece of intertextuality and dating, in that the potential “late date of the book in its present form would also explain why there are hardly any references in the books coming after the book of Judges to the persons and events as they are described there.”<sup>353</sup>

First, the book’s placement has much to say, in particular about the woman’s fate as well as a fascination with certain national fixations. Phyllis Tribble points out that, “In the Hebrew Bible, the story of Hannah follows the story of the concubine—which is in direct contrast to this story. In the Greek, the story of Ruth follows this story, also in direct contrast.”<sup>354</sup> Tribble takes this to mean that there *is* yet a way to relate to the female sex positively, granting redemption. Yet, while both Hannah and Ruth experience decent reactions from the men in their lives and happy endings, there is also another thread to pull within the story of Ruth. As the book of Ruth makes clear in the initial frame of the short story, it is written in the time of the “Judges (Ruth 1:1),” allowing for readers to let what has just been written previously, color what is about to occur in the pages that follow. Ruth is a story fascinated with a return to the land of Israel. The verb שׁוּב (*shuv*) is repeated over and over again as the Moabite, the foreign woman, becomes part of the genealogy of David. Although the portion that is clearly pro-monarchic will be examined further, what is intriguing is the longing for the land, women leading the story of return, which can also connote repentance. Considering the horrific stories that precede Ruth, and their

---

<sup>352</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 105.

<sup>353</sup> Klaas Spronk, *Judges*, Historical Commentary on the Old Testament (Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2019), 22.

<sup>354</sup> Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 84.



placement in the same setting as Ruth, does seem to belie not only the presence of foreigners as acceptable, but also, the recognition of exile as something to be rid of—a traumatic event in the memory of the Israelite peoples.

The book of Joshua precedes Judges; it is part of the first segment of the Deuteronomistic History. Brad Embry, reading Judges 19 from a reader-oriented context, notes that the location of these two books and their juxtaposition are important: the “violence of Judges represents an inversion of the Joshua narratives, a reversal of that conquest motif.”<sup>355</sup> Embry sees this occurring as the residents of the land begin to attack them, but also, they begin to attack themselves. As far as timing goes, the link to Joshua at the very least gives a date from which the authorship wanted the readers to assume these narratives were set in, in the tenth to ninth century BCE—to believe these are key, foundational narratives of their people. What it also may be doing in connection with one another, is creating both ideal and not-so-ideal leaders and leadership qualities, as there is a supposed necessity for kingship, as the refrain repeats and even ends the book of Judges: “In that day there was no King in Israel, and everyone did what was right in their eyes. (בימים ההם אין מלך בישראל איש הישר בעיניו יעשה:)”

Beyond immediate context is the inner-contextual allusions: most specifically, 69 Hebrew words are the exact same in Genesis 19 as in Judges 19. The similarities are quite surprising, echoing the tale of a weary traveler and company coming to a place to rest that is not their home, only to be met with no hospitality at all. Another resident, who also does not call this city home and would be more well known as a migrant too, is the one that steps up and grants the visiting party hospitality. While they are together, a horrifying mob from town comes to ask to know, to lie, with the visiting man. The host then attempts to protect them by negotiating and using the women as proverbial bait. But beyond this, the differences are fatal. In Genesis 19 the visitors, who are actually divine messengers, protect the host and the women, and enact “justice” against the city and those attempting to do harm. Judges 19 has the visitor, a Levite, who could be called a divine messenger himself, protect the host by taking hold of his secondary wife and throwing her out to the mob to do whatever they want to her. The justice that occurs in this city is not justice at all, as the men of Israel en masse enact *herem* on their own terms. Both cities,

---

<sup>355</sup> Brad Embry, “Narrative Loss, the (Important) Role of Women, and Community in Judges 19,” in *Joshua and Judges: Texts in Context*, edited by Athalya Brenner and Gale A. Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 259.

however, are famously known for their sin. Ezek. 16:49-50 shares exactly how the sin of Sodom is interpreted by the prophet, as the mouthpiece of YHWH, saying, “This was the sin of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them when I saw it (NRSV).” The sin of Gibeah has yet to be defined, which is ultimately, the goal of the study.

Fleming, in connecting the books of Genesis and Judges to one another, assumes that the two books “are ultimately founded on similar visions of Israel’s political character as an association of distinct peoples.”<sup>356</sup> While Fleming believes that these stories in Judges are ultimately Israelite lore, depicting a time without kings or a “fixed institution,” he also believes that Judah had their own hand in editing portions at a much later date.<sup>357</sup> While both stories are set in completely different contexts, Edenburg takes the position that Judges 19 is the story that was patterned after and took verbiage from Genesis 19, mainly that portions of the Sodom story were purposely integrated into the Gibeah story. The picture of a Deuteronomy law of *herem* and a sinful city, “the view of Sodom as the model of an irredeemable sinful city (or people) is deeply entrenched in biblical literature from the eighth century to the early Persian period,” is a powerful one to use on one’s own people group.<sup>358</sup> Moreover, recognition of using the Yahwist (J) source as the original traditional stories<sup>359</sup> that were then adapted, serves not only a late date for the text, but also one that could be perceived as a folk-tale rewritten for different communities in different situations, a trauma narrative.

As the Concubine’s body is cut into twelve pieces, many see the connection to King Saul and 1 Sam. 11:7, an act meant to specifically summon and unite the tribes under one cause. While what Saul does in this section is a positive act, one that has not been poorly looked upon, many have seen the intertextual allusion as one that purports an anti-Saulide narrative. Sara Milstein, alongside Fleming, believes this to be the purpose for the text of Judges 19, what they call a “Saul complex.” Not only is

---

<sup>356</sup> Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible*, 72.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid*, 59.

<sup>358</sup> Edenburg, *Dismembering the Whole*, 184-185.

<sup>359</sup> However, some view J to be written at the earliest in eighth century BCE. Others see it as supplementary to the DTR history in general, a “prologue” of sorts.

Saul from Gibeah of Benjamin, thus rooting him in a place teeming with wicked acts which is almost blotted out, but also, one that needs to kidnap women from Shiloh and rape them in order to even birth Saul, making the “implication behind [the text] that Saul comes from a rape marriage.”<sup>360</sup> They suppose that Judges 19 was redacted “by a Judahite writer who was ready to keep the Saul complex as a separate composition but to twist its intent.”<sup>361</sup> Although this interpretation has become quite popular, it not only sanitizes the text of the women, but also does not seem to convey the whole picture, rather substituting it with a quite narrow theory, while parody as propaganda is still an option.

However, in light of 1 Sam. 11:7 and the dismemberment and delivery of the Concubine’s body parts, other scholars see this as a rhetorical reference to not only the very beginning of Judges, but also the story of Genesis 19. Boling says that the purpose here is to offer a “counterbalance” of sorts; not only with the treatment of Adoni-Bezek in Judges 1, but also to invert the Levite in regard to Lot. He suggests that “the aim is to mobilize the confederacy, not to demoralize the opposition. There was one man against Israel. Here it is all Israel on behalf of one man.”<sup>362</sup> Within the Mari archives, Badhi-Lim suggests to Zimri-Lim that a prisoner’s head be dismembered and shown throughout the Hanean territory in order to fire people up to send troops.<sup>363</sup> While a heinous method, it roused those who were fearful before.<sup>364</sup> Stories from the Ugaritic Baal cycle through Anat, as well as the Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris, all contain portions of stories on dismemberment.<sup>365</sup> Far from being something that had never been seen in Israel since coming out of Egypt (Jud. 19:30), it was seemingly quite normal. Edenburg maintains of the anti-Saulide position, “if, as many think, Saul is the intended target of the story’s polemic, then it is surprising that the author incorporated only a limited number of literary borrowings from the Saul stories and that these have limited impact upon the structure.”<sup>366</sup>

---

<sup>360</sup> Tammi Schneider, *Judges*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 200.

<sup>361</sup> Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible*, 155.

<sup>362</sup> Boling, *Judges*, 276-277.

<sup>363</sup> Archives Royal de Mari, II, 48.

<sup>364</sup> Dharamraj, *Judges*, South Asia Bible Commentary, 327-328.

<sup>365</sup> KTU 1.3 ii; iii 1-2; 1.6 ii 28-37.

<sup>366</sup> Edenburg, *Dismembering the Whole*, 318.

Trible once more makes the intertextual connection in relation to the utter failings of the leaders, not only within the book itself, but also institutionally. For the argument that the text is not only anti-Saulide, but also pro-Davidic, pro-monarchic, she says,

Concluding not only this story but the entire book of Judges with an indictment, he prepares his readers to look favorably upon kingship. What irony, then, that the first king, Saul, should come from the tribe of Benjamin, establish his capital in Gibeah, and deliver Jabesh-Gilead from the Ammonites! But undercutting Saul to advocate the Davidide monarchy may be precisely what the author intends. The reign of David, however, brings its own atrocities. David pollutes Bathsheba; Amnon rapes Tamar; and Absalom violates the concubines of his father. In those days there was a king in Israel, and royalty did right in its own eyes. Clearly, to counsel a political solution to the story of the concubine is ineffectual. Such a perspective does not direct its heart to her.<sup>367</sup>

The Levites were also clearly unable to uphold these ethical principles, actually seemingly at fault for the sins, which could then strengthen the position on the monarchy. But as Edenburg argues, “it is unlikely that a king could have averted the assault at Gibeah or avenged the death of the Concubine more effectively than the concerted action taken by the tribes in the narrative.”<sup>368</sup> These institutions were incapable of holding up their end of the covenant, time and again.

Not only is there also a link with Judges 1, as Jebus, or Jerusalem, was the site of the first battle where Adoni-Bezek then was murdered, but there are also many parallels between Achsah in that same chapter that are inverted with the Concubine. Both women are Judahites, leaving their men to go to their fathers, and speaking to the heart is most certainly involved. In Achsah’s story, she becomes the archetype of what many white feminists would call a “girl-boss,” as she uses her agency to attain things for herself and is rewarded for it. Dharamraj writes that these similarities, or rather stark parallelism and opposite outcomes, as the very frame of the book of Judges, should attune readers to how bad things had become in the land.

While Aksah has a name and a voice that is heard (Jud. 1:13-15), the Levite’s concubine has neither. While one descends from her donkey to be received with

---

<sup>367</sup> Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 84.

<sup>368</sup> Edenburg, *Dismembering the Whole*, 296-297.

dignity, the other is loaded onto a donkey to be taken home and dismembered, perhaps while still alive (19:28-29). While one leaves her husband's home to travel safely to her father, the other leaves her father's home to travel with her husband to be raped and murdered. One gains what a woman rarely receives, the other receives what a woman most dreads. Aksah's husband is a warrior; the concubine's is a butcher in the worst sense.<sup>369</sup>

While more needs to be discussed as the Concubine is a popular feminist figure, these connections within the book of Judges more likely bolster the conclusion of a unified composition rather than a tacked-on appendix, or a different hypothesis that involves the same redactor creating both the prologue and the appendix.<sup>370</sup> Acknowledging these difficulties, and the disorientation innate in the creation of the text itself, how would this specific text be received by its many audiences?

#### **d) An Ancient Near Eastern Context's Potential Reception of Judges 19**

Whatever the specific dating, which at the very least is broadly agreed upon to be exilic or post-exilic, there had to have been an audience that received these words as truth, or at least for a valuable purpose, to be included in their texts. Edenburg holds the position that the composition was done mainly in the early Persian period, stating that the purpose and concerns of the narrative of Judges would need to then reflect what was most pertinent to the people receiving these words. As she argues for what that purpose potentially was, she says, "behind the bizarre and gruesome narrative cast in the distant past lies a political polemic that deals with the threat of factitiousness and the dissolution of the unity of an ideal postexilic 'Israel.'"<sup>371</sup> As this could be defined as propagandistic, trauma creates a foundational narrative that then coerced their audience through the effects of shock and horror to *not* be what they were found to be in these stories in order to bolster a sense of unity that keeps them in the land they return to.

The threat of another exile as it remained in the memory of not only survivors, but their children and the generations to follow, meant that the words continued to bear fruit even in differing situations: never again. While still under the thumb of imperialism, the previous forced migrations that wrested

---

<sup>369</sup> Havilah Dharamraj, "Judges," 296.

<sup>370</sup> For more information on this viewpoint, see Yairah Amit.

<sup>371</sup> Edenburg, *Dismembering the Whole*, 321.

them from the land of promise left a mark in literature and storytelling from that point on. Roger Ryan agrees that the text seems to be a reasoning of sorts, written in approximately sixth century BCE for the “exiled Israelites in Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon as they ask among themselves how they have arrived at such a desperate situation.”<sup>372</sup> Janzen, while of the opinion that the authorship is of the Deuteronomist sourcing, agrees that the texts would have not have been received if they did not explain the community’s suffering.<sup>373</sup> Fleming contends similarly that “the Bible was constructed for the *survivors* of Judah, and some uncertain but very large portions of its contents was created in this postexilic Judahite environment.”<sup>374</sup>

The study in general believes in embracing a polyvalency of interpretations, but it does seem as if many scholars missed the opportunities available to them for fleshing out what a trauma narrative is; these previously mentioned quotes pertaining to the text’s audience indicate a real reckoning with their communal trauma. As exile has been pointed out as a serious traumatic event in the life cycle of the Israelite people, one of the main questions to continue to ask, is whether or not the texts put forth a kind of propaganda; if the story of Judges 19 presents real and not fictitious characters and situations. While the text would have been authors or mediators making sense alongside their communities of what happened to them as a whole people group through exile, what then, does Judges 19 actually say?

#### **4. INTERPRETING THEIR HISTORY: HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT EXILE?**

While historical criticism looks at the world behind the text, literary criticism receives the text, the words, for how they present themselves. The study of genre in relation to this narrative is of utmost importance, as the debate in scholarship on whether the story is fictional, must be addressed. The characters in this story, as they do not fit neatly into any binary for understanding, will also be discussed, taking note to remember how this very chapter began with a quote from Bal in relation to power structures within the text. It is also necessary to pay attention to feminist concerns under the

---

<sup>372</sup> Roger Ryan, *Judges* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), xiii.

<sup>373</sup> “If the worldview held by the Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomist’s elite carrier group is unable to explain the community’s suffering, then it would have been difficult for the exiles to believe in its validity.” Janzen, *Trauma and the Failure of History*, 37.

<sup>374</sup> Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, 181. Italics mine.

banner of literary critique, regardless of if the text is fictional or not, as the words *zonah* and *pilegash* are weighted with stereotype in the text, and rape is carried out as a cultural normative through language and act, as well as used as a metaphor. The addition of postcolonial concerns as Othering must be addressed, as both discriminatory actions by gender and ethnicity occur in the passage. Each of these aspects of study are essential for not only exegesis, but also, to reach an actual conclusion of what the sin of Gibeah could be.

### a) Genre: What Way Does Trauma Talk?

Vayntrub's monograph is important to note in the study of genre, as she argues against what many scholars are culturally conditioned to recognize as modern genres. Using her terminology, one must understand these texts "on their own terms,"<sup>375</sup> which can be difficult when the texts do not give much framework or description other than the stories themselves. In attempting to give this chapter a specified genre that, at the bare minimum, distinguishes between modern fiction and non-fiction, the study also attempts to re-create a new genre to some extent: migratory trauma narratives. However, historiography can take on any level of subtypes, such as legendary, tragicomic, folklore, etc. This can also be a part of the spectrum that encapsulates words that hold the weight of a traumatic event and its aftermath.

Amit writes that historiography's main goal is to "educate, guide, and serve as a teaching of life."<sup>376</sup> Behind every history is ideology. There is no un-biased history. Marc Zvi Brettler compares the work of the historian to the work of those who make maps: cartographers. Cartographers, like authors and historians, consider the needs of those who will be receiving what is created. Both history and maps are judged according to their usefulness.<sup>377</sup> Janzen views the text of Judges 19 as one incorporated into the Deuteronomistic History and written by the Deuteronomist, using Brettler's definition of historiography as "a narrative that *represents* the past," meaning it does not necessarily fit into our

---

<sup>375</sup> Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality*, 24-25.

<sup>376</sup> Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing*, 10.

<sup>377</sup> Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 12.

current notions, nor ancient Greek notions, of what history is.<sup>378</sup> At the bare minimum of historiography presumed to be non-fiction, Janzen suggests that the

exilic readers who were at least somewhat inclined to trust the narrative's presentation of the past would not see the particular events that Dtr claims occurred in the past as a complete invention, but would see them as corresponding, more or less, to their own memories, as well as to stories of the past told to them by their parents and grandparents.<sup>379</sup>

With this, historiography includes literal, potentially fictional stories. Janzen, in a different book entitled *Trauma and the Failure of History*, writes that, "fiction and historiography have a lot in common, since historiography, like fiction, is a species of the genus narrative... The difference between history and fiction is in the eye of the beholder."<sup>380</sup> Story is not necessarily seen as fictional in Ancient Near Eastern concepts of genre. But story does have a great purpose. Amit says in her work on redaction that, "stories serve as the framework for the systemic and ideological weave of biblical historiography... these works were intended to create a community of readers and listeners, who would continue as carriers of the biblical ideology."<sup>381</sup>

Historiography shapes society through story. While the stories must be rooted in some way to the memories of those within the community, storytelling is a foundational cultural practice. Carolyn Sharp, in discussing the very origin traditions in the Hebrew Bible, poignantly describes the role of storytelling in communal settings.

By means of stories, a community explores how it came into being and what is core to its identity. Storytelling offers defining moments of grace and moments of threat that suggest how to understand the past and present. Those who preserve their cultural heritage and teach new generations about shared values use stories to sketch charismatic leaders of old, dramatize beginnings and turning points, and render in poignant or inspiring terms what is at stake in the continuing resilience of the community. In order to survive culturally, communities must be malleable and

---

<sup>378</sup> Janzen, *The Necessary King*, 48-49.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>380</sup> Janzen, *Trauma and the Failure of History*, 18.

<sup>381</sup> Amit, *The Art of Editing*, 11.



adaptable in the claims they stake. Over time, a community's stories are shaped to assist the process of adaptation: stories are often strategically constructed toward particular aims even when they are grounded in the authentic, lived experience of the group.<sup>382</sup>

Sharp remarks that memory, in general, can be distorted, as “hierarchies of value organize the ways in which communities think about who they have been and who they are.”<sup>383</sup> Moreover, memory itself is fickle, including memories affected by loss and grief that come with traumatic events. Due to these conceptions of historiography in Ancient Near Eastern Hebrew, the story itself, while educational, can also take on any variety of additional characteristics involved in the depiction of said story. This means that, while stories can be fictional but also rooted in communal memory with a hint of non-fiction, these narratives within historiography can have genres in and of themselves, or a combination of said genres. Decolonizing presuppositions of ancient writing can be done and should be done, although scholarship often uses modern conceptions in order to grasp what could have been.

These very historiographical narratives can also be affected by trauma, thus transcending previously held categories of genre in multiplying them. As trauma can take what was previously known and re-make something new from it, so too the opportunity for the genre of folklore also plays a part in Judges 19. Susan Niditch, in her work on folklore in the Hebrew Bible, suggests a variety of ways in which to indicate where this genre-of-sorts may be occurring, while she concedes that there is a “lack of definition because tradition is complicated and also involved.”<sup>384</sup> Folklore, in general, can be described as set in a specific social context, but also, a process and performance.<sup>385</sup> Dan Ben-Amos, a folklorist, discusses that there is a “grammar” of folklore, a “a cultural affirmation of the communication that governs the expression of complex messages within the cultural context.”<sup>386</sup> While the study will not

---

<sup>382</sup> Carolyn Sharp, *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*, edited by Gale Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 41.

<sup>383</sup> Sharp, *The Hebrew Bible*, 42.

<sup>384</sup> Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, 4.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>386</sup> Dan Ben-Amos, “Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres,” in *Folklore Genres* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 215-242. As found in *Beyond Orality*, Vayntrub, 86.

necessarily be reconstructing the genre of Judges 19, it will offer an opportunity via reconstruction to see patterns based on comparative analysis with intertexts through the lens of migratory trauma narrative as a way to re-interpret and understand the text afresh.

Although one can recognize “folklore based on repetition, form, tradition style,”<sup>387</sup> which would also incorporate knowledge of local, social context genre, what is most interesting, is Niditch’s observation of Freud’s view of folklore. She notes that folklore can become coping mechanisms, as repression and projection take place while “symbols are made into easily identifiable and interpretable categories.”<sup>388</sup> Similarly, Daniel Smith-Christopher, studying literature in the social context of the Babylonian exile, recognizes that one of the very “mechanisms for survival,” is the creation of new folk literature or patterns. Smith argues that while these are called mechanisms for survival, “by identifying the sociological mechanisms of minorities who are confronted with the culture of power, the behavior [of the Israelites in] the Babylonian Exile can be illuminated as a *creative response* to social realities, and not merely the desperate struggle of a culture in decline.”<sup>389</sup> Coping and survival should never be seen as weakness, but strength. Due to this, recognizing what began to emerge in this time period were the “hero stories,” sees this strength found in legends and role models for the collective.

Judges is filled with hero stories—legendary material. In addressing the issue of the legendary material, or Judges as legendary tale, many invoke the great divide debacle, as there is an assumption of very early dating for oral transmission of these beloved figures.<sup>390</sup> The study will not continue to belabor the ongoing debate of the great divide between oral and literary transmission of these stories, but it does take note of the way in which Judges 19 seems to be the exact inverse of a hero story. There is, quite literally, no hero in a whole book of heroes. Bearing in mind that this is most likely intentional in the light of intertextual allusion in the book of Judges up to chapter 19, it is sensible to see this anti-heroic

---

<sup>387</sup> Niditch, *Folklore*, 10.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid*, 28-29.

<sup>389</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Landless*, 10.

<sup>390</sup> See Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality*, 2-4.

narrative of proportions that outdo the “legendary evil of Sodom and Gomorrah,”<sup>391</sup> as what others have called tragi-comic.

Boling calls the book a tragi-comedy, as it is both horrific as well as bitterly ironic and sarcastic at points. While the study disagrees with the use of any form of “comical” to describe what occurs in Judges 19, no matter non-fiction or fiction, it is not abnormal for those in a precarious situation to make a joke of it as a survival tactic. In Steve Lipman’s book *Laughter in Hell*, he discusses how creativity was used through jokes and humorous stories by Jewish men and women during the Holocaust, what some call “gallows humor.” Jokes would be re-made, taken from what was a very different situation and then re-told in the light of their current situation, most often, in concentration camps. Deryn Guest takes note of this study as well as they write on Judges 19 through the lens of attachment theory, stating that humor in this way actually provides communities with more connection, solidarity, and strength for further resistance, and helps people to cope.<sup>392</sup> Using tragi-comedy, both the extremes of emotion, for an audience that may identify well with the story being told, even as one or more generations after the traumatic event, is certainly one way to elicit a response and ensure the story is forever remembered. It is easy to understand how the re-making of Genesis 19 for the audience that went through a new experience, being in exile, with horrific twists, was part of the coping of a surviving community.

The study could belabor these modern categories, but recognizes once more the polyvalency the text itself provides, as well as the bias that *any* interpreter brings to the text, which, while uncomfortable, is a more honest approach to scholarship. No one can claim objectivity. The range of possibility even within a specific lens of migratory trauma narrative, certainly a category that the study is using, envelops both the potential of the world within the text and what the words are doing on page; this study is an opportunity to see the text from a different, holistic angle.<sup>393</sup>

---

<sup>391</sup> Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 70.

<sup>392</sup> Deryn Guest, *YHWH and Israel in the Book of Judges: An Object-Relations Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 56-57.

<sup>393</sup> Coming from the thoughts and ideas of Jacqueline Vayntrub’s presentation at Union Presbyterian Seminary on April 27, 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xsRVXDGjTg>.

### b) Characterization: Who Plays a Part in this Narrative of Trauma?

There is an overall agreement that none of the characters in the story of Judges 19 are heroes in any way. However, there is great disagreement as to the reception of these characters as they present themselves: nameless, confounding, and not fitting into the proverbial boxes of the actual titles they are given in the story. The chapter gives few details to allow for assumption or presumption, but the actions in Judges 19 offer great scope for judgment. How one interprets each individual character can change the whole tone of the story, which is why it is important to understand the polyvalent nature of the text, the literary ways in which the characters reside in such liminal spaces, both literally and figuratively, for a purpose.

Every single one of the characters in the narrative of Judges 19 is nameless. Laura Smit and Stephen Fowl take this characteristic, or lack thereof, to have great theological significance. They argue that the anonymity used in the chapter is one specific way in which the text shows how far the characters have “fallen from God,” stating, “the loss of a name is a symptom of the slide backward from the creation into which we have been called toward nonbeing.”<sup>394</sup> Cheryl Exum, while making no note on the theological point Smit and Fowler make, argues similarly that the Concubine’s anonymity “encourages readers not to view her as a person in her own right.”<sup>395</sup> However, another way in which to view the story is the way in which Adele Reinhartz views characters in the Hebrew Bible with no names, in that they become a “type.” In one way, they are a nonbeing, but in another, they are representative of the general designation they *are* called, thus, *levite, pilegesh, servant, old man, father, virgin daughter, men of wickedness*.<sup>396</sup> Hence, anonymity is given a greater place in the text as it is used rhetorically with a “universalizing purpose.”<sup>397</sup> Havilah Dharamraj gives an example of how this can be implemented in a reading that emphasizes anonymity as type: “the narrator seems to be saying that every

---

<sup>394</sup> Laura Smit and Stephen Fowl, *Judges & Ruth*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2018), 180.

<sup>395</sup> Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives*, 176.

<sup>396</sup> Adele Reinhartz, *‘Why Ask My Name?’: Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6.

<sup>397</sup> Paynter, *Telling Terror*, 32.

Levite was capable of the horrendous acts described. Every host was potentially helpless against the mistreatment of his guests, and every woman could become a victim of rape until death.”<sup>398</sup>

While the setting is named, the narrative takes place in the course of characters’ journey; the characters occupy multiple places and spaces. Here, Hamley writes that “the setting of the characters creates a sense of no one being in their proper place, setting displacement and otherness as important themes.”<sup>399</sup> The term *ger* is used as a descriptive for both the Levite and the Old Man host. Moreover, the Levite himself lives on the very edge of the territory of the hills of Ephraim, where no one else in the Hebrew Bible is said to come from. David Moster, in his article about the Levite, which portrays the character positively, notes that this location is precarious, not only geographically but socially:

While this information characterizes the Levite as peripheral, at least in a geographical sense, the fact that he comes from the hills of Ephraim characterizes him as central as well. The hill country of Ephraim was at the center of Cis-Jordanian Israel and would eventually become the heartland of the northern kingdom in the book of Kings. While the discrepancy between these peripheral and central characterizations may seem insignificant at first, it actually creates a vantage point from which to view one of the Levite’s most essential traits, namely, his being marginalized and cast aside by some (peripheral) while being accepted and integrated by others (central).<sup>400</sup>

The in-between, liminal nature of not only the Levite but most of these characters, is striking, especially as they act as types, as general persons. It begs the question regarding the whole of Israel if these generalities, as they are, represent themselves as a nation in the world behind the text.

Once more, if these characters represent the whole of the actual title they are given, none of these figures fit into the neatly made paradigms that one assumes they would inhabit. For example, the Levite in the story is supposed to act on God’s behalf, ironically, a great intertextual choice for the angels in Genesis 19. However, as Hamley adds, “the Levite neither acts as God’s messenger nor, indeed, mentions God.”<sup>401</sup> His titles shift throughout the story, from Levite and husband, to master and lord. He

---

<sup>398</sup> Dharamraj, “Judges,” 325.

<sup>399</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 132.

<sup>400</sup> David Moster, “The Levite of Judges 19-21,” *JBL* 134/4 (2015): 724.

<sup>401</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 151.

lies repeatedly, not only in this chapter, but immediately following the murder by dismemberment, or “anti-sacrifice,” and the gathering of the tribes via his Concubine’s seized body. He “desecrates rather than consecrates,” in the words of Gale Yee, being quite literally the anti-hero of the evolving genre the story inhabits.<sup>402</sup> Whether or not the Levite represents a picture of a failed institution, or even, a failure on behalf of the Deity itself, is a bold statement by the author of the text.

The Concubine’s body was ravaged by almost every single man in the text. While it is relatively easy to make the case above, the way in which the Father of the Concubine also fails greatly, is a more difficult issue. Yamada believes that the two hospitality scenes in the passage contrast the way in which the Wicked Men of Gibeah show hospitality, which then produces judgment of the people of the town.<sup>403</sup> However, Pamela Tamarkin Reis argues, especially in the light of the six times the word father is repeated in the chapter, that he is supposed to be a father but does not act like a father. While the Father’s many attempts to ensure the Levite does not leave, could be interpreted as acting like a father, he still fails to protect his daughter, which Reis calls an “inadequate response.”<sup>404</sup>

In light of the counterpart of this father in Judges 1, this father does not provide much of anything for his daughter except what seems a temporary respite. Interestingly, the exact same verb is used for how the Father coerces the Levite to stay and when the Levite cuts the Concubine into pieces. Edenburg writes, “The treatment the concubine received at their hands [men of Gibeah] does not stand in marked contrast to that she received from the other characters. All the characters in the story treat the concubine as an object, and it seems that all are shown to be actual or implied partners in the affair that culminated in her rape and death.”<sup>405</sup> Bal makes it quite clear that while the text starts with a woman exhibiting agency, it is the men throughout the story that continue to gain and garner power for

---

<sup>402</sup> Gale Yee, “Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body,” in *Judges & Method* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 155.

<sup>403</sup> Yamada, *Configurations of Rape*, 72.

<sup>404</sup> Pamela Tamarkin Reis, “The Levite’s Concubine: New Light on a Dark Story,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 20/1 (March 2011), 133.

<sup>405</sup> Edenburg, *Dismembering*, 20.

themselves in a myriad of ways, while the woman's power decreases.<sup>406</sup> Although feminist issues must be addressed in the text, as well as reading with the lens of hearing the voices of women who are given none, it fits quite well within the general schema of Judges that just about every character in the story completely fails to fit the "type" they are supposed to be, most specifically, the men in the narrative. However, if one were to read this with a patriarchal lens, which would likely be how the story was originally created or read, the Concubine may have simply deserved her punishment for "trespassing into the public domain,"<sup>407</sup> or the story may be "just the unpleasant but unavoidable fulfillment of the divine plan."<sup>408</sup> For many reasons, the study will maintain a polyvalent approach and understanding of the chapter, while also holding it up to critique from a feminist point of view.

### c) Feminist Biblical Interpretation: Listening to Her/Their Voices

Athalya Brenner writes, "there is an apparent centrality of women in Judges," adding that "a closer examination of the texts may yield the conclusion that the women stories they contain are, by and large, androcentric."<sup>409</sup> Women literally frame the book of Judges, the very beginning, and the very end. Yet, despite this seeming "centrality" of women, their power declines throughout. Klaas Spronk notes that,

a decline is more clearly found in the role played by women. Whereas they show initiative and are mentioned by name in the beginning, they are pictured more passive and usually anonymous towards the end. The dissolution of society in the period of the judges is also revealed in the way the boundaries between animals are crossed. First only the foreign opponents are slaughtered like animals, in the end the same fate awaits Israel herself.<sup>410</sup>

And yet, we must not miss the women in the ideological education occurring in the narrative. Bal's book *Death and Dissymmetry* is all about the power shifts between characters in the book of Judges, which she views as highly gendered as well. For this reason, she calls for a change of genre into

---

<sup>406</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 23.

<sup>407</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 122.

<sup>408</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 13.

<sup>409</sup> Athalya Brenner, *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 13.

<sup>410</sup> Spronk, *Judges*, 36.

“hystorigraphy;” moving away from subordinating women’s stories within a major historical project and entering into concerns of historical reality.<sup>411</sup> With this lens we see that the main structure that is at fault within the story is not simply one of unity, or of anti-Saulide rhetoric, in order to bolster further male-centric preoccupations; but it moves beyond a dichotomy that asks the question why men have such contempt for women’s lives and bodies.<sup>412</sup>

Ultimately the study as a whole serves as an ideological critique from a feminist position. Phyllis Bird writes on the ideologies of ancient Israel as unabashedly patriarchal, stating that discrimination against women was an explicit function of the system, seen as normative. Bird finishes this monograph remarking that “we cannot return to the biblical world, nor can we make it speak our language or endorse our concerns. It has no feminist message, in my view, but it does have a message about the nature of our humanity and the requirements of justice that in our day must be translated.”<sup>413</sup>

Rampant anti-Semitism that still exists in the field of biblical studies should also caution us in the handling of the text that perpetuates this prejudice. In this regard, using the framework given by Julia O’Brien is helpful; she remarks that,

ideological critique of the Bible can lead to greater understanding of oneself and one’s culture. It can help readers to understand more clearly not only the logic of ancient texts but also the current ideologies with which those texts intersect, offering readers deeper insight into the cultural scripts that shape their own thinking and thus inform their responses to the text.<sup>414</sup>

Two women have a place in the story at hand: the Concubine and the Virgin Daughter. While many feminist scholars give these women a name, a way of honoring what the text did not, I see the rhetorical use of anonymity as a way in which to allow others to see themselves in the character or as part of that “type,” which can help others to re-orient themselves after their own traumatic event. This is

---

<sup>411</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 14-17.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid*, 28-34.

<sup>413</sup> Phyllis Bird, *Missing Persons*, 23, 263.

<sup>414</sup> O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 60.



another way in which in a world, or rather, “in a book where a man’s voice can be deadly to the body, the woman’s body becomes a voice.”<sup>415</sup> The next section will unpack the etymology and meaning of the words that define these women and their actions, or lack thereof—not only from a patriarchal view, but also using a feminist lens that will resist the falsified bifurcations weaponized against women, most specifically the representation found in Judges 19.

### *i. The Main Character Who Never Speaks*

The Hebrew word פִּלְגֶשֶׁת is loosely translated as concubine, or to others, secondary wife. Hamley remarks that every other reference to a *pilegish* is a story with a negative outcome; “they are all dark tales.”<sup>416</sup> The very word should lead readers to understand that the story would probably be one of those dark tales, to expect some of the terror that besets the following words. While its very meaning conveys the notion of subordination, the term is still being contested for lack of information. Yee reminds readers of the patriarchal setting of the narrative, meaning that while a wife would have been subordinate to her husband in this context, “the *pilegish* endures a double subordination in her position.”<sup>417</sup> Within the narrative, it is evident that the position is of quite low status, as Hamley notes that it “seems to be below even animals, as the Levite takes his donkeys first and the *pilegish* second in Judg. 19:10-12.”<sup>418</sup> At one point, the relationship between the two switches terms to one of maidservant and master (19:19), not husband and wife. Yet, she is always called *his* concubine, as she is his property. Susanne Scholz suggests about concubinage on her work involving rape narratives in the Hebrew Bible:

Indeed, the difference between an enslaved woman and a concubine is small. Like concubines, enslaved women are accustomed to giving birth to children who will be taken from them. Both concubines and slaves have to submit to the orders of the superior, whether this person is a slave owner, a husband, or a king. Sometimes their tasks are different. A concubine’s primary role is to provide children, whereas a slave also fulfills other functions. Furthermore, a concubine gives a man more prestige than

---

<sup>415</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 126.

<sup>416</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 137.

<sup>417</sup> Yee, “Ideological Criticism,” in *Judges & Method*, 152.

<sup>418</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 115.

a slave. A concubine may also reconcile political power struggles at the royal courts, whereas a slave never interferes into such affairs.<sup>419</sup>

Ryan also views concubines as little more than slaves, if not slaves in the full sense of the word. They could be booty from conquest or Canaanites grafted into Israelite household for “duties.”<sup>420</sup> This begs the question regarding the Concubine’s father’s house and previous status before concubinage beyond “daughter:” was she sold because her household could not afford to keep her and needed additional funds? Is she from Bethlehem as an Israelite, or a native Canaanite displaced? The text itself does not provide us with any answers to these questions.

Lillian Klein, who views Judges as a tale of great irony, writes that it seems the Levite may have purchased the *pilegish*, “for purposes of sexual gratification or housekeeping (or both), possibly because he could not afford the bride price of a wife.”<sup>421</sup> The irony for Klein is that the Levite tends to act affluently, but more than likely is not; however the irony is more likely found in the way in which she is viewed not as wife, but object. Even the reasons for which she may have been purchased, do not seem to quite work out. The text does not mention a lineage or offspring, nor does it mention a primary wife. The Levite does not fit what many would imagine the general “type” would be, nor does the Concubine. Hamley points out these differences in detail in her monograph, but with the undertone that the Concubine, at the very least, is used as an object.<sup>422</sup> As her hands post-gang rape find themselves on the threshold, that space of in-between, the border and boundary marker separating spaces, she too represents bodily in type and function what it means to belong nowhere fully.

The narrative of Judges 19 immediately starts with the power differential, as a “Levite has an honored place in society that sets him above many other males; a concubine has an inferior status that

---

<sup>419</sup> Susanne Scholz, *Sacred Witness* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 75.

<sup>420</sup> Ryan, *Judges*, 143.

<sup>421</sup> Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, JSOT 68 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 163.

<sup>422</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 121.

places her beneath other females.”<sup>423</sup> Similarly, Khumalo, who reads the text through the lens of non-consensual rape fantasies in cartoon pornography, writes that,

... a rape fantasy, is dependent on an unresponsive female body that is rendered as a commodity for masculine political exchanges. The text uses objecthood, configured through exceeding and evading mimetic realism, establishes narrative apparatuses that make use of women and their experience as raw material for the pursuits of male political agendas.<sup>424</sup>

And yet, the Concubine in this story acts on her own, another way in which she does not follow the traditional definitions of her “type,” displaying great agency. Yet, this act is defined by another word that is loaded with misconceptions and patriarchally charged negativity. *Zonah* is normally translated in modern English contexts as “playing the whore,” or “unfaithful,” usually applied to prostitution, or in cultic cases, idolatry. However, what immediately follows is that the Concubine goes to her father’s house in Bethlehem. According to the law in Deuteronomy 22, this infidelity should be punished. Is she waiting to be stoned at the door of her father’s house? Klein argues that this would not be characteristic of *this* kind of Levite, as “a woman who behaves like a harlot should be stoned to death, but this would leave the Levite without a woman for whatever purposes he had acquired her. The narrative leads one to believe that the Levite’s needs are more important to him than Yahweh’s moral strictures.”<sup>425</sup>

Furthermore, the Levite waits four months to go to speak to his concubine’s heart. Commentator Tammi Schneider sees this as an indication that the Levite waited until a pregnancy would be visible, approximately four months.<sup>426</sup> Was he waiting to see if she was pregnant with his child, or with another man’s child if she was *zonah*-ing in the full sense of the word? Ryan calls this a reasonable length of time to wait to see if she will return on her own.<sup>427</sup> This timing is repeated only one chapter later in the genocidal *herem* aftermath: Judg. 20:47 states that the 600 Benjaminites escaped to Rimmon Rock and

---

<sup>423</sup> Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 66.

<sup>424</sup> Khumalo, “Judges 19 and Non-Con,” 107.

<sup>425</sup> Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 163.

<sup>426</sup> Schneider, *Judges*, 253.

<sup>427</sup> Ryan, *Judges*, 143.

stayed there for four months. Theodore Mullen, who reads Judges as a creation of the Deuteronomistic Historian to bolster a national identity, views this as simply another text that highlights the need for unification, even when the enemy is your brother.<sup>428</sup> It is difficult to draw a parallelism other than potentially an ideological one. The four-month time period in this interpretation seems to be more a lack of immediate desire on the part of the Levite.

## *ii. Unfaithful How?*

The verb *zonah* in this case does not seem to be any of the above definitions as they stand. However, in the ancient Israelite context, to leave a husband for any reason was to be unfaithful. Cheryl Exum, using a feminist lens, writes, “a woman who asserts her sexual autonomy by leaving her husband—and whether or not she remains with him is a sexual issue—is guilty of sexual misconduct.”<sup>429</sup> She goes on to argue in relation to Judges 19 that this act of *zonah*-ing, in the patriarchal society, was deserving of punishment for leaving these social and sexual boundaries, regardless of whether the act was one of fornication.

As was said earlier, in a patriarchal society, wives were subordinated to their husbands, and concubines were doubly subordinate. While there are some scholars who rightly argue against simply carrying a western meaning of feminism onto an ancient text, it is helpful to distinguish that the social units and places of human meaning were not the individual, and the structures were mainly created for survival; there is still a great need to critique the actions that occurred so future readers and interpreters may heed them properly.<sup>430</sup> That being said, many commentators have written about the gang rape and

---

<sup>428</sup> Theodore Mullen, Jr., *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 178.

<sup>429</sup> Exum, *Fragmented Women*, 179.

<sup>430</sup> This quote from Keefe in *A Woman's Body and the Social Body in Hosea* argues this point, saying: “Ancient Israelite women certainly did not enjoy personal autonomy or self-possession over their own bodies, but were largely defined by their procreative potential and were constrained within a male-dominated social system. A modern, liberated person may respond to this lack of personal, bodily autonomy with horror, and conclude that ancient Israel was a misogynistic society which allotted women little more status than that of cattle or any other property a man might control. But in a social context where the individual is not the primary locus of human meaning and value, body, sex, and gender will carry meanings which are quite distinct from our own and the equations most central to feminist analysis will not necessarily hold. In ancient Israel, the basic social unit was not the individual but the kinship group, and personhood was defined in terms of one's place within the corporate structure and by one's contributions to those structures. Individual existence was intimately tied to corporate welfare and survival, both in the immediate temporal context and over the course of generations. In such a social formation,

dismemberment as a punishment that befits the “crime” in that context. Rachel Magdalene writes on divine sexual abuse in the light of Ancient Near Eastern treaty-curses, and makes note of the unfortunate reality of the law:

A prostitute could, therefore, be stripped and publicly humiliated or raped without consequence to the perpetrator. Any sexual assault would be viewed as legitimate retaliation for her sexual freedom and the temptation to males that she represents. Thus, it cannot be said that the ancient Israelites regarded the passages under study as describing rape, but instead, a type of retribution for the perceived affront to the social order which the prostitute embodies... the free reign of a woman’s sexuality is perceived as an offense worthy of the penalty of sexual assault. The crime is sexuality brandished; the punishment must, therefore, be both sexual and public. The woman is not violated; she is chastised through sexual savagery. To the mind of ancient peoples, these types of acts are not abusive.<sup>431</sup>

Is the Levite carrying out an act to punish the woman at greater cost? Is this how the ancient Israelites would have read the passage? This is one way to read the text, and many have—with consequences that continue to produce rape culture. However, if considered from a trauma perspective, it could give a traumatized audience a “reason” for their punishment as well. Hamley asks the real question that should be asked by feminist scholars who are caught in the binary of proving the Concubine’s innocence in that her *zonah*-ing was not a sexual act, “would she be less of a victim if she had been promiscuous?”<sup>432</sup> No matter her supposed crime, she is still a victim—we do not get to call her a survivor.

### *iii. Can We Call It Rape?*

The narrative repeats the invocation *הנה* seven times, and each time it is said, the danger increases and intensifies as the narrative focuses on specific characters and times. Yet, it is in Judg. 19:22, in the second hospitality scene as the men are pleasing their own hearts, that the narrative turns bleak. While the threat of rape has always been there for the *pilegish*, the Levite and also the Virgin Daughter, face the threat too. The Old Man of the house also feels entitled to the *pilegish*’s body in offering her to the

---

personal autonomy was not definitive to the structures of human meaning, and therefore, should not be taken as the normative criteria upon which to evaluate woman’s status and ascribed worth within ancient Israelite society,” 158.

<sup>431</sup> Rachel Magdalene, “Ancient Near Eastern Treaty-Curses and the Ultimate Texts of Terror: A Study of the Language of Divine Sexual Abuse in the Prophetic Corpus,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, 340-341.

<sup>432</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 139.

Sons of Wickedness, letting the men know that they can oppress, humiliate, and afflict the women as is pleasing to their eyes—but to oppress the man would be a disgrace.

What is of utmost importance to recognize, is that rape is a weapon of violence, not necessarily of sexuality, though it involves sex. As Roxane Gay remarks in her anthology on the subject, “rape culture” means to understand “what it is like to live in a culture where it often seems like it is a question of when, not if, a woman will encounter some kind of sexual violence.”<sup>433</sup> Smith speaks on patriarchal societies and the ownership of women’s bodies in the light of Judges 19, stating:

Patriarchal societies teach that it is the right of men to have access to women’s bodies to satisfy their desires; that their rage is justified when what they’ve been taught they are entitled to is not given freely. Rape is an act of hostility and violence and not a crime of passion, even and especially when men (and women) rape their wives or traffic or expose their wives and daughters to others in order to protect their own bodies and ‘manhood.’<sup>434</sup>

When this point is forgotten, it can be easily rendered that these men are actually dangerous homosexuals, as they ask for the Levite first and foremost. This interpretation has been wielded against the LGBTQIA community for far too long, creating a sort of “homosexual panic,” and it ultimately stems from a similarly oppressive notion of purity that seeks to control women’s bodies. However, in remembering this patriarchal context, acknowledging the “phallogentric construction of gender,” means that those who penetrate have power. Michael Carden, writing about this from a queer reading of the texts, both Genesis 19 and Judges 19, notes that this attack not only feminizes the men who are penetrated, but also, “inscribes the outsider as queer, and queer as outsider.” Carden argues, “In such a system, even sexual violence reinforces a male’s heterosexuality, because men affirm their male heterosexuality by penetrating others, male or female... A woman’s status is low in the phallogentric order, whereas raped men lose their heterosexual status and become like women.”<sup>435</sup> He interprets the rest of the narrative of raping the Levite’s property, the Concubine, as still creating this effect towards the Levite, or “queering” him. As mentioned previously, the rape of women is simply an accident in the

---

<sup>433</sup> Roxane Gay, *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture*, xi.

<sup>434</sup> Smith, *Insights from African American Interpretation*, 116.

<sup>435</sup> Michael Carden, “Homophobia and Rape in Sodom and Gibeah: A Response to Ken Stone,” *JSOT* 24/82 (1999), 90: <https://doi.org/10.1177/030908929902408205>.

real battle of men. Ultimately, Carden views the text as one that speaks of homophobic and xenophobic violence, adding that, “in this narrative all males are sodomites, whether they are misogynists or rapists, because ultimately they value men only.”<sup>436</sup> This seems to be exactly the case as the Levite interprets the outrage of Gibeah as his almost rape, and the violation of his property. Yee remarks that in the following chapter, when the people of Israel are united to discover who did such a thing to the body parts of the woman, they gather to hear her story, “but they hear his.”<sup>437</sup>

In this context, while knowing how self-serving the Levite really is, there is a recognition of how honor and shame works. Yamada contends that “the Deuteronomistic writers were not concerned primarily with sexuality, but with the ways in which sexuality impacted the political and social environment of Israel. Thus, within the DtrH, issues of male power and prestige are directly related to sexual activity with women.”<sup>438</sup> Even as the Levite makes the Concubine’s rape, and then her murder by him, all about himself, so do the men of Israel who unite over the horror and shame. But their idea of justice is quite similar to what has just occurred. Keefe points out valuably that “2 Samuel 13, Genesis 34, and Judges 19 are the only narratives in the Hebrew Bible where the rape of a woman is the focus of narrative attention, and in each of these narratives, this rape provides the catalyst for escalating violence and war between men.”<sup>439</sup> The ideology underlying the continuous violence perpetrated by the hands of men is still one that continues today: boys will be boys, and boys are destructive.

Even if the rapes that are threatened and carried out within the narrative are fictional, they are still problematic. Rapes do occur literally in the space of battle and war, *and* they occur as a metaphor to describe what people do to their enemies and the land. Pamela Gordon and Harold Washington point out that the term עָנָה—used twice in Judges 19, when the Old Man tells the men what to do with the women once they receive them, and then when they carry it out—is also used to “denote military assault, or the

---

<sup>436</sup> Carden, “Homophobia and Rape in Sodom and Gibeah,” *JSOT* 24/82 (1999): <https://doi.org/10.1177/030908929902408205>, 91-93.

<sup>437</sup> Yee, “Ideological Criticism,” 156.

<sup>438</sup> Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 16-17.

<sup>439</sup> Keefe, *A Woman’s Body*, 168.

defeat and exploitation of one nation by another.”<sup>440</sup> The desolation that rape creates is telling based on the fact that the same verb can be used to describe being defeated in war. However, Gordon and Washington do fear the implications of what using the term as a military metaphor can do ideologically.

Rape as military metaphor is masculinist language: it formulates and promotes an unchallenged masculine authority that sanctions both violent sexual acts and the mayhem of warfare. If we submit to this language uncritically, we resign ourselves to the view that ‘men are like that.’ But resistance is imperative because no one is safe in the environment created by such rhetoric. Women are allowed the role of the victim, and men are expected to pursue with equal enthusiasm both sexual domination and ‘war, the ultimate adventure.’ The woman becomes guilty by default—responsibility and victimization are collapsed into a single complex.<sup>441</sup>

This ideology clearly and evidently has death dealing, death worshipping, in its very nature. Judges 19 is evidence of this. Exum points out bluntly that, “it is men in this story who bring death and who shift the blame onto women through an encoded message that holds women responsible for male aggression.”<sup>442</sup> Mitzi Smith, who names the Concubine *enmishpat*, which means in Hebrew, “there was/is no justice,” sees this ideology as not only patriarchal, but also “misogynistic, class-conscious, and xenophobic which results in the dismembering of the most vulnerable of society.” She adds that “too many men in patriarchal societies, where equity and justice are contingent upon one’s gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity/race, do as they please and what pleases them.”<sup>443</sup> Others have noted rape as a colonizing tool; rape itself is something that colonizes. In other words, “everyone did what was right in their own eyes.”

What is most damning is that many forget that there is another woman in the story who is nameless and not given a voice: the Virgin Daughter. She is hardly even mentioned in the narrative itself, yet her rape is spared as the Levite seizes only the Concubine to hand to the Wicked Men of Gibeah, even though her own father offered her up to them. Julia O’Brien in her book that discusses

---

<sup>440</sup> Pamela Gordon and Harold C. Washington, “Rape as Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*, 313.

<sup>441</sup> Gordon and Washington, “Rape as Military Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible,” 320-323.

<sup>442</sup> Exum, *Fragmented Woman*, 193.

<sup>443</sup> Smith, *African American Interpretation*, 102-103.



problematic metaphors, most often in the prophetic texts, says that in this patriarchal context, “to be forever a daughter is to remain ever dependent on and vulnerable to others, defenseless when those in control fail to offer protection and care.”<sup>444</sup> Although some make a case for the parallel narrative in Genesis 19 being similar, of honor and shame codes that benefit mainly the men, a feminist case sees both offerings of the women as problematic. This does not have to be an either/or, where the men must be willing to be harmed on behalf of the women inside the home, as rape of and violence to everyone must be resisted and abolished everywhere. However, it is quite telling that for those who do seek to uphold patriarchal standards that “protect” women, this is the biblical model that we have. Ironically, there is not much of a difference between the Old Man host and the Father of the Concubine, in that they both fail to protect their daughters, but protect the man. The Old Man doubly fails as, unlike Lot, he does not close the door to the men.

What is important to note is that relationally there are most likely many breakdowns between all of the characters in the story, but most particularly between the Virgin Daughter and her father. Bal writes that there is “an intrinsic bond between the idea of virginity, the competition between fathers and next-generation men, and the extreme violence that takes the form of ritual sacrifice.”<sup>445</sup> In the patriarchal context, she is the best and most pure sacrifice, highly desired. As Phyllis Bird states, “the corollary of the unwritten law that a wife’s sexuality belongs exclusively to her husband is the law that demands virginity of the bride.”<sup>446</sup> The virgin is on the same side of the binary for women beside wife and mother, inhabiting a space of a “complementary ideal of the feminine,” described erotically as “ripe and unblemished fruit.” Bird continues that this is simply the “same ideal viewed from the perspective of male control underlying the legal stipulations regarding women’s sexuality.”<sup>447</sup> Unfortunately, when it pertains to some legal stipulations regarding women’s sexuality, there is still a narrative within that says that women are essential, but also an obligation. Due to this, there is also a narrative that proclaims

---

<sup>444</sup> O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 135.

<sup>445</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 93.

<sup>446</sup> Phyllis Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 24. She adds these laws are Ex. 22:16-17, 2 Sam. 13:11-16, and that in no case is the girl’s interests regarded by the law. See also Deut. 22:13-21, 28-29.

<sup>447</sup> Bird, *Missing Persons*, 61.

there are women who do not deserve to be raped, and some who do. Virgins are protected, to some relative degree, as innocent victims. Yet, as Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon writes in the poem based on the voices of the women in Judges 19, the Daughter repeats three times while watching the Concubine thrown out to the men: “It could have easily been me.”<sup>448</sup>

The poem starts the daughter’s section of the poem with the words, “suddenly, I am a stranger in my father’s house.”<sup>449</sup> For the father to offer his daughter up, unmarried, virginal, would mean that she would then potentially have to marry the rapists who are pounding at the door, which remains wide open to them. This is, for obvious reasons, not ideal, likely for all parties concerned, except maybe for the father, in that he is absolved of some roles and costs in the daughter’s life—he essentially Others his own daughter. Every male figure in the story participates in Othering someone, and often, not only those they stereotype, such as the Jebusites and other travelers, but also, those closest to them.

#### **d) Introducing Othering as Sense-Making Mechanism**

Hamley, whose research in Judges 19 relies on an Irigarayan framework, writes that “meeting the Other always precipitates a choice between hospitality and rejection,” adding that, “false hospitality makes no space for the unexpected Other but rather rehearses a conversation already scripted.”<sup>450</sup> We see these choices occur over and over again in the narrative of Judges 19. This Othering happens most vocally and blatantly towards the people residing in Jebus, or what readers would have known as Jerusalem, but most violently and vehemently towards the Concubine. Hamley defines this Othering as something motivated by fear and desire for dominance, but the “other” is never received for who they actually are, an “inverted and distorted image” of them is created. She argues that “[t]his Other is both feared and desired, yet neither fear nor desire leads to encounter; rather, it leads to the objectification of the Other as an object of fear and desire.”<sup>451</sup> Diana Edelman recognizes Othering as a “psychological strategy for establishing and reinforcing individual or group identity through separation and the establishment of

---

<sup>448</sup> Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon, *Black Swan* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 33.

<sup>449</sup> Clief-Stefanon, *Black Swan*, 31.

<sup>450</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 123-124.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid*, 224-225.

boundaries of difference.”<sup>452</sup> This shows up in a myriad of ways throughout Judges 19, and is worthy of exploration as it may, in fact, be the very key to the sin of Gibeah.

The first specific instance to note regarding Othering occurs in Judg. 19:12, when the servant or young boy asks the Levite to stay overnight in the city of Jebusites. The Levite responds by saying that they will not turn aside to the city of foreigners (נכר) as they are not sons of Israel. The term differentiation is key, as the Levite and the Old Man, migrants themselves, are given the title of גר. Ilse Müllner, who also recognizes the pattern of Othering in Judges 19, notes this differentiation:

Treating strangeness as a central category is the key to an interpretation that would attempt to clarify the differences contained in the text... The Levite is mistaken in his estimation of who in Israel was to be considered as Other. This error shows that social coding is an underlying factor in determining who is deemed Other, and that this code is not intelligible to all concerned. For the person who, unbeknownst to him or herself, is labeled as Other, this error can be lethal.<sup>453</sup>

Within this interaction between the servant boy and the Levite near the city of Jebus are several layers of Othering. Dharamraj acknowledges that “implicit in the Levite’s veto is the idea that Canaanites may harm rather than host them.”<sup>454</sup> As Müllner points out, this belief will prove to be ultimately untrue and fatal; the one who is stereotyped and Othered in the text are the Jebusites in Judg. 19:12, the underlying assumption that with “those people” is where the danger actually lies. Niditch, also recognizing the notion of “us versus them,” a tactic of Othering, in what is said to the servant boy, states: “the interaction between the Levite and his aide point to the contrast between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the group.”<sup>455</sup> And yet, the response from the Levite can be one that is learned, in that he is also a marginal person. A case can certainly be made for the reasoning behind xenophobia that can happen after a

---

<sup>452</sup> Diana Edelman, “YHWH’s Othering of Israel,” in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*, edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 41.

<sup>453</sup> Ilse Müllner, “Lethal Differences: Sexual Violence as Violence Against Others in Judges 19,” in *Judges: A Feminist Companion*, edited by Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 135-137.

<sup>454</sup> Dharamraj, *South Asia Bible Commentary*, 325.

<sup>455</sup> Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 192.

traumatizing event such as war and exile,<sup>456</sup>—as a remark for the text behind the text—including the further colonization that Judah and Israel experienced thereafter.

Yet, from a postcolonial perspective, the Jebusites should have a voice as they are systematically erased from telling their own history. Second Sam. 5:6-10 calls them “inhabitants of the land,” signifying they may be indigenous to what later is subjugated by Israel and called Jerusalem, as noted in the text.<sup>457</sup> Pierce connects the Genesis 19 passage to Judges 19 through the very sin of Sodom, or Gibeah, with his belief that the text ultimately is a critique against those who are inhospitable to the stranger, the alien, the “other.”<sup>458</sup> It is Israel themselves that must consider their history. The story makes a point to mention Jebus, highlighting Israel’s colonizing and violent history of displacing of indigenous peoples as they attempted to drive them out. The text acknowledges that these pieces of their identity need to be reckoned with and even atoned for. Interestingly enough, in the light for those wanting to characterize the text of Deuteronomistic History as fully anti-Benjaminite, anti-Saulide, it is Judah which is blamed for not driving the Jebusites out in Josh. 15:63, not Benjamin. Ultimately, the text is essentially saying, this is not where the threat lies: look at your history.

The threat lies within the walled city of Gibeah, walled to protect itself from what would have been thought to be violent outsiders. “Gibeah was chosen as ‘one of us’: the Levite wanted a city with ‘sons of Israel,’ who would see him not as Other or stranger but rather one of them. Instead, the despised and feared Others may have been a safer option as their Benjaminite kin treats the Levite as Other. A cognitive dissonance is therefore set up between perceived and performed identity.”<sup>459</sup> Some scholars make a case that the text involves an attempt to preserve the very unity of Israel in showing what happens in a fractured identity, the Othering within it often revealing itself violently. Firth remarks that

---

<sup>456</sup> Miles states: “Deportations as an aspect of foreign imperial policies in the ancient Near Eastern world were intended to destroy nationality and, regardless of protocol, always an effort to suppress the possibilities of any potential revolt,” 46.

<sup>457</sup> Nadav Na’aman, “Jebusites and Jabeshites in the Saul and David Story-Cycles,” *Biblica* 94/4 (2014), 485.

<sup>458</sup> Zachary P. Pierce, “Let Us Not Be Like Sodom: Revisiting the Cultural Critique in Genesis 19:1-11 in the Age of Trump,” for *The Institute for Confronting Religious Violence* (Inaugural Conference: Spring 2017).

<sup>459</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 187.

“Judges 17-21 shows Israel’s dividing itself, treating each other as foreign, even as foreigners who lived among them showed a better alternative than did Israel themselves.”<sup>460</sup>

The ultimate act of Othering occurs in relation to the Concubine and the many men in the story. Hamley writes that, “women work as the fixed reference points, the mirrors of male constructions of subjectivity. As such, they cannot have their own representations, discourse, or desires, as this would threaten male totalitarian constructs.”<sup>461</sup> The mirror concept of the “other” is often located in what are depicted as negative spaces, stereotyping, projection, and the “reverse image” as a reflection of the one who creates it. Not only is the Concubine firmly located in the margins, effectively *marginalized*, through the lack of name and position as secondary wife, but also an outsider in each of the places she finds herself in, never firmly belonging. Her hands, as they reach the threshold, the place of supposed safety right across the boundary between public and private spheres, reside alone in the liminal space. She herself is a character more likely written from the male gaze; from the perspective of the male is where she as woman is created as “other.” She is also essential to the story as the bridge for the men to progress to the next stage in *their* story. Her body is only functional for the men. Being the meeting place for these men, she is acted upon—even with the agency she exerts, a performance is demanded. Susan Niditch in her writing on Judges 19 writes, “the tale as told also emphasizes the ways in which women, the mediating gender, provide doorways in and out of war.”<sup>462</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, as a woman herself caught in the crossroads, describes it as “blocked, immobilized, we can’t move forward, can’t move backwards.”<sup>463</sup> Beyond the necessary lens of what were private and public spheres for the genders to operate within—still an ongoing conversation today—the in-between nature of her intersecting identity renders her dispensable after their use. Müllner argues that “sexual violence, as represented in this story, combines the two aspects of Otherness—being a member of the female sex and being a

---

<sup>460</sup> Firth, *Including the Stranger*, 92.

<sup>461</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 10.

<sup>462</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 193.

<sup>463</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 43.

stranger—and thus multiplies, not only adds, these aspects of Otherness.”<sup>464</sup> She is destroyed, but her “dangerous memory” lives on.

There are others who view the text as telling a different story. Keefe argues that “in these stories, it is rape, the violation of women’s bodies, which is disruptive and which signifies chaos, not women themselves.”<sup>465</sup> This seems almost too good to be true given the weightiness of the actions in Judges 19. Opening the text up amidst the given critiques from a feminist perspective within a patriarchal context not only allows other voices to shine through that are not typically heard (though present) but also creates a space where other interpretations can have validity. It is from this place that embraces the liminality and receives the “other(s)” that applying the lenses of migration and trauma narratives in tandem give insight to fresh ideas on the actual sin of Gibeah.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Judges 19 as a story written from the perspective of Israelites wearing the trauma of migration, using the narrative itself to begin to explain and process that very trauma, is a rather new concept. The chapter sought to reckon with the historical, but also, in deducing that the aftermath of the historical would create both psychological and sociological effects, reckon with how that takes shape in the literature. Words shape worlds, and words can also be affected by the worlds they reside in. From a feminist viewpoint, the chapter also allowed the layers of oppression to become visible, another way in which the world of the reader can be part of the change in understanding the words in this story. Acting with care to not impress unethically upon the meaning of the text, receiving Judges 19 as it was and can be, is done by taking trauma seriously. Reading how others such as Hosea may have interpreted the sin of Gibeah will continue to shape the definition of the phrase itself—but it certainly starts with a re-reading of this passage through the lens of the actual context as a migratory trauma narrative.

---

<sup>464</sup> Müllner, *Judges: A Feminist Companion*, 140.

<sup>465</sup> Keefe, *A Woman’s Body*, 174-175.

## CHAPTER FIVE: HOSEA, GOMER, AND THE “DAYS OF GIBEAH”

*The prophetic corpus is by and large a complex literary response to the massive collapse of ancient Israel’s longstanding cultural arrangements. And this collapse is chiefly the result of war, forced relocation, and captivity—all traumatic events in ancient and contemporary times. (Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim)<sup>466</sup>*

*... genuine repentance involves claiming one’s sinful ancestry rather than distancing oneself from it. (Bo H. Lim and Daniel Castelo)<sup>467</sup>*

*Our sociology is predictably derived from, legitimated by, and reflective of our theology. And if we gather around a static god of order who only guards the interests of the ‘haves,’ oppression cannot be far behind. (Walter Brueggeman)<sup>468</sup>*

### 1. A NATURAL POLYVALENCY

The first few verses of Hosea give clues as to what the rest of its contents will be inundated with: many abuses, a glimpse into future (or current) horrors, and prophesy of both tragedy and hope in what seems the same breath. The entire text of Hosea spills out in ways confusing and confounding to most scholars, as voices change between first, second, and third person, and metaphor cuts too close for comfort as the literary device more often than not sounds like realism. Interpretation throughout the years has varied, depending on context, but stayed consistent in more conservative places, rendering the text as something simplistic, as sections are cherry picked without considering the whole. In light of Hosea’s own context, and the methodology this study proposes for understanding the text, this living and breathing scripture speaks both intertextually and to even the modern reader with polyvalency. What has yet to be considered in scholarship, is how this text’s wild and varied nature could be explained and better understood as a migratory trauma narrative.

---

<sup>466</sup> Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>467</sup> Bo H. Lim and Daniel Castelo, *Hosea*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 165.

<sup>468</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 8.

The chapter will begin with a translation of the Hebrew text of Hosea 9-10, including a few notes on the differences found between the text and the Septuagint. Immediately following the translation, the chapter will do a brief synopsis of the many differing opinions of dating and authorship of Hosea, making note of the historical events that need to be considered in what will be read and received by not only modern-day readers, but generations closest to the events, and exactly what those words would have meant to them. While taking care to consider the historical context of this book, the chapter will focus mainly on literary exegesis, considering the genre as well as a trauma literature lens for new understanding of an old passage. Furthermore, an intersectional feminist as well as a migratory lens lend themselves to asking an old question with a new distinction: is this another text of terror? In answering the question, the chapter will make the case for reading Hosea 9-10 as a migratory trauma narrative, which holds distinct implications for this reading in both scholarship as well as for ordinary believers. Ultimately, the study will further reflect on the meaning and significance of the sin of Gibeah in Hos. 9:9 and 10:9-10 by means of focusing on the intertextual relationship between the texts of Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 while implying that for years scholars have missed what could be a fuller, more pertinent, description.

## 2. TRANSLATION

Do not rejoice, Israel; Do not exult!  
 Like the nations<sup>469</sup> you have been a prostitute against your god  
 You have loved wages<sup>470</sup> upon all threshing floors.  
     Threshing floors and wine vats will not feed them<sup>471</sup>  
     And new wine will deceive them.  
 They will not dwell in the land of the Lord  
 But Ephraim will return to the wilderness  
 And in Assyria they will eat unclean food.  
     They will not pour out drink offerings to the Lord  
     And no sacrifices will be pleasing to him  
     It is as mourning bread; All who eat of it will be unclean  
     For the bread of their soul will not come to the house of the Lord

---

<sup>469</sup> Literally the word is “peoples” (כַּעַמִּים), not nations, but there seems to be difficulty in translating to English in a way that is most grammatically correct.

<sup>470</sup> What is more likely is “a prostitute’s wages,” as it fits the context more appropriately.

<sup>471</sup> Another way to interpret this verb is “will not shepherd them,” which could also be a double meaning in multiple ways as it involves not only common shepherding imagery, but also, some of the context clues as will be discussed in the beginning of this chapter.



What will you do on the day, the day of the feast of the Lord?  
Behold! For if they go from violence, Egypt will gather them  
Memphis will bury them  
Thistles will inherit their precious things of silver  
Thorns will be in their tents<sup>472</sup>  
The days of punishment have come  
The days of recompense have come  
Israel knows  
The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is mad  
In spite of [your knowing],<sup>473</sup> great is your sin, great is your hatred!  
The prophet is watching Ephraim with my god  
A fowler's snare is upon all his ways  
Hatred is in the house of his god.  
They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah  
He will remember their iniquity  
He will punish their sins.

As grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel.  
As firstfruits on trees in season, I saw your ancestors.  
They went to Baal-Peor, and they dedicated themselves to shame,  
They became shame, as they loved it.  
As a bird will fly away, Ephraim's glory from birth, pregnancy, and conception will depart.  
If their children grow up, I will bereave them until there is no one.  
Woe to them when I depart from them!

As a palm planted in a meadow, I saw Ephraim;  
Now Ephraim is leading out their children to the slaughter.  
Give them, Lord, what will you give?  
Give to them a bereaving womb and drying breasts.  
All their evil is at Gilgal, because there I hate them,  
I will drive their evil deeds out<sup>474</sup> from my house,  
I will not love them again.  
All their officials are stubborn.  
Ephraim is stricken,  
Their root is withered, they will never make fruit.  
Even when they give birth, I will kill their beloved children.<sup>475</sup>  
My God will reject them because they do not listen,

---

<sup>472</sup> Robin Routledge, *Hosea*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Academic Press, 2020), 130. While this study does not believe in the "empty land" myth, Routledge mentions that as used in Isa. 34:13, this can describe a "once occupied land that has become desolate and uninhabitable."

<sup>473</sup> Here the study makes an interpretive difference, deriving from similar translations of Job 10:7 from the BDAG as well.

<sup>474</sup> Robin Routledge, *Hosea*, 134. Routledge mentions that this verb can also mean *to divorce* as seen in Lev. 21:7, 14; 22:13.

<sup>475</sup> Another way to translate this phrase literally is, I will kill "the desirable thing in their belly." This could mean that women miscarry and are not able to carry babies to full term.

They will become wanderers<sup>476</sup> among the nations.

Israel is a luxurious vine<sup>477</sup> that yields its fruit

As more of its fruit increased, altars increased;

As the land improved, the pillars improved.

Their heart is false. Now they will bear their guilt.

He will break down their altars and he will devastate their pillars.

Because now they say, “We have no King for us,

because we do not fear YHWH; and a King, what can he do for us?”

They speak words, they swear false oaths, they make covenants,

and it springs up as weeds of judgment<sup>478</sup> over the furrows of the field.

The inhabitants<sup>479</sup> of Samaria fear the calves of Beth-Aven,<sup>480</sup>

Their people mourn over it,

Their priests rejoice<sup>481</sup> over its glory that has gone into exile.

Also, it will be carried to Assyria as an offering to the Great King (Jareb)<sup>482</sup>

Ephraim will be put to shame, and Israel will be ashamed of its counsel.

Samaria’s King will be cut off as a twig upon the face of the waters.

And the high places of sin will be destroyed, the sin of Israel

Thorn and thistle will cover their altars

and they will say, “cover us!” to their mountains,

and to the hills, “fall upon us.”

From the days of Gibeah you have sinned, Israel.

---

<sup>476</sup> Yet another translation for this word is “to flee,” but “flee-ers” is not a word. To understand wanderers, flee-ers, in terms of how migration as lens fits, could be describing a kind of forced migration *by* the supposed rejection of and hand of God.

<sup>477</sup> Martin Sweeney argues that this word is actually more likely to be translated in a way that defines luxuriant as “to empty, to lay waste,” *The Twelve Prophets: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 103.

<sup>478</sup> This can also be translated as brings up “poison,” Francis Landy translating as “the systematic inversion of values, their version of justice means the harvest is venomous, *Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 127.

<sup>479</sup> This translation is difficult, in that it is often translated “neighbor” in the Hebrew. It is also translated as *παρουκῆσουσιν* in the LXX, and as Edward Glenny in his commentary from the Codex Vaticanus explains, it refers “to the inhabitants of Samaria sojourning in foreign lands for a time,” *Hosea: A Commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 146. Does this imply that they were already in different lands, writing from this perspective?

<sup>480</sup> It is beneficial to understand this whole phrase as addressed by Keefe in *The Woman’s Body*: “The ‘calf of Samaria’ is false not simply because it is an idol, but because of what it stands for: the structures of power which are seated in Samaria,” 97.

<sup>481</sup> This verb form has the same root as mourning, but as Mayer I. Gruber also points out, the ambiguity is probably on purpose, *Hosea: A Textual Commentary* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 415. It is also interesting that Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman in *Hosea*, mention that it could actually be translated as “yaguru, or literally ‘they will be resident aliens’,” *Hosea* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 560.

<sup>482</sup> All roots for this word are used in relation to proper names, so the question is asked if this is a scribal error, shortening the name of Jeroboam?

You continue there.

Shall not war overtake you in Gibeah upon the sons of iniquity?<sup>483</sup>

With my desire, I will instruct them,

And they will gather the peoples against them;

They are bound for their two/double iniquity(ies).

Ephraim was a trained calf that loved to thresh, and I spared her good neck.

I will yoke Ephraim, Judah will plow, Jacob will harrow for himself.

Sow justice for yourselves, reap faithful love for yourselves.

Break up the fallow ground for yourselves; it is time to seek the Lord  
until He comes and causes rain of righteousness for themselves.

You plowed evil, you reap iniquity.

You have eaten the fruit of lies, because you have trusted in your way by your great  
might/warriors.

So tumult will arise against your people, and all your walls will be destroyed,

As Shalman destroyed Beth-Arbal on the day of war,<sup>484</sup>

Mothers upon their sons will be dashed into pieces.

Thus it will be done to you, Bethel, before your great wickedness.

At dawn, the King of Israel will be completely cut off.

### 3. IDENTIFYING AND PLACING HOSEA'S FRAGMENTED PUZZLE PIECES

#### a) History's Roots

Although there are a number of concerns about the book of Hosea, the vast number of differing conclusions on the historicity alone has generated separate books. In asking the question this thesis desires to answer, this portion serves to answer the question of not only *how* the mentioned "sin of Gibeah" itself is a link intertextually to describe the devastation of war and exile on the Body of Israel, but also make the point that *from where* this text is coming can be said to be traumatic in itself. One could ask whether the final form of Hosea is simply "a recontextualization of the pre-existing material for a new socio-historical setting?"<sup>485</sup> or, literally from the space of a wound to the wounded, from the traumatized author himself to the traumatized audience. Both these interpretative possibilities beg further interrogation and more nuance. The section considers the events that would at the time of the composition of Hosea have been considered to be traumatic in nature. In addition to the effects on the community and said text, as well as effects on an interpretation based on reception, a literary-theoretical

---

<sup>483</sup> The translation in Judg. 19:22 is Sons of Belial. LXX translates this as the children of injustice.

<sup>484</sup> This event occurred in 727-722 BCE by Shalmeneser V.

<sup>485</sup> James M. Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 10.

perspective will start first and foremost with historical criticism. In attempting to answer these many inquiries, the chapter begins with *when*.

### *i. Who Claims Authorship of These Words?*

The text states at the very beginning that this book is filled with the words of YHWH that came to Hosea, son of Beeri. While actions do seem to occur throughout narratively—the beginning involves Hosea acting upon the words of YHWH in taking a “woman of promiscuity (Hos. 1:2)” as a wife and mother to their children—the text itself does not necessarily depict the given words of YHWH as a speech performance to the people of Israel, but as transmission between Hosea himself and the Divine.<sup>486</sup> The transmitted words are said to have come to Hosea during the “reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam, son of Jehoash, king of Israel (Hos. 1:1).” These specific time periods that are referenced in the history of both kingdoms are approximately between 790 and 700 BCE. While the book says the words of YHWH were given to Hosea, son of Beeri, somewhere within these time periods, the study recognizes that this is a “literary claim,” and we have very little to suggest that these words were literally orally prophesied following the transmission other than tradition itself. However, these words grant authority in multiple ways.

Jacqueline Vayntrub, in her book *Beyond Orality: Biblical Poetry on Its Own Terms*, rejects the typical framework used to define Hebrew poetry, as it is often through a western, or rather, Greek lens instead of the culturally specific one that can be found in the texts themselves. Vayntrub argues that Hos. 1:1 “authorizes the text by accounting for the moment of the text’s transmission from the deity to the prophetic speaker.”<sup>487</sup> However, she also notes that the authorization was a “significant locus of meaning for the biblical authors,” as “the importance of the embodied voice of characters—of identifiable, legendary speakers—not only shaped the way in which poetry appears in our texts, but also plays a significant role structuring discourses of transmission and survival beyond bodily death.”<sup>488</sup>

---

<sup>486</sup> More on this framework will be expounded upon in the literary section under genre, but it is helpful to note that we do not know for certain how these prophecies or oracles were transmitted to the people of Israel, whether orally or written in anthology or collection as we currently have it. Jacqueline Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality: Biblical Poetry on its Own Terms* (New York: Routledge Press, 2019), 187-189.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>488</sup> This is where Vayntrub adds that this could be “the human voice or the deity’s voice by analogical extension,” *ibid*, 219.

Regarding Hosea, this understanding can complicate dates as it pertains to the book itself being a potential “anthology, or collection of collections”<sup>489</sup> of the prophet’s, or rather, YHWH’s words. However, one should note that the literary claim first and foremost uses the “title” as a narrative authoritative frame for the words that follow.

From here, the radical change within a relatively short period of time of approximately 90 years is only part of both the wildly differing opinions scholars have on the historical setting of the text, as well as the chaotic agreement that many things can be true at once. Although Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman’s commentary on Hosea contend that the book was written during a time of flourishing,<sup>490</sup> they quickly shift to address the turmoil other scholarship acknowledges. Not only was this book clearly “intended to be read against the background of the rise of the Assyrian empire in the Mid-Eighth century BCE, and the threat it posed to the Northern Kingdom of Israel,”<sup>491</sup> the internal fissures in the Northern Kingdom alone were enough to have seven kings within 20 years as revolt and assassination became part of the political landscape. The addition of continued and increased tension between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, angst culminating in the Syro-Ephraimite war occurring in 733/2 BCE, laid bare the true state of Israel as a whole: wholly divided.

2 Kings 16 begins the story as King Ahaz is on the throne in Judah, and King Pekah rules in Israel. Pairing up with Damascus, or Aram, the two kingdoms waged war against Jerusalem, causing Ahaz to become a vassal of Assyria, specifically to King Tiglath-Pileser. Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria then captured Damascus, deported citizens to a different city as was custom and practice, and annexed Galilee and Gilead.<sup>492</sup> Although it was not long before Israel too became a vassal state of Assyria, and Samaria also fell to Assyria under the king following Pekah, Hoshea, it is clear that slowly but surely, the Northern and Southern Kingdoms rejected one another. 2 Kings 17 lays out the history of this latter portion for Israel as the people were exiled, and once more, refugees were moved from place to place as

---

<sup>489</sup> Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality*, 218-219.

<sup>490</sup> Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea*, Anchor Bible Commentary (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980), 33.

<sup>491</sup> Martin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 3-4.

<sup>492</sup> A.A. Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), xcvi-xcvii.

a way to break their spirits by removing them from their lands and homes, including moving settlers into Samaria itself. King Hoshea himself was imprisoned and then deported from Beth-el by Shalman[eser] of Assyria around 724-22 BCE.<sup>493</sup> As some Israelites fled to Judah<sup>494</sup> or even Egypt before being forcibly displaced, if one assumes that Hosea was a historical prophet, James Mays writes that “it is not inconceivable that the prophet himself was a refugee in Judah.”<sup>495</sup>

Within this time period, a few issues stand out, which it seems the author of Hosea spoke to. One of the most pertinent issues seems to be syncretism with the state apparatus. Alice Keefe mentions that what was primarily of concern was the use of the “cult of sacrifice at the national shrines functioning as an arm of the royal administration, lending divine sanction to the monarchy and its policies.”<sup>496</sup> Yee notes this particularity as well, yet more so in light of the relationship of the tumultuous kingships and the land. As the demand for the crops most known in Israel grew greater, accompanied by immense wealth, so too did the exploitation of the most poor in the nation. At the same time, worship of Ba’al became venerated, as hopeful and desperate people in an agrarian society looked for help to supply the large demand, to provide fertility in all manners of life. Keefe continues,

Hosea was angry because elite strategies of land accumulation and coordinate power politics had transgressed and profaned the sacred nexus of relationship among and between the people and their land. The transformation to a market economy, within which land, produce, and people had been commodified, constituted a religious crisis concerning the meaning and identity of this people.<sup>497</sup>

Israelite religious belief and practice had always been somewhat pluralistic as they lived among other cultures; monotheism was not fully adopted until the centrality of the cult became normative. This

---

<sup>493</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 111.

<sup>494</sup> The study would deem this internal displacement to some degree, even as refugees, but due to the rhetoric discussed previously, it could be determined that they be seen more as voluntary immigrants.

<sup>495</sup> James Luther Mays, *Hosea*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1969), 16.

<sup>496</sup> Alice A. Keefe, “Hosea,” in *Fortress Commentary on the Bible: The Old Testament and Apocrypha*, 823.

<sup>497</sup> Keefe, *A Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea*, 220.

stance of a pure worship of YHWH is typical of Deuteronomistic historians, as language of covenant became the norm.<sup>498</sup>

Covenant was the central concern of the authorship of Hosea, specifically, the ways in which the covenant with YHWH had clearly been broken. Covenants were a large part of how society was conducted, mainly in ways of creating hierarchies, through vassal and client relationships. Treaty-curses were intended as punishment, written and promised if treaties were broken by the client. A common curse was deportation as punishment, not only by Assyria, but also by others in the Ancient Near East.<sup>499</sup> While there was a covenant with Assyria, it was broken by Hoshea when he refused to pay tribute to the king, thus enacting a curse. The covenant blessings and curses found in Deuteronomy give insight as to what Hosea assumed would be the lot for Israel as they broke covenant with YHWH by worshipping Ba'al, presumably as well as other sins which will be mentioned as the study continues. Deuteronomy 28-29 offers these details to remind and to warn the people of what happens when one either obeys YHWH's commands or disobeys. As Deuteronomy also writes from the perspective of exilic and post-exilic authorship, given the details of Assyria's scorched earth policies in war<sup>500</sup> and the potential connection of Judges 19 with the passage, the recognition of covenantal curse here seems explicitly predictive, and likely as it had already come to pass:

Future generations of your children who follow you and the foreigner who comes from a distant country will see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses the Lord has inflicted on it. All its soil will be a burning waste of sulfur and salt, unsown, producing nothing, with no plant growing on it, just like the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord demolished in his fierce anger. All the nations will ask, 'Why has the Lord done this to this land? Why this intense outburst of anger?' Then people will answer, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their ancestors, which he had made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. They began to serve other gods, bowing in worship to gods they had not known—gods that the Lord had not permitted them to worship. Therefore the Lord's anger burned against this land, and he brought every curse written in this book on it. The Lord uprooted them from their land in his anger, rage, and intense wrath, and threw them into another land where they are today. (Deut. 29:22-29 CSB)

---

<sup>498</sup> Gale A. Yee, "Hosea," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, 300.

<sup>499</sup> Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Weisbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1979), 42.

<sup>500</sup> David Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), 25.

As it seems that Hosea acknowledges a similar covenantal understanding as that which the Deuteronomist wrote about, it seems odd that some scholars argue for an early date for the writing of this book. Scholars tend to view the language in the text as early Biblical Hebrew (EBH), or Israelian Hebrew. What would be called a “Northern text” contains a dialect that has specific characteristics, but according to James Bos’s monograph *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea*, Hosea does not have “a large enough data set from undisputed northern contexts” in order to make such a definitive claim.<sup>501</sup> As even the greatest proponents of Hosea as a Northern composition admit, according to Yoon Jong Yoo and Gary Rendsberg, “southern writers were capable of producing northern characters in their texts with distinctive speech,” a trait that Yoo prefers to call “style switching.”<sup>502</sup> While Bos has a strong argument for why we may not have any biblical texts from Israel, all of them being “historical reconstructions,”<sup>503</sup> the study suggests that perhaps the blurring of these boundaries and lines in language could be purposeful ambiguity, or rather, an effect. Ehud Ben Zvi remarks in regard to the writing of this book and historical setting that,

Numerous references to Judah reveal a perspective that is not consistent with an actual historical (as opposed to literary) northern Israelite setting. Thus either Judah is transformed into Israel, so as to construct a text that can be associated with a northern Israelite setting, or some of these texts are assigned to later redactional levels or additions.<sup>504</sup>

In returning to the initial question of Hosea as a book of transmission between YHWH and the man named Hosea, the study asks if this is an anthology of sorts, although it certainly seems the text itself has a unity that does not permit for a multitude of oracles that occurred at separate times. Bos argues that “there is no hard, textual evidence for an expansionist or redacted text.”<sup>505</sup> Meanwhile, Gale Yee disagrees, advocating for four redactors from four different time periods. While it is not the purpose

---

<sup>501</sup> James M. Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea: The Case for Persian-Period Yehud* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 18.

<sup>502</sup> Yoon Jong Yoo, “Israelian Hebrew in the Book of Hosea,” (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1999), 23-26. More specifically, this argument against Yoo’s research is summarized in Bos, *Reconsidering the Date*, 19-22.

<sup>503</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering*, 167.

<sup>504</sup> Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, Vol. XXIA/1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 14.

<sup>505</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering*, 29.



of this study to figure out the number of redactors that potentially wrote Hosea, what we are looking for are the “literary and cultural-historical forces that shaped the values for the configurations of this collection.”<sup>506</sup>

Yet, in order to create or shape a collection of written works, one must be literate. The literati of the time would likely have been elites, either part of an administration itself and employed by their rulers, or financially independent themselves. Moreover, in order to receive and disperse written information such as these transmissions from YHWH to Hosea, they would also have needed to be literate, thus being not only the creators of texts from previously oral transmissions, but the interpreters of these texts to their communities.<sup>507</sup> This being said, the study recognizes that the composer of the final form of the text of Hosea would more than likely have been employed by the state.<sup>508</sup>

However, Bos claims that those employed by these administrations would not have been able to truly implicate their own “bosses” in the current events that befell them, lest they lose their employment. Using this rationale, he shifts from an Israelite context of creation into Persian-period Yehud, stating that there would have been less of an issue of literacy in this period as well as no native king in Judah,<sup>509</sup> allowing for some dissention, political power as well as clear ideological biases towards their “Northern neighbors and competitors.” Yet, Bos fails to address some of the fallout within the Southern Kingdom of Judah itself, as it is clear that Judah is also implicated in the many words transmitted. Nonetheless, he

---

<sup>506</sup> Vayntrub, 218-219. Gale Yee, in *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, 44, talks more of literary “gestalts” and a molding [sic.] of tradition in that, “a literary work, therefore, is not just an aggregate of smaller units of tradition. Nor can the meaning of the total work be dependent on the meaning of its isolated units. The meaning of a literary piece is derived from the dialectic interaction among the complexes of tradition and redactional commentary: *its gestaltist unity*. In the end, the redactor creates a new tradition out of the old.”

<sup>507</sup> While we can discuss oral traditions, and many scholars have, for the purpose of this study, specific focus must rest on the written forms, as they were more likely than not polished and not necessarily verbatim as they stand.

<sup>508</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering*, 2-13. He continues that “certainly there were degrees of literacy, and the probability that some persons not associated with the state administration could have obtained a rudimentary form of literacy that allowed them to read or write their own name is high. Yet these persons were not producing literature, and that is the kind of high-level literacy that is primary for this discussion.”

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid*, 31-33.

calls these texts “literary predictive,”<sup>510</sup> in other words, “writing about things that *have happened* in order to bolster the *current time*.”<sup>511</sup>

According to Bos, this means that in some ways the book Hosea could be a propagandistic piece of literature. Coming from a place of trauma, which the study will continue to make a case for, it begs the question if giving the readers and hearers of these texts propaganda that offers them a reason for their suffering, is ethical or not. I will maintain that the either/or binary remains largely unhelpful in these discussions of trauma. Yee locates the cultural forces that shaped the editing of Hosea 9-10 by the redactor she calls R2 from a post-exilic or exilic period, in that the judgments that seem to be foreshadowed, had already happened.<sup>512</sup> Ben Zvi agrees with Bos that Hosea was written by an elite group of literati in the Persian period, but differs in that the “Israel” that the book discusses “must involve an Israel that encompasses the people who lived in the Northern and Southern monarchical polities,”<sup>513</sup> especially as it pertains to the main themes of the second exodus. The pre-history is clearly from the eighth century BCE, as indicated by the very first words in the book, but “the past is constructed in a manner that serves the interests of a Fifth Century audience.”<sup>514</sup> A full, adequate picture of the text in this study will take into account the text receptors, as well as history’s effects on their interpretation of the words spoken to them by the literary elite of the time.

## *ii. For Whom? Text Reception for Generations of Survivors*

While the historical realities of the authorship(s) of the book of Hosea remain open-ended, with the caveat being that most modern scholarship agrees on the compilation of the text in the exilic to post-exilic eras, text reception needs to remind itself that this is history *for*, and then ask, for whom? This can become difficult in the area of reception, as modern-day readers are also text receptors. As James Trotter introduces in his own “literary-theoretical” perspective, he argues that “a valid interpretation of the text

---

<sup>510</sup> Originally from Maria deJong Ellis, “Observations on Mesopotamian Oracles and Prophetic Texts,” *JCS* 41 (1989), 148.

<sup>511</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering*, 13-14. Italics mine.

<sup>512</sup> Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*, 214.

<sup>513</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 14-15.

<sup>514</sup> Bo H. Lim and Daniel Castelo, *Hosea*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 31-2. They take many of their cues here from Ehud Ben Zvi as well.

is not whether it can be conclusively demonstrated to be an accurate construal of the author's intended meaning but whether such a reading accurately reflects the interpretive constraints of the interpretive community.”<sup>515</sup> Searching for the meaning of these texts within a particular interpretive community or communities, whether that be the elite literati who created or at least brought the words together, becomes most difficult as the seeming ambiguity can lend itself to different meanings for differing peoples. Embracing a polyvalent text in regard to reception is of utmost importance. The study itself, then, proposes one interpretation as accurate amidst others that can simultaneously be so. The book of Hosea itself, speaking of the past, does so in an open enough way to not only be interpreted in terms of just one time period that it was potentially written as history *for*, but also *for* the generations to follow.<sup>516</sup>

Then reading the text as interpreting an intertextual reading alongside Judges 19 from the perspective of traumatized migrants works not simply only for the immediate fifth century BCE context that some propose, leaning towards a *terminus ad quem* in the Persian Period, but also, for considering future audiences who continue to consider the significance of these texts in the centuries that follow. This proposed understanding becomes almost timeless due to the trauma and movement that continues to occur even among the Jewish communities, and also due to the multiplicity of the ways in which it can be wielded. Moving further away from a paternalistic either/or binary that does not and has not served its purpose even among scholarly communities, creates an embrace of both/and outcomes as many have seen in our own modern interpretive spaces.

Yet, the word “intertextual” has been misunderstood, according to Jakob Wöhrle in his article on cross-references in the Book of the Twelve. As its original meaning, defined by Julia Kristeva, is just about disregarded in biblical studies, or at the very least, fraught, Wöhrle succinctly sums up the phenomenon of intertextuality by acknowledging that, simply put, “it is just a descriptive term pointing

---

<sup>515</sup> James M. Trotter, *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 27.

<sup>516</sup> Ben Zvi writes, “In fact, the text remains as open as possible within the time limitations and general scope of the world in which the book is set, as one would expect from a written text composed for continuous reading and rereading by literati... and for the literati’s interpretive readings to others unable to read by themselves at different occasions and for different reasons,” 196.

to the interrelatedness of any given literature.”<sup>517</sup> However, there are still distinguishing factors to acknowledge in this process, as intertextuality may be either intentional or unintentional, as well as the degrees of literary dependency that must be addressed. In returning to Julia Kristeva’s original definition of intertextuality that encapsulates texts as something that can encompass culture as well, this word can even refer to a relationship shared coming from a similar space and time as a reaction or later reflection. The intertextual reading as proposed in this study involves specifically the times and places mentioned as a looking back at the past from the space of exile and post-exile, therefore beginning to define the texts themselves as migratory trauma narratives.

James Trotter uses this model as a way in which to attempt to interpret how those within Achaemenid Yehud would have understood Hosea, also recognizing that the production of these texts would have been closely related to the time period itself making sense of them. He claims that the literati of this time, “reflecting the values, beliefs, and social and political goals of the ruling class that functioned as both their patrons and peers,”<sup>518</sup> would have wielded these texts in a way that would take traditions of the past to function as “a warning to avoid the disasters that came upon their ancestors, and, at the same time, to support their construction of a new social and religious structure.”<sup>519</sup> The text both functioned as propaganda, potentially subversive, a post-traumatic maintenance of national and religious identity,<sup>520</sup> as well that, while greatly affected, they still survived and were back in the land of promise.

Arguing for the timelessness of the lens of traumatic migration narrative in interpreting the text involves recognition that exile and colonization have in part been continuous, and not just in Jewish communities. Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim write of the prophetic corpus as a whole being

---

<sup>517</sup> Jakob Wöhrle, “So Many Cross-References! Methodological Reflection on the Problem of Intertextual Relationships and their Significance for Redaction Critical Analysis,” in *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations – Redactional Processes – Historical Insights*, edited by Rainer Albertz, James D. Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2012), 6.

<sup>518</sup> Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 46.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid*, 225.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid*, 221. Trotter would not necessarily recognize, however, that this would be a collective post-traumatic necessity and response.

“*Sitz im buch* rather than a *Sitz im leben*,”<sup>521</sup> writing being a medium that has fewer boundaries than oral transmission. Yet, balancing honestly both synchronic and diachronic elements within this study means to still hold close to attempting to follow a recognizable picture of at least similar histories in both spaces, which is difficult to do as reception itself recontextualizes the “pre-existing material for a new socio-logical setting.”<sup>522</sup> Receptors in different times are new interpreters of these texts. Along this line of thought, David Janzen in his unpublished monograph discusses how the biblical text can be the “creation of the reader,” and the ethical responsibility as a reader to have a bias towards justice and liberation for all. As has been addressed in the chapters on methodology, intersectionality is one of the tools for interpretation in the study, adding a clear bias towards justice; “the Bible plays a key role in either reinforcing the status quo or prompting action toward liberation,”<sup>523</sup> and while the study will not sanitize or rehabilitate the text, it will offer a differing view to see the texts themselves.

Once more, one should be aware of the ethics behind using texts for specific purposes, and who gets to decide what interpretation is appropriate, although we are all interpreters. When making claims about the text, it is important to understand that they are all truly speculative, because one cannot claim full objectivity. Schüssler Fiorenza agrees, saying, “scholarship claiming to be ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ is not more value-free and less ideological because it hides its subjectivity and contemporary interests from itself.”<sup>524</sup> The study discussed in Chapter Three the specific lenses of intersectional feminism and postcolonialism, which is helpful for historical-critical, literary, and sociological purposes as well as for my own modern-day biases. Both the interpretation *and* the application of these texts are also of ethical importance.

---

<sup>521</sup> Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *You are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>522</sup> Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 10.

<sup>523</sup> Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, *Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 70.

<sup>524</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 90.

The literati, those who would have been reading as well as interpreting the text for the communities of which they formed a part, would also have recognized that as a prophetic book, these texts were meant to be didactic and dynamic. According to Ben Zvi, readers are:

supposed to learn through the continuous reading, rereading, and studying of the book, and others to whom the book or portions thereof were read are also supposed to learn by listening to particular instances of YHWH's word, that is, prophetic books... *Each reading* may evoke images of different social interactions and situations... likely to convey a multiplicity of meanings and of associations; moreover, the intended rereaders approached them in a way that is informed to some extent by other readings in the book.<sup>525</sup>

In the many communal readings and re-readings of this text, as with human beings who have experienced no trauma whatsoever but also with those who have endured a traumatic event(s), different emphases likely occurred during different times. The benefit of doing so in a community setting adds to the heightened emotional nature of this traumatic migratory narrative as certain words and places read aloud, even generations after the event(s), would have evoked a plethora of memories and meanings. None of this process is static by any means. As Ben Zvi continues, "the issue is not one of historical reality, but of constructions of the past."<sup>526</sup> Jeremiah Cataldo writes that the book of Hosea "is not about the life of a prophet but about a nation that must be reborn in the ashes of its defeat. It is about constructing the order of a renewed sociopolitical body out of the chaos of a foreign world as it was interpreted by the literati."<sup>527</sup> The study hopes to adequately construct from the pieces available of the past, an intertextual interpretation from the traumatic migratory narrative lens as it could have been received by exilic and post-exilic readers.<sup>528</sup>

### **b) Specific Histories, Memories in Spaces and Places**

Some of those shared, historical memories are also named alongside Gibeah in Hosea 9-10, making them equally important to study for full breadth in contextual meaning. There are additional place

---

<sup>525</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 7-8.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>527</sup> Jeremiah Cataldo, "Trauma of the (un)civilized (wo)man in Hosea," SBL Annual Meeting 2019, San Diego, 5.

<sup>528</sup> As mentioned before, colonization and occupation have been continuous, and, as said by Stulman and Kim, this then has meaning for old and new exiles.

markers in the whole of the book, including one further mention of Gibeah in Hosea 5, but they do not detract from the few mentioned in the two chapters the study is focused on. J. Andrew Dearman says of the authorship that they have “a penchant for citing disturbing events by reference to a geographic locale assuming that [their] contemporaries know enough of previous national history to understand [their] references.”<sup>529</sup> First, it has been speculated that the imagery used in Hosea 9 focuses in on the festival of Sukkoth. Second, the section will discuss memories potentially associated with the place names within these chapters, followed by additional historical points of contention such as covenant and religious syncretism. Lastly, the section will describe a few of the speculative options by scholars concerning the place of Gibeah, as well as a hypothesis of the memory referenced specifically in Judges 19.

### *i. Sukkoth*

Playing upon these specific spaces and places, specifically, the space of Sukkoth and the place markers in national memory, are crucial for the prophetic word, as it creates effect in the reader/hearer of the words. As mentioned in the discussion on trauma, how things are remembered is “crucial for identity formation—we are indeed what we remember (and forget).”<sup>530</sup> These memories are shared in the large group. In some cases (bearing in mind Volkan’s analysis on transgenerational traumas) these very places and spaces can be triggers, or what he calls a “reactivation” of chosen trauma, magnifying what is currently occurring and creating a time collapse of sorts, bringing the past into the present.<sup>531</sup> How the group then responds to this time collapse is up to the community, or rather, the leader of the community, who mediates the message. Whether this was a member of the royalty, or the prophet Hosea himself, is unknown. But what is certain, is that there was an important reason for the prophet and/or the authors of this text to bring these spaces and places to their attention.

It is worth mentioning that some scholars have proposed that Hosea 9 be situated within the context of the festival Sukkoth, or at least, the memory of what Sukkoth was and represented to the audience it is addressed. References to the threshing floor and winepress (Hos. 9:1-2) would have

---

<sup>529</sup> J. Andrew Dearman, *Hosea*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 183.

<sup>530</sup> Hendrik Bosman, “The Exodus as Migration,” 46.

<sup>531</sup> Vamik Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions,” 90.

supposed connotations of the joy associated with the feast of booths that celebrated and “commemorated God’s provision for Israel during its wandering in the wilderness and entry into the promised land.”<sup>532</sup> Torah would have been read aloud, a reinforcement of the covenant relationship through public remembrance, and a “rehearsal” of history.<sup>533</sup> This proposed background to Hosea 9 that begins with imagery of this historical, annual seven-day remembrance of the abundance before them as well as the traditions from which they came, mainly the Exodus, however, turns out to be quite ironic. Not only does Hosea 9 begin with the very setting where the festival would have taken place, Sweeney sees this as continuing in Hosea 10, presenting Israel as a lush vine bearing fruit, only this is used as a double entendre, an ironic betrayal and outcome in paying homage to Assyria and not YHWH.<sup>534</sup> As suggested by the intertextual reference assumed in this text, not only Judges 19, but the subsequent events narrated in Judges 20-21 are set in the time period of Sukkoth as well: in order to correct the misjudgment and near extermination of the Benjaminite tribe, young women from Jabesh-Gilead as well as from Shiloh, who are performing dances in the vineyards to celebrate, are taken from their homes and forced into relationships with the remaining men of the Benjaminites. The upending, dismantling, and reversal of this feast serves as a literary tool that will be discussed later in the chapter, as it may reveal a double meaning in the light of Shiloh’s daughters as well. As Ben Zvi writes concerning the significance of the Sukkoth as backdrop for Hosea 9:

It bears particular notice not only that the book is a holistic, written document, but also that neither the book as a whole nor Hosea 9:1-17 asks the intended readership to imagine a particular set of circumstances against which the proposed oral communication took place. The text... provides the readership with no information on the addressees, the place, the circumstances, or the time of the oral communication. To be sure, readers may identify the situation in the world of the book as the festival of Sukkoth, but they are certainly not required to do so. In fact, the text remains as open as possible within the time limitations and general scope of the world in which the book is set, as one would expect from a written text composed for continuous reading and rereading by literati in the post monarchic period, and for the literati’s interpretive readings to others unable to read by themselves at different occasions and for different reasons.<sup>535</sup>

---

<sup>532</sup> Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 154.

<sup>533</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 94-96.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid*, 103.

<sup>535</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 196.



## *ii. Cities both Inside and Outside of Israel*

It is furthermore important to consider the reference to Memphis that follows as specific place marker in Hos. 9:6, paralleled alongside Egypt, as it is, in fact, an Egyptian city approximately 20 kilometers south of modern Cairo.<sup>536</sup> Jeremiah 44:1 mentions this city among three others as places to where some Judeans, and also Israelites earlier, fled amidst conflict. It is known that religious life, or rather culture, continued for the diaspora in Egypt as there were temples at Elephantine and Heliopolis. Memphis specifically was a necropolis.<sup>537</sup> While death in this space was very literal, mentioning Memphis can also connote spiritual as well as cultic death—once more, the historical memory or knowledge of a place functioning as a construction to invoke a myriad of meanings.

Baal-Peor as mentioned in Hos. 9:10 is a moment in Israelite history found in Numbers 25. In this text, Israel joins the Moabite women in sacrificing to Baal of Peor, as well as fornicating with them. Although those who aligned themselves with the foreign god are commanded to be killed, at some point a plague also occurs, killing 24 000 Israelites according to the text. Phinehas, the priest, engages in stopping said plague, but in doing so, kills an Israelite man, Zimri, engaged in sexual relations with a Moabite woman, Cozbi. Macintosh describes this moment as one that would mark “migration by momentous failure.”<sup>538</sup> Much can be said about the problematic, xenophobic nature of this event in general; in fact, xenophobia itself can be a response to traumatic events, scapegoating out of need for protection.<sup>539</sup> However, allowing for religious practice to be nuanced, one should also tread lightly in

---

<sup>536</sup> W. Edward Glenny, *Hosea*, 136.

<sup>537</sup> Mayer I. Gruber, *Hosea*, 381.

<sup>538</sup> A.A. Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), xciv.

<sup>539</sup> I have written about this as found in the blog for the *Journal for Feminist Studies in Religion*, May 27, 2020: <https://www.fsrinc.org/trauma-and-the-other-for-better-or-worse/>. “While not condoning the actions we see in the text, and recognizing their resilience, trauma’s response longs to quickly resolve the many problems before them and to prevent them from happening again using easy binaries. However, in this text’s full context, the lines blur between who is truly ‘other.’ Taking the time to reckon with the interplay between power hierarchies and trauma becomes difficult in ancient and religious texts, but is an absolutely necessary lens to continue to use in our modern contexts. It explains, but does not condone the behavior.”

terms of what could be potentially anti-Semitic comments, while also recognizing and critiquing the problematic patterns being practiced.

Gilgal, as referenced in Hos. 9:15, is a sacred center, more specifically, where the Israelites first stayed after crossing the Jordan, creating a memorial using stones from the river to commemorate their passage to the Promised Land (Joshua 4). It was in Gilgal that Joshua also made a treaty with the Gibeonites (Joshua 9), and where many begin the fault lines with these passages leaning towards an anti-Benjaminite, anti-Saulide rhetoric. Gilgal recounts a place where Saul was rejected as king by YHWH through Samuel, for sparing both the King of Amalek, Agag, as well as the best of the animals. Samuel followed through on the command of YHWH, declaring on a similar note as Hosea in 1 Sam. 15:33, and subsequently dismembered Agag into pieces.

Beth-Aven, called a “dysphemistic epithet,”<sup>540</sup> or a “pejorative”<sup>541</sup> term, could be a pun of sorts to describe Beth-El; instead of the house of God, it becomes the house of iniquity. Many agree that the book of Hosea itself seems to focus on the Northern Kingdom of Samaria, and Beth-El would have held the royal shrine.<sup>542</sup> Carolyn Sharp argues that this historical moment has much to do with what occurs in 1 Samuel 14, as Saul swears an oath that no one in the army should eat in the midst of battle until it is won. However, this argument falls short. While the answer to Saul’s question of pursuing the Philistines is not received due to Jonathan’s unknowing failure, as well as an aside that troops also ate meat with blood still remaining in it, the people intercede on behalf of Jonathan, and the passage seems to lean in the direction of Saul’s oath lacking thought. The author of Samuel does, however, call this place Beth-Aven, so it could be a different place, still located within the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin. However, if it is a pun to implicate Beth-El, one would then regard the cultic space that beheld “Samaria’s calf,” invoking the combination of idolatry and the monarchy (Hos. 8:6).

---

<sup>540</sup> Gruber, *Hosea*, 413.

<sup>541</sup> Carolyn Sharp, “Hewn By the Prophet: An Analysis of Violence and Sexual Transgressions in Hosea with Reference to the Homiletical Aesthetic of Jeremiah Wright,” in *Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets*, edited by Chris Franke and Julia M. O’Brien (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 60.

<sup>542</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 16.

Beth-Arbel is one of the more difficult sites to place, as it does not conjure up any specific memory nor does it have a verified site or location, but it may be because it reminded the readers of a more literal, recent history considering the author's claimed time of writing. Yee argues that Beth-Arbel is the real "interpretive wordplay on Beth-el in the tradition,"<sup>543</sup> but many scholars, including Yee, agree that read alongside the whole of verse 14, referencing Shalmeneser IV from Scripture's 2 Kgs. 17:3 and 18:9, "the readers of the book are asked to compare both the murder of children and mothers and the destruction of fortresses to that which seems to be taken as a paradigmatic case, the destruction of Beth-Arbel by Shalman."<sup>544</sup> Yee's point does not seem entirely plausible as Hos. 10:15 literally inscribes the place of Beth-El, but the notion of mothers and children "dashed into pieces" in a day of war brings about vivid imagery.

### **iii. Gibeah**

Of utmost importance to the study is the place marker of Gibeah, mentioned multiple times in these two chapters of Hosea. Much ink has been spent on the arguments that arise when attempting to place what exactly happened at Gibeah that designates a particular sin or sins connected to it. The initial argument comes from a differing interpretation in the LXX, as the word in Greek for Gibeah can also mean "hills" in Hebrew. As is well known in biblical scholarship, quite a bit of sacred, cultic activity occurs on the high places, the hills. So whether Gibeah means a generalized damnation of those activities, or if the name itself is a double entendre, is difficult to determine. The most current argument has much to do with what Sara Milstein reconstructed as a "Saul complex," seeing the story of the war in Judges 19-21 alongside an account of Saul's birth, that culminates in his victory in 1 Sam. 11:1-11.

Daniel Fleming, Milstein's supervisor, incorporates these ideas in his book *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition*, specifically stating that her analysis actually places Benjamin as juxtaposed with Israel, or Ephraim in the book of Hosea. Fleming writes that this combination of "the war account with Saul's birth and heroic debut was recast in

---

<sup>543</sup> Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 213.

<sup>544</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 219.

cunningly ugly terms.”<sup>545</sup> As the land of Benjamin lies between the two kingdoms, many argue that within this context, as an almost border-state itself, while biblical authorship seems to place loyalties with the Southern Kingdom, it is difficult to see whom it serves, most often playing a mediating role. On this point, Landy joins in, claiming that, while it may hearken to the memory of Judges 19, the true point is really to see Saul, as a Benjaminite, founding the capital of his “abortive kingdom” right in Gibeah on the ashes of his own people.<sup>546</sup> Wellhausen and Nowack also see this as a reference to the time of Saul, simply because his headquarters was in Gibeah, stating that the sin then, is the rejection of the monarchy as a whole.<sup>547</sup>

There is also an entire book that seeks to portray Gibeah as a biblical city. Patrick Arnold connects the Judges 19 episode to Hosea only on account of the Syro-Ephraimite invasion, when he argues that the city would have been a Judean border post in proximity to where the forces would have begun to invade. By actually flipping the normative narrative, Arnold maintains that the issue lay with the Israelites as a whole and not necessarily the citizens of Gibeah, saying, “as Israel once massacred Benjaminites at Gibeah in antiquity, so now it intended to repeat this murderous policy in the Syro-Ephraimite invasion.”<sup>548</sup> Yet, Arnold *does* place the Judges passage as of Israelite creation, with Hosea using it for the opposite purposes the original outrage story intended.<sup>549</sup>

Contextually, along with most scholarship, Judges 19 as the shared memory Hosea is referencing, remains most valid. As Hosea makes mention in Hos. 10:9, the main key to this thought specifically concerns the “war against the unjust overtaking them in Gibeah.” The most explicit reference to war beyond what could be the Syro-Ephraimite incident in the supposed author’s given time period, is the civil war that breaks out after Judges 19. While the anti-Saulide, or Saul complex, may have factored into the text, there is not enough evidence to prove this was the author’s intention with the

---

<sup>545</sup> Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible*, 155.

<sup>546</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 73.

<sup>547</sup> Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 125-126; Nowack, *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 65.

<sup>548</sup> Patrick M. Arnold, S.J., *Gibeah: The Search for A Biblical City* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1979), 124.

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid*, 82.

verbiage used in the actual text. Gibeah does not really play a part in the story of Saul other than the fact that it is his home. If we mention Saul's birthplace, then we must also consider that Gibeah is the burial site of Eleazar; however, when using these sorts of claims, the event it is actually referencing is lost in menial speculation. To further complicate potential redactions and actual dating of the text's authorship, Judah *is* included, and this begs the question as to who exactly is Israel in specific verses of condemnation.<sup>550</sup> Yairah Amit in her work on hidden polemics places the blame on the regime, based in Jerusalem, that had failed their people.<sup>551</sup> But once again: for whom is this history? Ben Zvi makes this point in the following way:

[Hos]10:9-14 has a form of a concentric thematic structure, first and third units pointing at Israel's fault and a calamity that takes the form of a devastating war. The first unit (9-10) advances an interplay of a previous and future war that fits with a rhetorical (and ideological) position that past, present, and future are deeply intertwined—and its implications for the future, as well as the reference to the social memory of a war of the tribes of Israel against Benjamin... One reads about a war against children of badness, and about a future war for which peoples will be gathered.<sup>552</sup>

Considering the particular histories associated with the various place markers outlined in Hosea 9 and 10, Sharp concludes that most of the places and spaces in the text deal most specifically with crossing boundaries in multiple “embodied” ways, creating an “intertext” inside the text of Hosea. She continues, “illegitimate desire rends the body of Israel as a people, leaving it dismembered in pools of blood. To think that this is the way of God *is* Israel's idol. This is Israel's unfaithfulness.”<sup>553</sup> While there is much truth to Sharp's statement, there is also another sociological addition that needs to be addressed and is currently lacking to her thesis, especially regarding the status from which not only the author of Hosea wrote, but also, from the histories of these places themselves and when those played out.

---

<sup>550</sup> Grace I. Emmerson, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 85.

<sup>551</sup> Yairah Amit, “Epoch and Genre: The Sixth Century and the Growth of Hidden Polemics,” in *Judah and Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, edited by Oded, Lipschitz and Blenkinsopp (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 146.

<sup>552</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 218.

<sup>553</sup> Sharp, “Hewn,” in *Aesthetics of Violence*, 57-59. Italics mine.

While it may seem initially clear, or even explicit as to who is on the “correct” side, and who has broken covenant and, in doing so, crossed a boundary, the borders are also simultaneously hidden, a subversive note underlying the message portrayed by the human author on behalf of the Deity. Sharp says illegitimate desire as act splits and divides and does so bearing the name of God’s people. In this way it is quite possible that some borders were *created* and adhered to that were not covenantal in the first place. In this regard, syncretism stepped in to uphold ideologies that ultimately kill and destroy, including themselves. What then, one could ask, is the sin of Gibeah itself that has been ongoing and is reason for ruin? If not illegitimate desire, how might we address the historical, shared memories and metaphors that come from a border-crossing God? Much more needs to be said involving the way this could be a probable hypothesis in which the historical also intersects with the literary features of the book, with the literary as the primary method by which historical finds meaning and is mediated.

#### **4. HISTORICAL MEMORIES MEDIATED IN AND THROUGH LITERATURE**

The speaker, through the author, is YHWH themselves, but through these words, we are granted a window into the life and character of the supposed prophet Hosea, son of Beerī. As Hosea’s book has generally, if not always, been categorized as a prophetic book, the study must discuss not only the characteristics of the human prophet transmitting these words, but the genre from which these books are understood in Hebrew literature. The book itself is preceded by “Esther, Judith and Tobit in the ‘dominant’ order of books in the LXX, which is the order in the Vaticanus,”<sup>554</sup> as pointed out by Glenny, noting that the books are all about life in exile under the power of a foreign hegemony, as worthy of consideration in the current study of Hosea. These very themes are strong throughout, themes of captivity, death, and reversal of outcomes, and, typical of the genre of prophecy, thick with metaphor. From the literary critical approach, a feminist critical position that seeks to understand an ethical usage of metaphor, continues to build upon the necessary steps to see and interpret the text as a migratory trauma narrative. Ultimately, then, the study will connect through this lens to Judges 19 as a way of understanding and interpreting the sin of Gibeah.

---

<sup>554</sup> W. Edward Glenny, *Hosea*, 5.

### a) The Man Hosea and How “He” Communicates/Mediates

Authorship is difficult, but who the author(s) want readers and hearers to understand as the receiver of the transmitted words of YHWH, is Hosea, son of Beerī. Whether the words are the voice of YHWH themselves, or Hosea’s, either are characters speaking, expressions of a character’s voice, imbued with authority.<sup>555</sup> Walter Brueggemann sums up a prophet’s work in three steps: they “(1) offer symbols, (2) bring to public expression those very fears and terrors that have been denied, and (3) speak metaphorically but concretely about the real deathless that hovers over and gnaws within [us].”<sup>556</sup> Yet, Brueggemann gives simplicity to what is in actuality much more complex; by only written word, he is correct, but it may not be historically accurate of a prophet. Martti Nissinen, in writing on the “dubious image of prophecy,” argues that actual prophetic activity would have been viewed as “too precarious to conform to the prophetic ideal cherished by the scribal circles.”<sup>557</sup> This marks a difference between prophetic and scribal activity, although some would argue that the scribe’s work in the prophetic genre can still function in a prophetic way, or as divination, as Nissinen believes.<sup>558</sup> While Nissinen uses this as a way to resolve the conversations on compiling oracles together, Vayntrub disagrees, suggesting that historical prophets were despised and that a better understanding of these figures as authoritative, legendary voices make it more likely that archived works were compiled creatively by scribes, giving these characters anthologies.

Kenton Sparks calls these prophetic texts a “generic ruse.”<sup>559</sup> Bos also includes this as an additional option in his own monograph as a plausible solution to locating the genre of Hosea, in that these texts “present themselves as something they are not.” The text presents itself as the actual, literal written words of the prophet that were spoken to a people, or in this case, both transmitted by YHWH and Hosea. But the ruse must be discovered and, once discovered, “it is necessary to read them in a way

---

<sup>555</sup> Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality*, 218.

<sup>556</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 45.

<sup>557</sup> Martti Nissinen, “The Dubious Image of Prophecy,” in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 27.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>559</sup> Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 18.

not intended by the authors.”<sup>560</sup> Landy argues in the light of the poetic breakdown of Hosea that this be read as “apocalyptic poetry.”<sup>561</sup> Again, allowing for a polyvalency in the text is essential for what would be a faithful exegesis.

Hosea is located in the Latter Prophets as a Minor Prophet; the genre itself given away by the book’s placement as what would be called “prophecy.” Prophecy is a compilation of prediction, oracles and narrative, seen typically as narrative framing the message that follows. While some perform speech following the narrative, in Hosea, it is a transmission from YHWH to the prophet that we read in tandem with his obedience to those words—an act as well, but differently designated. Yet, after the initial section of Hosea 1-3, although the differing voices switch consistently throughout, it seems that Hosea may be giving the speech performance of the said prophecy starting in Hosea 4 throughout the end of the book, which would be in accordance with how many have divided the book into similar sections.

While many do not disagree about the frames and their content, others debate the contents of what is perceived as poetic form through these oracles. Sharp herself calls what the complex literary communication attempts to address in the book of Hosea somewhere between, “the elegant binary form of sapiential aphorisms in wisdom literature such as Proverbs,” and, “the florid tone and sexually graphic diction of Ezekiel’s pornographic metaphorization.”<sup>562</sup> Yet, these are said to be the very words of the Deity, speaking to their people, those of Israel (Hos. 4:1), and the ambiguity is enough to question whether that be the Northern Kingdom alone, or the entirety of what had been called Israel by God. In the tone of an instructional proverb, how then does one define the genre that poignantly says, “it is too late”? If it is not simply instruction, *mashal*, even about what is to come, is it or can it also be lament, *qinah*?

Vayntrub differentiates between *mashal* and *qinah* even as their similarities share many characteristics. Both of these seeming poems demonstrate what is a very logical cause and effect explanation to the hearers and readers, asking rhetorical questions throughout. She states that the *mashal*

---

<sup>560</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering*, 16.

<sup>561</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 29.

<sup>562</sup> Sharp, “Hewn,” 54.



“generalizes the world and its actors into categories and outlines the relationships between these categories,” and the *qinah*, simply put, is much more specific in “respect to the failure of actors within their presumed categories.”<sup>563</sup> The passage in this context does not give any direct indication as to what designation it falls under; the whole book is dotted with interrogatives towards a personified nation, yet with both positive and negative outcomes and terminology. Yet, while the text itself speaks of much to grieve and mourn, it is at the least a type of *mashal*, as it “cannot be defined as a single circumscribed literary form,” and the text shows a “formal expression of social failure.”<sup>564</sup> The substantives of derision, desolation, and ruin find more than temporary shelter in the poetry where Israel as a whole is the object. Susan Niditch—from whom Vayntrub draws in some ways, but disagrees in others—in comparing *mashal* to folklore, describes this fluid genre as a worldview itself, one that can “point to tensions between generations, to important questions of identity, and to matters of myth and reality.”<sup>565</sup> As the authors of the book of Hosea used this, taking common, cultural memories that can, in essence, be folklore itself, the text became one that is “a form of oblique and artful communication that sets up an analogy between the communication and the real-life settings of the listeners... providing a model of or for reality, pointing to unresolved tensions and ambivalences.”<sup>566</sup>

As was mentioned previously, Bos advocates for understanding prophetic texts from the perspective of literary predictive works that occurred in the Ancient Near East. “Characteristic of these literary-predictive texts is a predicted disaster to be followed by a restoration,” says Bos, adding that this seems to be “mirrored in many of the biblical prophetic books that seek to explain and justify the disasters that befell Israel and Judah while portraying a brighter future.”<sup>567</sup> This is absolutely true of the book of Hosea, even of seemingly opposing motions within the span of a chapter—the section that the study focuses on, is immediately followed by a confession from the Deity that they have compassion for

---

<sup>563</sup> Vayntrub, *Beyond*, 145-146.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid*, 80, 170.

<sup>565</sup> Susan Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1993), 81.

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

<sup>567</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering*, 15.

these people. In *You are My People*, a book introducing one to written prophecy, Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim write similarly,

The enduring contribution of written prophecy, we argue, lies in its (1) trenchant truth-telling and dogged refusal to deny the unspeakable and in its (2) audacity to imagine a future for defeated and captive people who live in a world in which violence and death are more tangible than coherence and meaning.<sup>568</sup>

Beyond *marshal* and the many similarities of ancient genres to the text of Hosea 9-10, is also the in tandem usage of metaphor and imagery to depict such disaster and predictive instruction. These pornographic, almost horrifically realist pictures, are used to describe what the ruse also asks readership to understand, meaning-making in dictating what would have been history.

### **b) Imagery and Repetition in the Text**

As part of almost anything literary, themes run among the words in order to shape and make a cohesive whole. Hosea has few of these themes in that, while the writing itself could have been touched by many redactors, it simultaneously has a somewhat cohesive whole. Most specifically, the themes of death, reversal, and exodus stand alone, as well as intersect as concrete matters of discussion and repetition. Recognizing the historical context from which this book asks the readers to meditate, but also, the space from which the words would have actually been transcribed and considered, leaves no question as to why these remain the themes of the book of Hosea. Not only these themes as they are explicitly discussed, but also, the ways in which the authorship used metaphors and other literary devices to bring these topics to the forefront will also be addressed in this section of the study.

Death remains one of the prevalent themes of the book of Hosea, not only a literal, physical death, but also a spiritual one. Most specifically, this comes up in the chapters the study focuses on in mentioning the places of Egypt, Assyria, and Memphis, a necropolis (Hos. 9:3-6). Their food becomes defiled, the bread of mourners. It is well known in Judaism that when death touches something or someone, it makes everything unclean. Macintosh writes that when food is brought to a home where death occurred, where mourning takes place, the food “was entirely secular and consumed that way,

---

<sup>568</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are My People*, 1.

used merely for nourishment.” When one is unclean, one cannot be in the Deity’s presence. Macintosh continues that to be separated from the presence of YHWH and in the land, is in essence, to “be sentenced to a living death.”<sup>569</sup> Yet, if these people were not mourning, but located outside of the land of promise, as the text alludes to Egypt and Assyria, Gruber writes that “any food, no matter how kosher it may be, if consumed outside of the land of Israel, is *ipso facto* unclean.”<sup>570</sup> In the light of verses 4 and 5, the rhetorical question that is posed to the audience and/or readership is one with a mocking tone: there was at this point only one place where sacrifices could really be made, so as festivals called for offerings of food and drink, basic cultic practices were lost, connections important to the very identity of worshippers of YHWH. Landy says, “God’s rejection of sacrifice would be then an internal exile, of which depopulation would be a consequence or correlate.”<sup>571</sup> YHWH’s people had lost divine approval.

The punishment of destruction and desolation in the land of Israel even causes them to cry for their own destruction in Hos. 10:8, crying out to the land itself to bury them; according to Landy their “preferred fate that the land should collapse on its inhabitants, infusing eschatology with origins, the hills with Gibeah.”<sup>572</sup> As Ephraim becomes an image of birds, their glory flying away (Hos. 9:11), Ben Zvi points to the very connection of YHWH turning aside from them in the following verse, the imagery of flying birds being a well-known image of exile and national death.<sup>573</sup> Richard Nelson, in writing of the covenantal formula in Joshua 23, notes the similar usage of the bird imagery, “communicating the loss of freedom and independence of action,” as what would happen if the terms of the agreement were broken.<sup>574</sup>

Perhaps the terminology of the death of a nation is strongest in the immediate context of these verses, also echoed in the end of Hosea 10, in which their future ancestors are imagined to be cut off.

---

<sup>569</sup> Macintosh, *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 345.

<sup>570</sup> Gruber, *Hosea: A Textual Commentary*, 374.

<sup>571</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 113.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid*, 130.

<sup>573</sup> Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 194.

<sup>574</sup> Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua*, *The Old Testament Library* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox: 1997), 261.

Macintosh argues that the break in voices in Hos. 9:14 is an intercessory prayer from Hosea himself, asking for mercy in sparing the unborn children from experiencing what is to come, or what has already come.<sup>575</sup> In sorting through the horror of the scene portrayed, as Ephraim brings his children to the executioner in verse 13, Macintosh also asks the question if the people of Israel are bringing their children for child sacrifice, or if it is imagery of sacrifice to the endless war they wage.<sup>576</sup> Landy is correct in saying about the book as a whole that it is “haunted by images of ravaged maternity.”<sup>577</sup> Not only will she watch as her children’s lives are lost, but her own breasts will dry up, she will miscarry. Her life will be entirely marked by loss as her own future without children becomes frail and uncertain.

Many of these grim themes and pictures that center death also find irony in the light of the seasonal festival of Sukkoth. Sukkoth is the festival of booths, tabernacles, the explicit reminder of what was as their ancestors wandered in the wilderness following the Exodus out of Egypt. This is a celebration that they have a home, pilgrimage is no longer needed; but what is instead about to occur, is a reversal of the Exodus, an “anti-pilgrimage,” as called by Landy.<sup>578</sup> In evoking the very place name of Egypt, the reminder of this place as a “figurative country of exile” would have been quite potent, especially paired with the continuous use of the verb שׁוּב as the foretelling. What does happen, is “Israel ending up in the miserable conditions that controlled their life before they were called to be YHWH’s people.”<sup>579</sup> The “field Jacob should have tilled is covered with the debris of altars and pillars,” as thorns and thistles overtake them, as YHWH themselves break and demolish them. Although not in the immediate text, this image conjures up one from Hos. 12:12, “juxtaposed with Jacob’s flight to the field of Aram, a prototype of exile.”<sup>580</sup> In the LXX of the text, the geographies of Palestine and Egypt seem to

---

<sup>575</sup> Macintosh, *Hosea*, 380.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid*, 372.

<sup>577</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 19.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid*, 111.

<sup>579</sup> Gert Kwakkel, “Exile in Hosea 9:3-6: Where and for What Purpose?” in *Exile and Suffering*, 135.

<sup>580</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 113.

be muddled, and Brill sees this as a suggestion that “Ephraim could be ‘in Egypt’ spiritually, or experientially, while they are in Palestine.”<sup>581</sup> There are many ways to experience death.

The word for exiled, *gālâ*, suggests rejoicing suddenly cut off, or a grieving for that which is banished. *Gālâ*, however, is also a pun, since it may mean to uncover. In that case, the motif of exposure, associated in the Hebrew Bible with sexual shame, combines with that of captivity.<sup>582</sup>

Nothing is purely neutral, including the metaphors used in the book of Hosea. While intentions could be pure and using imagery in this manner could be so horrifying in order to instill shock in the hearers, the violent and gendered nature of the metaphors do need to be addressed, even as they *do* occur. Sharp addresses these metaphors, noting that while they are effective, “aesthetics are never simply representation, but speaking of power relations to an interpretive community.”<sup>583</sup> Due to the highly graphic metaphors involving death, exile, and exposure, in the context of the book of Hosea as a whole that uses the woman Gomer as a paradigmatic “lesson,” the study would do well to critique and consider not only her as metaphor, but also the consequences of doing so. If metaphors are used to help make meaning in light of what lacks words to fully describe, what does that mean for the womxn who are often used to portray both horrible things done to them, as well as the representation of sinfulness itself?

## 5. MULTIPLICATIVE TEXT OF TERROR? THE FEMINIST CRITICS

### a) Dysfunctional Marriage

Hosea begins, for three full chapters, with a potentially metaphorical story that YHWH tells Hosea, son of Beerī, to enact. The first transmission of YHWH to Hosea following the narrative frame is to marry a זונה and to procreate with her, *because* the land is also acting as a *zonah*.<sup>584</sup> Gomer, daughter of Diblaim

---

<sup>581</sup> Brill, *Hosea*, 136.

<sup>582</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 128.

<sup>583</sup> Sharp, “Hewn,” 50.

<sup>584</sup> For more information on the rhetoric behind זונה: “As a general term for extramarital sexual intercourse, *znh* is limited in its primary usage to female subjects, since it is only for women that marriage is the primary determinant of legal status and obligation. While male sexual activity is judged by the status of the female partner and is prohibited, or penalized, only when it violates the recognized marital rights of another male, female sexual activity is judged according to the woman’s marital

as the only other descriptive of the woman beyond her characteristic of *zonah*, is then married to Hosea. There is a continuation of transmissions from YHWH and subsequent obedience on behalf of the prophet, with symbolic explanations as to why these acts had to occur. Julia M. O'Brien in her book *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor* remarks that, "when the author of Hosea sought to convince ancient readers of the legitimacy of God's punishment of Israel, he found an easily usable cultural analogy: patriarchally framed marriage."<sup>585</sup>

The horror that continues throughout these chapters is regularly condemned by feminists, and for rightful reasons. O'Brien points out that the "ideology fits the classic pattern of domestic abuse, not only because it sanctions violence against women, but also because it reflects the entire constellation of behaviors and attitudes identified by social workers as abusive."<sup>586</sup> After she conceives three children with Hosea, she is immediately verbally and emotionally abused through rebuke and threat (Hos. 2:1-3), isolated (Hos. 2:6-7), and an odd honeymoon period (Hos. 2:14-23)—all under the pretense that this is loving. Moreover, Hosea strikes a nerve in the heart of many mothers by using their children against her, making the decision to leave such an abusive situation as the children too are at risk. Via redactional processes, it is difficult to discern whether Hosea then buys another woman, who is not Gomer, as this woman is an adulteress (זֹנָה) and adverbs used to describe her are not the same as for Gomer. This new woman, who is an adulteress, is married to Hosea for different metaphorical reasons (Hos. 3:4-5).

Francis Landy sees these metaphors as a representation of a "splitting of consciousness" as these relationships are literalized. He explains this further:

The prophet crosses the gap between the divine and the human by acting out the divine-human relationship; the poetic task of finding adequate metaphors is thus short circuited, as the pathology is experienced in the human body, in the generative organs themselves. The narrative expresses a contradiction: a disclaimer of paternity that is nonetheless asserted through the very act of naming. This may correspond to the dissociation of his act from the acknowledgement of desire; if the desire is illicit, a

---

status." From Phyllis Bird, "'To Play the Harlot': An Inquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, edited by Peggy Day (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 77.

<sup>585</sup> Julia M. O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 69.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

crossing of class and sexual boundaries, it suggests an involvement with the promiscuity it insistently condemns, that implicates God as well as his agent.<sup>587</sup>

These metaphors are of especial interest to the lens of intersectional feminism, as not only does it foreshadow trauma's effects on literature, but also, the blurry nature of what exactly is going on in these passages that begin the book and replicate throughout it. Although the study will address the problem of who is really supposed to be at fault as the ambiguity grows from chapter to chapter in the book of Hosea, Sweeney makes a pointed comment in light of Landy's observations that "YHWH would not be the first husband who failed his wife and tried to cover his actions by accusing her of adultery."<sup>588</sup>

Kirsi Cobb reads these chapters in the light of her own experience of being abused by her ex-husband. Giving Hosea the benefit of the doubt initially, in that many of these images can be compared to warfare and covenantal curses, "by playing to established patriarchal conventions of marriage as well as gender stereotypes, the metaphor works precisely because it references accepted social and cultural norms."<sup>589</sup> The story actually uses these social and cultural means to garner sympathy for the abuser. By pushing for retributive punishment, actually the "woman's claims to autonomy through the use of her body is no use for survival anymore; the woman's only option is to submit to her husband's demands."<sup>590</sup> Cobb calls Gomer's return to her clients/lovers "coercive control," a way in which rebellion grants a semblance of autonomy, or safety zones; "an illusion of control of some parts of my existence."<sup>591</sup> But we only know about Gomer from the husband's point of view, from Hosea himself. From what the reader experiences of the husband, it seems logical that Gomer returns to her previous life's pattern.

---

<sup>587</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 17.

<sup>588</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 6.

<sup>589</sup> Kirsi Cobb, "Reading Gomer with Questions: A Trauma-Informed Feminist Study of How the Experience of Intimate Partner Violence and the Presence of Religious Belief Shape the Reading of Hosea 2.2-23," in *Feminist Trauma Theologies: Body, Scripture, and Church in Critical Perspective*, edited by Karen O'Donnell and Katie Cross (London: SCM Press, 2020), 114.

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid*, 117.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

However, it is Rhiannon Graybill's work on the prophet Hosea that mentions that the fixation on these horrors misses the point of what the text is actually doing. She reads the text from the lens of Hosea as a horror genre itself, not only in content, but also structurally. Graybill makes it plain that it is the painful opening of the woman's body, where the masculinity not only of the prophet, but also of YHWH, is negotiated violently. She writes that Hosea has an obsessive interest in the opening of the female body, "in making the female form into both a space (consider the land as body in the Hebrew Bible) and a conduit (the basic structure of prophecy)."<sup>592</sup> The horror lies in the possessiveness, the obviously inappropriate and abusive behavior, and also, the way in which woman is simply object in order to move forward a "masculine" agenda. The study argues that this is even clearer in light of the one characteristic of Gomer which is mentioned, the potentiality of her occupation as sex worker.

### **b) Gomer as Sex Worker**

Gomer as a sex worker herself makes the situation even more precarious. The term *zonah* (זֹנָה) is one with a long history of interpretation that is considered objective, and yet, holds deep biases towards women who choose sex work as their occupation, especially in relating to the children conceived with Hosea, as scholars wonder if he is truly the father. Within the actual context of the book of Hosea, and not unironically, in our modern-day context, Sweeney rightfully addresses the stigma that often sees a sex worker as one who has a "lack of moral character. But, when considered in relation to its ancient context, it seems to constitute a matter of economic necessity."<sup>593</sup> A woman's status in an agricultural, patriarchal society was already precarious, in that there was an absolute dependence on the men in one's life to provide means for life. If one lacked such providers, there were few options for work that would allow for survival, including prostitution. Yet, even so, prostitution was not abnormal in the Ancient Near East, and even married men could visit these women.

Phyllis Bird is well known for her work on not only texts that include זֹנָה, but the social realities behind the word, person, and occupation. Bird identifies the prostitute in the Hebrew Bible with the

---

<sup>592</sup> Rhiannon Graybill, *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 51.

<sup>593</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 15.



status of “an outcast, though not an outlaw, a tolerated but dishonored member of society.”<sup>594</sup> She<sup>595</sup> is “other.” The term itself refers to a “class or status designation... and a stigma is always attached to her role and her person, however desired and tolerated her activity.”<sup>596</sup> Even when this character may be a heroine of sorts in the text, she is still yet marked by her role in society. In describing Tamar in Genesis 38, as she plays the “whore” for what is called a righteous reason, Niditch discusses the place of the prostitute as one that occupies a liminal space of acceptable categories and statuses in this context, saying, “the harlot belongs to a special class of women who can ‘play the harlot’ without being condemned. One could fall between the proper categories and survive, once that outside betwixt-and-between status was itself institutionalized and categorized.”<sup>597</sup> The presuppositions that come with a sex worker seem to translate from the Ancient Near East to the modern context quite seamlessly.

But even this description of the Ancient Near Eastern occupation of sex work is complicated, as it adheres to too narrow a picture of sex work as a whole, as well as the reasons one enters this occupation. The edited compilation of essays by sex workers called *We Too* sets out to specifically address the many misconceptions that come with the work, including the additional criminalization that in effect puts them further at risk. Their occupation is also one that fully exposes the many ideologies that are beheld in society, such as rape culture, patriarchal ways of bifurcating women’s consciousness, and the upholding of violence in general as an answer to correct supposed issues; sex work often does not fall in the many binaries they are likened to. Not one of the essays in the book is the same, and sex workers are often treated as an impersonal monolith. Christa Marie Sacco in her essay “Victim-Defendant: Women of Color Complicating Stories about Human Trafficking,” describes the ways in which creations of the perfect “victim/survivor,” are not as easy as they seem in the modern world, as “the legacies of white supremacy, cisgenderism, and heteropatriarchy renders us unable to recognize the

---

<sup>594</sup> Phyllis Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 199.

<sup>595</sup> Most often, the harlot is referred to as female, as there is very scarce information about male prostitution, though it existed.

<sup>596</sup> Bird, *Missing Persons*, 205-206.

<sup>597</sup> Susan Niditch, “The Wronged Woman Righted: An Analysis of Genesis 38,” *HTR* 72, (1979), 147.

dignity of those people who are experienced in the sex industries.”<sup>598</sup> If we only see their work and worth through the lens of sexuality, instead of as an occupation, trauma is never really taken seriously.

Sex workers are simultaneously the perfect victims and the wrong kind of victims. Well-meaning sympathizers who don’t hold our ‘brokenness’ against us make sure that it defines us. When we are sexually assaulted on the job, the victim paradox obscures the legitimacy of our grievances. On the one hand, sex workers are seen as the perfect victims because we are assumed to already be survivors. On the other hand, sex workers are the wrong kind of victim: we cannot experience sexual violence because of the nature of the work we do.<sup>599</sup>

From an intersectional lens, it is seamless to continue to the discussion of “unrapeability,” especially in the light of the consistent, violent bifurcation of women’s consciousness. Chanequa Walker Barnes, in discussing racism within Christian cultural contexts, mentions this in a note on Jezebel, that “while the scriptural narrative lacks any mention of Jezebel’s sexuality, the character has become synonymous with sexual deviancy... women are labeled ‘jezebels’ when their sexuality defies social norms, functioning as a form of social control meant to shame women into conformity.”<sup>600</sup> This hypersexualizing spills over into the stereotypes of women of color that continue the bifurcation of pure woman versus Jezebel spirit, “sanctioning institutionalized rape.”<sup>601</sup> Vanessa Carlisle writes that in Los Angeles, “there have been verified accounts of police using ‘No Humans Involved,’ to classify murder cases involving Black sex worker victims.”<sup>602</sup> As a tool of white supremacy, Othering classifies the “other” as object to be used and subsequently demonized, instead of received as fully human.

---

<sup>598</sup> Christa Marie Sacco, “Victim Defendant: Women of Color Complicating Stories about Human Trafficking,” in *WE TOO: Essays on Sex Work and Survival*, edited by Natalie West (New York City: The Feminist Press, 2021), 68.

<sup>599</sup> Ignacio G. Hutía Xeiti Rivera, “The Invisibles,” in *WE TOO*, 237.

<sup>600</sup> Chanequa Walker-Barnes, *I Bring the Voices of My People: A Womanist Vision for Racial Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 108.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid*, 108-109.

<sup>602</sup> Vanessa Carlisle, “How to Build A Hookers Army,” in *WE TOO*, 296.

Nancy Nam Hoon Tan, from the feminist methodological lens of standpoint theory,<sup>603</sup> reads texts that mention נָזִי alongside research with sex workers in Hong Kong. Reading the passages of Hosea 1-3 to these women and ensuring that they were aware of the ancient contextual differences in order to potentially make a difference for the sheer horror they heard was met with both/and. Nam Hoon Tan mentions, “at the outset that the sex workers loathed this text, because they identified it as a text of danger and death. At the same time, they took heed from it, sensing a note of caution for their own survival.”<sup>604</sup> From their viewpoints, the women identified multiple overlapping issues between them, specifically Hosea and YHWH seemingly condoning rape culture, the victimization that occurs in the text to Gomer, and the problem of female prostitution metaphors in general. Ultimately, they arrived at the conclusion that,

Hosea 1–3 is a rape text sanctioning rape, physical and psychological torture against sex workers. From the sex workers’ perspective, this text denies them any personhood, or rights to protect themselves and their children from psychotic husbands. They felt horrified by the violence of the text and offended in terms of their dignity as mothers, their financial capabilities and economic independence, and their ability to stand up against abusive male figures. The sex workers deem Hosea 1–3 to be troubling and problematic because it is ineffective in its primary purpose—namely, to call Israel to account. The text not only justifies violent punishment but sanctifies it. The upshot is a diatribe about the author’s misogyny, in the course of this, sanctioning and promoting rape culture.<sup>605</sup>

If one were to discount the remarks made from those on the margins with similar lived experiences, scholars like Landy comment that the text, while certainly implicating men as well as part of the metaphor of Gomer as Israel, “connotes women as pre-eminent vehicles of estrangement, and thus

---

<sup>603</sup> Sandra Harding, “Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophic, and Scientific Debate,” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, (New York: Routledge, 2004) 128. “Standpoint theories argue for ‘starting off thought’ from the lives of marginalized peoples; beginning in those determinate, objective locations in any social order [that] will generate illuminating critical questions that do not arise in thought that begins from dominant group lives. Starting off research from women’s lives will generate less partial and distorted accounts not only of women’s lives but also of men’s lives and of the whole social order. Women’s lives and experiences provide the ‘grounds’ for this knowledge, though these clearly do not provide foundations for knowledge in the conventional philosophical sense. These grounds are the site, the activities, from which scientific questions arise.” Nam Hoon Tan argues that intersectionality fits this perspective quite well, 10.

<sup>604</sup> Nancy Nam Hoon Tan, *Resisting Rape Culture: The Hebrew Bible and Hong Kong Sex Workers* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 68. The warning also is multifaceted in that they are grateful the text acknowledges they exist.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

a polemic against Israel easily becomes one against women.” He grieves that many of these texts are pornographic in nature, and that, as Gomer is exposed by Hosea to others, it justifies and instigates gang rape.<sup>606</sup> As this study takes the stance of feminist critique seriously, it becomes increasingly difficult to embrace the ideologies of the metaphor used, even if the said “whoring” wives are not real and are also metaphorical.<sup>607</sup> Yet, as Corrine Carvalho writes on “the challenge of violence and gender under colonization”:

In general, metaphors depend on the cultural or symbolic meaning given to a particular thing, but using an item or action as a symbol also reinforces the cultural meaning ascribed to that item. The marriage metaphor, that is, the trope that Israel’s worship of other gods is like a wife who cheats on her husband, in Hosea 1-3 depends on assumptions about women as sexual beings, legally subordinate to their husbands. Academic readers recognize that these metaphors do not aim to blame the fall of Jerusalem on the sexual violations of women; female sexual transgression is a metaphor for elite male’s worship of other gods, or transgression of their covenant relationship with God. But the detail that the author provides in the metaphors, along with Hosea’s rhetorical strategy to tie the metaphor to a real woman, easily reinforces negative views of women’s sexuality.<sup>608</sup>

### c) Gomer’s Body, The Concubine’s Body, The Communal Body

As was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the narrative frame of the book Hosea is one of transmitting the word of YHWH to Hosea. However, the text portrays quite a few things being “taken up”, including the woman, Gomer. This is not the way in which Vayntrub would say a *mashal* is “taken up,” as this functions more literally and less figuratively than the study suggests; but it does beg the question if Gomer could be the proverbial cautionary tale, or the embodied site of *mashal* as her body which is taken frames the preceding two lengthy poetic messages to the people of Israel. Also, Niditch argues that a *mashal* can be human, comparing Ezek. 14:8. She describes the human *mashal* as “an icon

---

<sup>606</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 37-38.

<sup>607</sup> Landy remarks that Hosea’s choice of a particular woman “suggests a measure of individual initiative. If Gomer is a ‘woman of whoredoms,’ her social status is intriguing. How did Diblaim accommodate himself to his miscreant daughter? In Deuteronomy 22:21, the woman who ‘fornicates’ against her father’s house is stoned at its entrance.” Who really is Gomer?

<sup>608</sup> Corrine Carvalho, “The Challenge of Violence and Gender under Colonization” in *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*, edited by Gale Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 111.

or an exemplar who becomes part of the tradition to be stylized, remembered, analogized, and cited.”<sup>609</sup> Another instance in which people, or humans, become a *mashal*, is Deut. 28:37, in the context of covenantal curses and blessings, as the people collectively become a curse in exile. In the book of Hosea, covenant curses are beginning to come to fruition.

Gomer is important to the study, not simply because she is a female character in the context of the scripture being studied in Hosea, but because she is the *mashal* that is repeated throughout the book as a whole. One way in which this is explicitly captured is in Alice Keefe’s work, *A Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea*. In making sense of the metaphor, as well as taking into consideration the meaning behind the imagery of an abused sex worker as the very land of Israel, the study asks if there is any hope of seeing these metaphors in a way that is liberative and ethical, while not sanitizing the text. Keefe’s work on the book of Hosea makes this much more plausible.

Keefe argues against the highly dualistic nature that tends to beset biblical studies as a whole, in assuming the authors interpret female sexuality and women in general in ways she calls “away from transcendence towards the temptations of the flesh.”<sup>610</sup> The proposition is that this dualism is not adhered to in the book of Hosea. Yet, in the words of Peggy Day, “we need to ask feminist questions, but we must be prepared to obtain answers that do not directly conform to the values we hold in the modern world.”<sup>611</sup>

By asking these feminist questions, Keefe confirms that in this patriarchal, agrarian society women and their bodies were owned and controlled by the men in their lives. However, women’s bodies were “named as sacred, the essential materiality of life as generated from woman’s womb and sustained in the context of human interdependence.”<sup>612</sup> The bodies of women, source of the community, then come

---

<sup>609</sup> Niditch, *Folklore*, 76.

<sup>610</sup> Alice Keefe, *A Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea*, 11.

<sup>611</sup> Peggy Day, *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, 158.

<sup>612</sup> Keefe, *A Woman’s Body and the Social Body*, 176-177.

to stand as a symbol for the community, and the violation of women offers a metonym for social dissolution.”<sup>613</sup> With this purview, she reads the first three chapters in a different way historically.

One may read Hosea’s metaphor of Israel’s social body as a fornicating female body in light of a growing atmosphere of crisis in eighth-century Israel concerning matters of community identity, socio-economic practice, sacral meaning, and corporate survival. This crisis, which was at once social, political and religious, was precipitated by the erosion of indigenous structures of community life under the pressure of a rising market-based economy revolving around interregional trade, land consolidation, and cash cropping. At risk in this transition was not only the well-being of individuals, but the sustainability of an order of world that was oriented around the intimate relationship of families to land and structures of communal solidarity based upon the bonds of proximity and kinship.<sup>614</sup>

What is troubling, though, is how Keefe then subsequently paints Hosea as a positive character in the light of the woman that is also *הגז*, representing the very land they all live on. While sex work was normal and regularly made use of by even upstanding members in the patriarchy (although certainly not without stigma), the woman longed to return to her clients *after* her children were named dishonorably—something that also became clear in the interviews by Nam Hoon Tan with sex workers from Hong Kong that show how the children were also stigmatized and set against their mothers.<sup>615</sup>

The marriage between Gomer and Hosea immediately starts off poorly, regardless of whether or not it is metaphorical. Keefe agrees that the language is disturbing, but argues that it is for a good reason as Hosea views “his contemporary situation in which the realities of intersocietal violence and the transgression of traditional communal values had irreparably ruptured the order of the world as known by these people... [female sexuality] does not symbolize an otherness that must be rejected, but points to that which was most essential to the meaning of his world, and which has now been lost.”<sup>616</sup> Bird formulates this sentiment well:

The metaphorical use of *znh* invokes two familiar and linguistically identified images of dishonor in Israelite culture, the common prostitute and the promiscuous daughter

---

<sup>613</sup> Keefe, *A Woman’s Body*, 176-177.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>615</sup> Nam Hoon Tan, *Resisting Rape Culture*, 76.

<sup>616</sup> Keefe, *A Woman’s Body*, 220-221.

or wife. As a sexual metaphor, it points to the sexual nature of the activity it represents. Its female orientation does not single out women for condemnation; it is used rather as a rhetorical device to expose men's sin. By appealing to the common stereotypes and interests of a primarily male audience, Hosea turns their accusation against them. It is easy for patriarchal society to see the guilt of a 'fallen woman;' Hosea says, 'You, (male Israel) are that woman!'<sup>617</sup>

While in this light Gomer's body does embody something extraordinary and meaningful, even dignified, as Keefe argues, it is still her body being used as an object lesson, a *marshal* herself; she represents Israel as a whole. Whether the rhetoric specifically pointed towards men for shock value, it is still rhetoric that makes use of the presupposition that women as sex workers are undignified. As Renita Weems argues about the ethical use of metaphors, we need to recognize their impact: "Metaphors can hurt. Metaphors can distort. Metaphors can kill. Metaphors can oppress."<sup>618</sup>

Once more, Nam Hoon Tan's interview with the sex workers from Hong Kong is helpful to consider more clearly how, with this logic, men identified themselves more with YHWH and Hosea in this marriage, and that the metaphor should have personified a male if they truly wanted to make the point in a patriarchal culture.<sup>619</sup> Fokkelein van Dijk-Hemmes agrees that the metaphor for these injustices should then have been a male rapist, not a woman or prostitute.<sup>620</sup> Yet, the metaphor retains this status, as the very place of the people in the covenant in relation to YHWH is one of reception, obedience, and submission—all of which were characteristics of the wife in a marital relationship in the Ancient Near East. However, Keefe argues against a Deuteronomistic lens and/or redaction in the text of Hosea, seeing the covenant along the lines of a kinship model.<sup>621</sup>

---

<sup>617</sup> Bird, *Gender and Difference*, 89.

<sup>618</sup> Renita Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 110.

<sup>619</sup> Nam Hoon Tan, *Resisting Rape Culture*, 79.

<sup>620</sup> Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, *The Double Voice of Her Desire: Texts by Fokkelien van-Dijk-Hemmes* (Blandford Forum: Formerly Deo Publishing, 2004), 85.

<sup>621</sup> Keefe, *A Woman's Body*, 12, 158.

Recognizing that there is still some inherent appreciation for seeing the whole of Israelite society as a woman, something to be cherished and loved, which is abused at the hands of the prophet/YHWH, does render a more ethical question as to who may be the wrongful party in these chapters, and in the book as a whole. Furthermore, could a horrifying metaphor such as this be the only way in which to depict something just as destructive in both similar and different ways to a community and culture, and in this case, does it make the use of these metaphors ethically acceptable?

## 6. CONCLUSION: NO ONE WAY TO DESCRIBE TRAUMA

Some scholars have connected Gibeah of Hosea with the infamous Judges 19, but never from the perspective of a migratory trauma narrative. It is plausible from multiple angles within the lens itself, making room for multiple interpretations that speak of trauma, and simultaneously, help one cope with it. Landy calls Hosea “a poetry of despair, a vision of death, as well as of hope. It balances ambiguities, leaving itself open... always, elsewhere, perhaps.”<sup>622</sup> Keefe uses the book as a call to action, as “Hosea's prophecies of a lifeless world can remind us of what is at stake in the decisions we, as individuals and as nations, make today.”<sup>623</sup>

The place of Gibeah is famous enough that it has its very own book. Ironically, “after the exile, it retained enough importance to accept returning Judean refugees and house a sizable Levitical community, yet it never again captured center stage in the events that shaped Jewish history.”<sup>624</sup> Yet, the place itself as one that elicits and has created an “outrage tradition,” invites readers to consider what the sin of Gibeah, or Gibeah’s double iniquity, *was* and what it still might be for text receivers today. This, the study argues, simply cannot be done without the story itself, found in Judges 19 read intertextually. Repeating what Keefe says in the quote above, there is much at stake.

This chapter started with a historical analysis of the book of Hosea, both in the world of the text, and within the world of the potential authorship of the text. Casting a wide net still placed the text in a space of liminality, not only in terms of the traumatic events of war and exile, but also, in the destruction

---

<sup>622</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 20.

<sup>623</sup> Alice Keefe, “Hosea,” in *Fortress Commentary of the Old Testament and Apocrypha*, 831.

<sup>624</sup> Patrick M. Arnold, “Gibeah: The Search for a Biblical City,” *JSOT* 79, 124.



and recreation of a communal identity. From there, the chapter made clear the themes in the literature of the book that fit this historical context, as the fixation on death, exile, and hopeful return runs repetitively throughout, even in horrifying metaphor (as it may not be metaphor at all). After a feminist critique of the text itself in beholding the personhood of Gomer in an abusive relationship with the proverbial transmitter of YHWH's words, the chapter focused on using the methodological lens of viewing the text as a migratory trauma narrative. Through the body of Gomer, the social body of Israel may have even found itself asking if the "educational process" of exile is actually abusive.<sup>625</sup>Trauma must always be reckoned with, a concept necessary to continue to explore through the intertextual connection with Judges 19. This lens also garnered the question of what kind of implications this creates for scholarship and modern-day responsible readers, in reading the text alongside a current migration trauma novel.

---

<sup>625</sup> From Robert P. Carroll, "Deportation and Diaspora Discourses in the Prophetic Literature," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, 67: "In Hosea imagery of divine allurement or seduction of the nation into the desert which takes up and utilizes aspects of the grand narrative of the exodus out of Egypt. Thus the book of Hosea would have to be catalogued under the subcategories of deportation and return in relation to the larger category of diaspora. The period in captivity or in the desert represents a temporary and disciplinary moment in the nation's education, but is neither a permanent nor a terminal experience. In conformity with the discourse of education, so prominent in the book of Hosea, the motif of the return to Egypt or deportation to Assyria represents a sentimental education on the part of Israel whereby the nation finally learns what it has failed to learn when living in its own land. Exile as education is a major trope in the scroll of Hosea."

## CHAPTER SIX:

### MAKING SENSE OF TRAUMA THROUGH HER BODY: JUDGES 19 AND HOSEA 9-10 IN CONVERSATION

*Could Gomer's mistreatment be similar, then, to Hagar's, or even, to the woman dismembered, cryptically alluding to the divine mistreatment of exiles who are brutally abandoned... Perhaps, through silent or silenced dissent, Hosea's metaphors expose the horror and humiliation Israel has to endure. (Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim)<sup>626</sup>*

*Readers and writers should not deceive themselves that literature changes the world. Literature changes the world of readers and writers, but literature does not change the world until people get out of their chairs, go out in the world, and do something to transform the conditions of which the literature speaks. Otherwise literature will just be a fetish for readers and writers, allowing them to think that they are hearing the voiceless when they are really only hearing the writer's individual voice. (Viet Thanh Nguyen)<sup>627</sup>*

*Refugees' stories reflect the complexity of navigating the social vacuums between states. Yet the scourge of rape isn't rooted in the culture that crosses the border, but the culture of borders themselves. The line separating one society from another—and "us" from "them"—is what we make of it. (Michelle Chen)<sup>628</sup>*

#### 1. THE SIN OF GIBEAH FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF OTHERING

The study thus far has already begun making a case for the validity of reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migratory trauma narratives. In what follows, this chapter will be reading these two narratives together as a way to offer another option for what may be understood as the sin of Gibeah. While there is not a firm grasp on who the authors of these texts were, and even less certainty as to in what time period exactly these texts were written, this study is rooted in research that hypothesizes that both of these texts are to be associated with the theology that is encompassed by the Deuteronomistic History, written either by the priestly elite, or simply the male elite of the Judahites who were amongst those who had returned from exile. Although the post-exilic epoch is not a time period that can be narrowed down

---

<sup>626</sup> Stulman and Chul Paul Kim, *You are My People*, 189.

<sup>627</sup> Viet Thahn Nguyen, *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives* (New York: Abrams Books, 2018), 20.

<sup>628</sup> Michelle Chen, "Bodies Against Borders," in *Not That Bad*, 192.

well, both texts bear the marks of migratory trauma. As Brett describes the impact of traumatic events on the formation of these texts:

The Deuteronomistic theology found in the subsequent narratives of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, can therefore be understood as a response to the trauma of imperial invasions—when the northern kingdom was overwhelmed by Assyria, subsequently when the Assyrians also invaded Judah at the end of the eighth century, and then a century later, when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem.<sup>629</sup>

This chapter will in the first instance point to the places in which it is clear that Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 are marked by the trauma of migration. In making sense of the story of the sin of Gibeah, it will make sense of how the community processed the traumatic events that had befallen them, including wrestling with their Deity. This study will uncover the meaning that these communities found in facing the trauma of migration, and furthermore consider the implications for what this reasoning did in the time of Hosea and continues to do in subsequent communities. The chapter will first read Judges 19 and then Hosea 9-10 as described in Chapter Three of this study, as a chosen migratory trauma narrative. Thereafter, these two texts will be read together, considering the intertextual relationship between these two stories of migration, in that the authorship of Hosea knew the story of Judges 19. By means of comparing Gomer in Hosea 1-2, and the nameless Concubine in Judges 19, this chapter will also grapple with the lasting effects on particularly women as their bodies become the site on which the trauma of migration is processed. As a result of this, the study will then consider how the sin of Gibeah may have been understood and how it continues to impact individuals, and in particular women, today.

## **2. JUDGES 19 AS CHOSEN MIGRATION TRAUMA NARRATIVE**

When considering Judges 19 as a chosen migration trauma narrative, it is important to note the role of storytelling and story creation in communities to not simply re-make, but to be involved on a much greater scale with the formation of a national identity. According to Sharp, stories “preserve cultural heritage,” thus, telling stories is “a foundational way in which a community manages change so that its members can work toward a future in which the community can flourish.”<sup>630</sup> The stories of the Hebrew

---

<sup>629</sup> Brett, *Political Trauma and Healing*, 9.

<sup>630</sup> Sharp, “Character, Conflict, and Covenant in Israel’s Origin Traditions,” in *The Hebrew Bible*, 41.

Bible in their many shapes and forms are a necessary part of any culture in the way they understand and present themselves.

The notion of trauma narratives is a rather new undertaking in biblical research, with many disagreeing with labeling or categorizing what can be also very fluid. However, recognizing these specific characteristics that do overlap with much of what we understand to be modern renditions of traumatic events, is extremely helpful in recognizing what is occurring socio-politically and psychologically in the midst of a people group. We can no longer ignore the people's state of mind, and in particular the effect of trauma in the creation of these texts. The irony in reference to the title of Bessel van der Kolk's book, "the body keeping the score," is that even if trauma is something one attempts to push away and forget, it always shows up again. Thus, we are able to see the effects of trauma in texts created in the time period of the particular traumatic event, or much later in new generations long after the fact. Attending to the layers of trauma in the text offers a more holistic reading that employs empathy for previous communities of people as a way to bridge the gap between ourselves and "them" from centuries before. This methodology takes the historical and literary criticisms that have been forerunners in biblical scholarship very seriously. Yet, there is an opportunity here to gain great, new knowledge and allow oneself, and other communities who read the texts, to be changed by it.

Edenburg recognizes that the very "language of Judges 19-21—both the primary narrative and the later revision—is somewhat distanced from traditional literary expression and even tends to be innovative."<sup>631</sup> However, this move away from traditional expression is not explained by Edelman with the text behind the text, which I propose is a traumatic event in the history of the community of the Israelites, as she gives a thorough account of differing words that pertain to authorship. Other scholars have also noticed that Judges 19 bears the marks of trauma. Specifically, Janelle Stanley calls Judges 19 a text of trauma. While she does not take the time to go into detail about *how* or *why* this community is traumatized, she notes that the text is "recounting a traumatic event...showing dissociation, fragmentation, and repetition compulsion."<sup>632</sup> As she writes:

---

<sup>631</sup> Edenburg, *Dismembering the Whole*, 158.

<sup>632</sup> Janelle Stanley, "Judges 19: Text of Trauma," in *Joshua and Judges*, edited by Athalya Brenner and Gale Yee (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 279.

The way the story is put together, the fragmented nature of some details peeking through and others becoming obscured, the extreme focus on some details at the expense of others, the repetition of words and phrases—all of these are characteristic of traumatic narratives and texts of trauma.<sup>633</sup>

It is furthermore important to remember that for the author(s), who potentially experienced this trauma themselves, the texts of trauma may not have been a safe space for it to be processed, unless there was a way in which to create a level of distance from the event. The various literary characters in these narratives then serve a double purpose in that a particular character fulfills an “everyperson” or “type” function, but the narratives do not refer to specifically named people that were affected by the violence. Oddly enough, by means of this narrative strategy, one can choose to be a part of the story, which involves feeling the terror, or one may choose to remain far away from the traumatic feelings in an attempt not to let the disaster affect your person. Given the absolute horror that transpired, the latter seems quite difficult to do. As the word “behold” (הנה) is found in Hos. 9:6, there is a level at which the narrative calls others to bear witness, to pay attention to what happened and what *is* still happening. In bearing witness, one must do something, and the text explicitly asks the reader to do so.

Indeed, as the text creates distance using the anonymity of characters, it also creates a distance in that the story would have been to some extent recognized as the antithesis of the hero stories heard before in the book of Judges, a slightly fictional account of something else that had occurred. As trauma takes what was previously known and understood in culture, a pattern of folklore throughout the book, and re-makes it to fit a new context and understanding of the world, the hero story is made inverse. Not only would the story have been recognized as closely related to Genesis 19, but it would also have been entirely unrecognizable in its differences and horrific ending. This complicates the narrative itself, as one wonders amidst the blurry lines, who is at fault? Who is to blame for the torture and dismemberment of the Concubine? Or, most horrifyingly, did she deserve it? What is this narrative attempting to say to whom?

As everyone in the text begins to Other each other, Uriah Kim’s postcolonial critique of the narrative suggests that “there are too many ruptures and discontinuities to draw a unified identity.” As

---

<sup>633</sup> Stanley, “Judges 19: Text of Trauma,” in *Joshua and Judges*, 283.

he argues: “The narrative is unsure who is an Israelite and who is an Other. Israel’s identity was questioned throughout the narrative.”<sup>634</sup> In fact, nothing seems clear in the text other than the actions that occur. Everything else, including identities, is blurred. What is proposed, then, is that Israel did locate themselves in a character in the story, most poignantly in the *pilegesh* herself, both literally and figuratively.

### a) Her Body is Our Body

As these events may not have happened literally, the figurative lessons shine through, depicting an Israel torn asunder. This is not simply one person’s trauma, but a whole community’s trauma. Juliana Claassens, in her monograph on trauma narratives *Writing and Reading to Survive*, writes that, “the close connection between individual and collective trauma draws our attention to the fact that sexual violence, is, and ought to be, not merely a woman’s issue, but intrinsically connected to the plight of the entire community.”<sup>635</sup> Yet, the only one completely destroyed in the text is the *pilegesh*. In applying Keefe’s theory that the woman’s body is a depiction, or even metaphor, of the social body, one can see that the trauma of rape and dismemberment to the nameless Concubine may have more meaning than initially assumed. Keefe argues this very point using the text of Judges 19 to apply to the book of Hosea, writing: “The presence of a symbolic convention in which a woman’s body is a sign for the social body is most clearly visible in Judges 19, where the gruesome division of the woman’s body into twelve pieces appears as a metonym for the national community of the twelve tribes as they are torn apart by civil war.”<sup>636</sup> Although Keefe mentions the civil war as it occurs in the chapters that follow, or, potentially the Syro-Ephraimite war in the text behind the text, which this study disagrees with, she is still right in admitting specifically that “the sexual violation of women provides a powerful and graphic representation of the real meaning of internecine war as the dissolution of all forms of community coherence and order.”<sup>637</sup>

---

<sup>634</sup> Uriah Kim, “Postcolonial Critique: Who is the Other in the Book of Judges?” in *Judges & Method*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press: 2007), 180.

<sup>635</sup> Claassens, *Writing and Reading to Survive*, 119.

<sup>636</sup> Keefe, *A Woman’s Body*, 175.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid*, 175.

Keefe is not the only interpreter to assume that the *pilegesh's* body dismembered means something more than what is literally occurring in the text. Hamley also writes that she is representative of Israel, that “the story of an individual woman becomes the story of a nation. As the *pilegesh* will be torn apart, so will the nation. Her body effectively embodies the fate of Israel, rather than just exemplifying the consequences of the breakdown of social and ethical norms.”<sup>638</sup> Rape, often used as a military metaphor for war, while inappropriate, makes sense in this historical location as well. PTSD is often compared as similar amongst those who are rape victims and those who are veterans of war. It is possible that during the time of exile, or even post-exilic, in order to attempt to make sense, searching for a reason why they were sent out of their pure land, the rape of the woman could in fact have been considered a metaphor for the war that beset them, and as she goes without proper burial, so were they gruesomely dismembered into diasporic living, living under the thumb of colonization thereafter. Will they ever unite again? Hamley writes,

Her body is never brought back together. There is no possibility for her to be restored into one consciousness, a whole and healed speaking subject, just as Israel remains utterly fragmented, in endless pieces each carrying the trauma of the story. The fragmentation of woman and nation speaks to the reality of trauma and its enduring significance.<sup>639</sup>

### **b) Fragmented Body, Fragmented Time**

In fact, the text of trauma seems to bear enduring marks that are not fully resolved. This first example is the way in which time is portrayed. Amit points out that,

the text itself confirms that the events described belong to the beginning of the period of the judges rather than to its end, as in both sections appear figures belonging to the third generation following the Exodus from Egypt: Jonathan son of Gershom son of Manasseh and Phineas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. Thus, in the final part of the book events appear that break its chronological flow.<sup>640</sup>

One does not question that there seems to be a downward, morally debasing cycle occurring throughout the book of Judges but how does this work out when the book is not chronological, but specifically edited to depict this cycle instead? Or, a better question through the lens of trauma, is: how do we see

---

<sup>638</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 100.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid*, 232.

<sup>640</sup> Amit, *The Art of Editing*, 312.

this as edited for ideological reasons, and also recognize “the single time of trauma subsuming the past into the controllability and unknowability of 586 BCE”?<sup>641</sup> Janzen offers repetition as a key part of trauma in that it becomes a re-enactment, “the ambiguity can signal to readers that what is important in the cycle of apostasy that these passages introduce is not chronology but the single repetitive fate of Israel.”<sup>642</sup> Involving the breakdown of time, as the events are seemingly repeated and replayed, Hamley also sees this as an ideological backbone of Judges 19 as fiction:

If the spiral is not chronological, then the epilogue suggests a different structure for the book as a whole, based around meaning, within which the conclusion can serve as both an illustration and a warning of what happens if and when Israel loses sight of the covenant. The lack of temporal markers creates a sense of generalization of the conclusion: this may have happened to real people in real life, but the deliberate effort to subtract the episode from specific timings, alongside the namelessness that blurs characters into types, suggests a universal meaning for the episode that would have been difficult to achieve with a more precise narrative.<sup>643</sup>

As time itself breaks down, yet the traumatic event is seemingly being repeated and replayed, folklore from Genesis 19 is retold in order to reflect new circumstances—the defeat by imperialistic powers, and subsequent exile from the land and one another. As evident in the number of cross-references and inner allusions that have been referenced, this chapter points to the argument made by Edenburg that it seems that within those intertexts there is a constant replaying of their trauma.<sup>644</sup> As words and phrases are repeated, the timeline and characters themselves can either become vividly clear or blurry and confusing. The ambiguity goes hand-in-hand with the fragmentation and repeating nature of the very words used. All of these are markers of trauma narratives.

---

<sup>641</sup> Janzen, *The Violent Gift*, 143.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid*, 131.

<sup>643</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable Things Unspoken*, 176.

<sup>644</sup> Edenburg, *Dismembering the Whole*, 256.



### c) Highlighting Moral Injury

A further point regarding Judges 19 as a trauma narrative that is important to discuss, concerns the potential of moral injury associated with this text. Robert Alter mentions in his notes to his translation of the Hebrew Bible that,

One can see a line of imagistic and thematic continuity from the maiming of Adoni-Bezek at the very beginning of the book to the dismembering of the concubine at the end. That act of chopping a body into pieces, of course, is intended as a means to unite the tribes against Benjamin and its murderous rapists, but there is a paradoxical tension between the project of unity—unity, however, for a violent purpose—and the butchering of the body, the violation of its integrity, which in the biblical world as in ours was supposed to be respected through burial.<sup>645</sup>

In their book on recovering from moral injury post-war, Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini define this term as “a wound in the soul, an inner conflict based on a moral evaluation of having inflicted or witnessed harm... it can result not only from active behavior, but also from passive behavior, it can (also) involve feeling betrayed by persons in authority.”<sup>646</sup> Kelle defines moral injury as “the wrecking of a person’s fundamental assumptions about ‘what’s right’ and how things should work in the world—that result from a sense of having violated one’s core moral identity and any reliable, meaningful world in which to live.”<sup>647</sup>

As Kelle writes from the perspective of those coming out of warfare and contexts of militancy, there is a level at which people can be morally injured from simply being a part of the environment that is toxic, as they ensure those within it take on the ideologies, whether implicit or explicit, that conflict with morality.<sup>648</sup> With reference to Judges 19, moral injury creates an additional layer of irony that may not have been seen before. The Israelites cry out in Judg. 19:30 that such a thing has not been seen since the days they came from the land of Egypt, but they participated in dismembering a man, Adoni-Bezek,

---

<sup>645</sup> Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: The Prophets* Vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019), 80-81.

<sup>646</sup> Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* (Boston: Beacon, 2012), 1.

<sup>647</sup> Brad Kelle, *The Bible and Moral Injury: Reading Scripture Alongside War’s Unseen Wounds* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020), 2.

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

in the first chapter of Judges. There is a huge lack of recognition by the Israelites about who they are and the actions they participate in. As Kelle rightly points out: “in order to heal, one has to be honest.”<sup>649</sup>

However, there is a danger of the scapegoat mentality as well, as some say that the Concubine *had* to be dismembered in order for the Israelites to awaken to what they had been doing and had done, essentially, not so much who they were, as who they had become. Exum recognizes the scapegoating exactly for what it is in the whole of Judges, adding that “attention to the gender politics of Judges enables us to expose the phenomenon of scapegoating women for what it is: a strategy patriarchy uses to avoid facing and having to deal with its own violent legacy.”<sup>650</sup> This is exactly what the men in the story do as soon as they come together to discuss the horror of receiving her body parts: they continue to perpetuate the violence. Even if she is the proverbial scapegoat, something that erases her humanity regardless of her fictional state or not, it is clear that no one learns whatever lesson they were supposed to. The reality is, even if the woman is simply a type, representative of Israel as a whole, just a fictional character, the actions that are done to her are traumatic—and they represent a trauma that occurred to a whole people group, many women, children, and men who had been absolutely devastated by the effects of war and exile. There is still a reality in the story to acknowledge, as it clearly shaped an entire community.

Circling back to the fact that this text is not only considered a prophetic book, but as one foundational to the Israelite identity, yet marked by trauma, what then is the word that needs to be heard, listened to, “considered and spoken of?” I propose that this narrative is actually one that not only shares honestly about the devastation that occurred to the body of Israel, but one that shows the ideologies that led them to that very place in a grotesque and brutal manner, as an act of dissent and resistance against them. Sharp is clear that the very “practice of dissent—of challenging official narratives and reframing a community’s stories—is vital for the healthy articulation and amplification of a community’s self-understanding.”<sup>651</sup> As the Israelites began to make sense of and seek a reason for their suffering and trauma, the story shares honestly about what exactly that could have been, in a way that does not allow

---

<sup>649</sup> Kelle, *The Bible and Moral Injury*, 137.

<sup>650</sup> Exum, “Feminist Criticism: Whose Interests are Being Served?” in *Judges & Method*, 86.

<sup>651</sup> Sharp, “Character, Conflict, and Covenant,” in *The Hebrew Bible*, 42.

those who hear or read the text to look away. Interestingly, the book of Hosea also uses the text in a way that calls for introspection in relation to the very cause of their trauma in and through exile.

### 3. HOSEA AS MIGRATORY TRAUMA NARRATIVE

As was argued in Chapter Five of this study, Hosea 9-10 can be viewed through a historical lens of not only the time period the text claims but also from a later period in which this book was likely finalized, thus viewing the text from both perspectives. The tumult caused by multiple kings in quick succession in the Northern Kingdom is associated with subsequent forced migration, as is the potentially exilic, or post-exilic context in which this book has been placed. In the case of war and migration, it is not only the immediate individual and communal trauma that feeds into the literature of the time, but also the trauma that is passed down intergenerationally.<sup>652</sup> Regarding the authorship in general, Francis Landy begins his own commentary on Hosea by stating that, “disunity is implicit in the text.”<sup>653</sup> He writes:

Instead of authorship, we have a play of mirrors: the prophet speaks and/or writes for and about a future, including those listeners who write the script of the prophet who writes about them. Analogously, the book is set, extremely realistically, in a world that is about to disappear; but it speaks also of that world from the other side of the disappearance, from the perspective of the survivors.<sup>654</sup>

Stulman and Kim say explicitly that “the genre of prophecy itself is meaning-making survival literature,” written for “exiles of old and exiles today.”<sup>655</sup> They add that, “community survival within the Persian Empire is also a focal concern of this literature. Primarily because of imperial constraints—imposed by Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, and their designs toward absolute power—the prophetic corpus is a literary artifact of terror and vulnerability, a disturbing cultural expression of lament and

---

<sup>652</sup> David Janzen in *The Violent Gift*, 40: “These aspects of trauma in literature - not only the dominance of and fixation to the traumatic past in the present, and the closely related repetition of trauma, but also the knowable void at the center of experience that radically throws the ability of narrative and even language to convey trauma into question - all appear in the works of the children and the grandchildren of survivors of massive trauma as they do in the literature of survivors themselves.”

<sup>653</sup> Francis Landy, *Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 11.

<sup>654</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 11-12.

<sup>655</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are My People*, 1.

chaos.”<sup>656</sup> The text of Hosea thus finds itself in a liminal space, the readers not knowing who the author really is, the many voices that call out within it, straddling the border between not only death and survival, but the literal borders of what was called home and what is displacement and diaspora.

In reading Hosea as survival literature, there is distinct imagery of the author himself as traumatized. The poetic form of the book itself seems to reveal multiple portraits of the writer of the text, either through redactional processes or the events occurring themselves, much of it coming across as fragmented and disconnected. For instance, Sharp writes as follows regarding the difficulties encountered in studying Hosea:

while some grammatical and conceptual issues in Hosea may fairly be considered to be the products of unintended errors in the composition, redaction, or transmission of the text, other aspects of the inaccessibility of Hosea’s rhetoric may be due to tradition-historical challenges that the prophet intends to present to his implied audience. That is to say, the tumultuous aesthetic of Hosea may be a meaningful feature of the book. If it is, it may be analyzed in its own right, not merely as an unfortunate by-product of historical accident, but as a performative quality of the prophet’s discourse.<sup>657</sup>

Landy also argues that dissociation may even occur in the book of Hosea, a “desire to articulate a reality and the collapse of language which that articulation necessitates.” Yet, the prophetic is still translated into words, and “asserted through the very act of naming.”<sup>658</sup> All of these seemingly difficult characteristics can be explained through trauma narrative.

#### **a) Sites of Remembrance: The Importance of Place**

When reading Hosea 9-10 as chosen trauma narrative of migration, an important category to consider is the notion of place. Michelle Balaev uses a postcolonial lens in the study of trauma and specifically focuses on the role of place, as discussed in Chapter Two. In trauma literature, an emphasis on place specifically helps with “descriptions of the geographic place of traumatic experience and remembrance to situate the individual in relation to a larger cultural context that contains social values that influence

---

<sup>656</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are My People*, 11.

<sup>657</sup> Sharp, “Hewn,” 51.

<sup>658</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 17.

the recollection of the event and the reconfiguration of the self.”<sup>659</sup> Balaev suggests that with a pluralistic model of trauma,<sup>660</sup> the multiplicity of meaning that can arise within a narrative, may be attended to. Thus, the significance regarding place includes not *only* the destruction that occurred in relation to a traumatic event, but also a process of re-ordering. According to Balaev,

Place, therefore, becomes central to representations of trauma in the novel because the physical place of suffering and remembrance of loss becomes an identifiable source for the author to explicate the multiple meanings of the event. The physical landscape is a referent for the individual’s sense of self or identity, and writers often centralize the natural world when the protagonist confronts a traumatic memory in order to demonstrate the internal struggle of the self and the various workings of the mind as the individual attempts to understand, incorporate, and explain the traumatic event.<sup>661</sup>

Once more, all it takes is a mention of the name of the place in order to conjure up memory or memories that add weight of meaning to the current moment. Yet, Balaev adds that memory itself is complex, an “active and revisionary process,” especially in narratives marked by trauma.<sup>662</sup> Writing is the construction of what was, and what is, in light of the “tumultuous” traumatic experience, a literary embodiment of what may be happening both externally and internally. Recalling the many place markers discussed in the previous chapter of this study, helps us to also acknowledge that each marker has memories associated with it, triggering the audience as they are remembered. Landy, discussing the passages at hand, argues that within the symbolism and memories which are linked with these place markers, “Gibeah and Egypt are metaphorically consequent,” in that intertextually they describe “inner dissolution *and* foreign subjugation.”<sup>663</sup> The trigger for the place Gibeah, embodying both their own people groups’ fragmentation as well as the imperialistic pressure they continue to feel, goes hand-in-hand with what Judges 19 depicts as the sin of Gibeah.

---

<sup>659</sup> Michelle Balaev, “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory,” *Mosaic* 41/2 (June 2008), 149.

<sup>660</sup> Michelle Balaev, “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered,” 4.

<sup>661</sup> Balaev, “Trends,” 161.

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid*, 163.

<sup>663</sup> Landy, *Hosea*, 116-117.

### b) Scriptotherapy in Hosea 9-10

However, in ensuring that the study does not simply conform to the traditional, hegemonic understanding of trauma, we must recognize that there are culturally specific expressions of trauma, including the healing, or rather re-making, process. Moreover, to talk only of dissociation and destruction disregards the strength found in the processing through trauma. Daniel Smith-Christopher remarks that “by identifying the sociological mechanisms of minorities who are confronted with the culture of power, the behavior and theology of the Babylonian Exile can be illuminated as a *creative response* to social realities, and not merely the desperate struggle of a culture in decline.”<sup>664</sup> As one of a collection of prophetic books that Stulman calls “the legacy of the losers,” Hosea forms part of the “complex literary response to the massive collapse of ancient Israel’s longstanding cultural arrangements, collapse chiefly the result of war, forced relocation, and captivity—all traumatic events in ancient and contemporary times.”<sup>665</sup>

The fact that this trauma that informs Hosea is not only associated with the time period mentioned in the text, but also during a later time in the exilic or post-exilic setting, requires the creation of a new structure, or, according to Vamik Volkan (cf. Chapter Three of this study), the canvas of the large group’s tent or large-group identity.<sup>666</sup> When a “storm” rages, that canvas takes on more importance for a collective’s protection, and in that, there is a choice to be made to preserve identity under threat. The creation of these texts, the text of Hosea as a whole but specifically Hosea 9-10, creatively wields place names and symbolism in order to give a diachronic account in the midst of trauma, so as to process through it and simultaneously, also resist; to protect the canvas but also to remake it with this new information in light of these events. These very events and texts that follow do form and forge the people that behold them, creating a new “structured identity,” marked by the trauma in a way that guards against it ever happening again. While the old canvas that held together the proverbial tent of large-group identity still retain pieces of its former self, they need to be repaired, and thus, do not remain the same as they were before. In referencing the creation of a trauma narrative, there

---

<sup>664</sup> Daniel Smith-Christopher, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 10.

<sup>665</sup> Stulman, “Reading the Bible as Trauma Literature: The Legacy of the Losers,” 3-5.

<sup>666</sup> Vamik D. Volkan, “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity,” *Group Analysis* 34/1 (2001), 79-97.

is a new awareness of viewing portions of Scripture affected by trauma as ones that were ultimately part of their proverbial therapy.

### c) Hosea and Ironic Self-Blame

In terms of meaning-making, which is a central aspect of not only human nature, but also in processing trauma, people search for meaning in suffering, which is often called meaningless. Elzbieta Gozdziaik, in her research with refugee women, has found how important “viable explanations of suffering are... to individual and community survival.”<sup>667</sup> In terms of the Book of the Twelve, Stulman and Kim argue that this search for meaning is central when they describe “the question of theodicy [as] the uniting banner of the twelve.”<sup>668</sup> In terms of Hosea, one may similarly ask who exactly is to blame for the trauma that generated this literature?

Sweeney, writing along similar lines, notes that this question comes up as it is “relevant to the contemporary world as it was in the past... why does God allow such evil to take place?”<sup>669</sup> Within the book of Hosea, countless commentators have also asked the question, easily theologizing about how the place of “wilderness” was the training ground for becoming YHWH’s people, maintaining the theological position that the Israelite’s suffering in exile was well deserved for their total depravity, thus mimicking a remaking of Exodus. One can easily make a case for this in the text. However, through the lens of trauma, differing solutions, additional options and voices, are revealed, blurring such a clear-cut rendering of a punishing God. While self-blame is something that gives reason to the unreasonable, and is a way of viewing the text of Hosea, one must also recognize the hidden messages beneath the surface of the text, that may speak not of self-blame, but of protest. If there is an underlying message of resistance, and who were they, the authorship, protesting?

The reasoning of self-blame in order to make sense of trauma is one that many have latched on to in light of their suffering. This is no different from making reason and sense of war and exile by blaming

---

<sup>667</sup> Elzbieta Gozdziaik, “Refugee Women’s Psychological Response to Forced Migration,” 14.

<sup>668</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You Are My People*, 185.

<sup>669</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 6. He adds that “in the face of the modern experience of the Shoah (Holocaust),” it is even more important as many Jewish people feel as if this experience repeated itself.

the collective self of the Israelites gone astray. Self-blame, in general, is easiest to take up in the wake of trauma, especially if one has faith in an all-powerful deity that could have done something about it. In fact, Serene Jones in her own research on trauma and theology notes that, “for many who suffer deeply, the only thing that frightens them more than the idea that God is punishing them is the idea that God is not in charge at all.”<sup>670</sup> Self-blame can give a sense of control. As has been mentioned before, using the covenant, “specifically, the broken covenant, was a metaphor used to understand retrospectively the catastrophes of the early sixth century.”<sup>671</sup> Carr writes about much of the prophetic literature that

As one surveys the material associated with pre-exilic prophets, the focus on the blame of the community, of course, is huge. Not only do large swaths of the major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, feature indictments of the people, but so do many of the pre-exilic minor prophets, such as Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah. As scholars have long supposed, such indictments—whenever they were written—were well suited for exiles attempting to come to terms with what had happened to them. Dated to the pre-exilic past, these prophetic traditions offered concrete diagnoses of where Israel and Judah went wrong. In this way, they helped exiles on the journey from shame to guilt, indicating possible wrong decisions that led to the catastrophe in which they now found themselves.<sup>672</sup>

Israel is given lists of its sins, as well as the very places where these actions happened, that would then require a punishment of great measure. Trauma theorist Judith Herman confirms that in such a situation self-blame can give a semblance of control when nothing is in one’s control.<sup>673</sup> Kirsi Cobb, in the light of her reading of Gomer through her personal experience with intimate partner abuse, remarks that self-blame can also give victims a sense of agency, and most pertinently with a view to the Israelites’ sins, the belief that their behavior can have some effect on the outcome of their current

---

<sup>670</sup> Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2019), 32.

<sup>671</sup> Bos, *Reconsidering*, 170.

<sup>672</sup> David M. Carr, “Reading into the Gap: Refractions of Trauma in Israelite Prophecy,” in *Interpreting Exile*, 300.

<sup>673</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 53-54.



situation.<sup>674</sup> She also views Gomer as someone who can be a metaphorical social body, representing Israel as they attempted to cope with loss through literature, yet, safely from a distance.<sup>675</sup>

With reference to the immediate context of this time period, Carr further writes that “Assyrian texts and art depicted the Assyrian army as feminizing and raping their victims, but in Hosea’s prophecy it was Yahweh and only Yahweh who terrorized Israel. But this also meant that Israel could change its behavior and regain control over its situation. In this way, Hosea offered a way of self-empowerment to his traumatized people.”<sup>676</sup> Did the very set-up of the covenant God give them a way to cope? Although this offers a more clean-cut answer to the problems we are addressing, it still acknowledges, in some sense, that they were the victims in the situation, and not necessarily the instigators they made themselves out to be.

Alongside covenant, which was not something that was just made with YHWH, but also with even the rising hegemony of Assyria, Carr maintains “every few years the Assyrian army removed yet another rebellious Israelite monarch and ravaged the countryside. In between such rebellions, the people struggled to recover while paying huge tribute payments to their Assyrian lord, whom they were supposed to ‘love’ with their whole heart.”<sup>677</sup> Carr argues for Gomer’s marriage to Hosea as a way to cope with imperial trauma, as he says that to Hosea, God’s face looked a lot like the Assyrian king’s face, especially as seemingly *both* covenants with these Suzerain rulers were broken by Israel. This, certainly gave the “traumatized body” a way of making meaning of their experiences: “he redescribed Israel’s God, Yahweh, as a (partial) reflection of the world-dominating, subordination-demanding Assyrian emperor, an emperor who would settle for nothing less than absolute allegiance.”<sup>678</sup> Janzen similarly sees, alongside the irony of Hosea’s name literally meaning “salvation,” that,

---

<sup>674</sup> Kirsi Cobb, “Reading Gomer with Questions: A Trauma Informed Feminist Study of How the Experience of Intimate Partner Violence and the Presence of Religious Belief Shape the Reading of Hosea 2.2-23,” *Feminist Trauma Theologies*, 122-123.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid*, 123.

<sup>676</sup> Carr, *Holy Resilience*, 33.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

trauma's subversion of the master narrative of the History challenges and throws into ambiguity and radical questioning the notions that God is just; that the exiles' suffering is truly a punishment for disloyalty; that repentance has any effect at all on how God distributes salvation; or even that Israel consists of a succession of different generations, each making its own decisions in regards to its vassal duties that it owes to God and judged accordingly.<sup>679</sup>

In turning self-blame inside out, however, one is faced with the perspective of blaming God themselves for the events that occurred. This would be an underlying message, in that the victim, being both the figure of Gomer herself as well as the addressees of the text of Hosea, does/do not have an opportunity to speak or be heard in the text. Yet, one of the aspects of trauma's effects is that it shatters previously held worldviews, that simply do not hold any longer. The receivers of these texts, while employing an account that Sweeney says is purposefully ambiguous, used the prophet's marriage to Gomer as a way to "garner empathy from the audience to establish support for YHWH's position."<sup>680</sup> Yet they still have experienced something that can be ultimately shattering to the very thing that upholds the framework for the large-group identity: a belief in a singular deity that protects as part of the suzerain-vassal covenant between them. Sharp says it well: "Israel's tradition-history is swallowed whole by a rapacious and unforgiving God... forced to reconfigure itself, Israel learns to renounce the god that had wreaked such havoc on its cultural body."<sup>681</sup>

As Hosea re-describes YHWH in the image of a foreign power bent on ruling and subduing, there is a space that asks if this really *is* YHWH, or if this newly made image of God that the people are worshipping, is the problem itself. In this un-felicitous light, this raises protest among the Israelites against an experience that should not happen to anyone. While the text does not take the form of lament, nor funeral dirge, instead of an instructional text, it nonetheless speaks of matchless death. The crisis that Hosea addressed involved a situation of explosive disintegration of the Israelite communal "self," which also included their understanding of God.<sup>682</sup> This communal self, in the midst of rebuilding what

---

<sup>679</sup> Janzen, *The Violent Gift*, 62.

<sup>680</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 25.

<sup>681</sup> Sharp, "Hewn," 66-68.

<sup>682</sup> Carr, *Holy Resilience*, 33.

exactly their identity was and would be, was greatly damaged. Janzen writes on the metaphor of exile that it was “a punishing experience, more effective than any symbol left in the homeland, which unavoidably reminded the Jews that they were conquered.”<sup>683</sup>

#### **d) Moral Injury**

In light of this we may well ask if the authorship was experiencing, once again, moral injury. Most often, what occurs to those experiencing moral injury is very similar to PTSD symptoms. Brad Kelle’s work addresses how one can easily use this trauma as a lens by which to read and interpret both injury and repair. Kelle states that being honest about the violence that these texts portray, gives an opportunity in modern settings to be clear about the realities of war in the light of such a desensitized culture.<sup>684</sup> As persons experience the wounds of moral injury, as they participate in it or watch it occur, there is a level at which one can also mourn the structures that create these issues in the first place. Kelle quotes Camillo Mac Bica, a researcher on the casualties of war, saying “simply living amid the prolonged violence, death, trauma, and anxiety of war erodes our moral being, undoes character, and reduces decent men and women to people capable of incredible cruelty.”<sup>685</sup> While the experiences the authorship endured does not mean we condone the negative behaviors that so abuse others, reading Hosea as one who was morally injured by the very ideologies that were death-dealing rampantly around him, as well as the personal and collective trauma of war and exile, can be a helpful tool. In recognizing that one may have participated in a moral orientation that turns out to be death-dealing, there is also moral injury.<sup>686</sup>

Providing a myriad of voices within the lens of reading Hosea as a migratory trauma narrative has been purposeful—not only are the opportunities for further scholarship in reading this book and other prophetic books great, but there is evidence that trauma itself does not often give clear answers. A theodicy emerged as the traumatized seek a reason, but in that there is still an invitation to consider what is happening between the margins, between death and life, or rebirth itself. This is not to glamorize

---

<sup>683</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Landless*, 31.

<sup>684</sup> Kelle, *The Bible and Moral Injury*, 178.

<sup>685</sup> Camillo Mac Bica, *Beyond PTSD: The Moral Casualties of War* (Commack, NY: Gnosis, 2016), 16.

<sup>686</sup> Kelle, *The Bible and Moral Injury*, 33.

trauma, but a way in which to see trauma borne out and worked through in time. While these texts themselves depict trauma, they can be the methods by which healing is found too; giving narrative, symbolism, and naming; a place in text to speak to what one may not want to confront, but bodily, cannot push away. As the Israelites attempted to reconsider what had occurred to them, to their brothers and sisters, they assessed whatever was left of the large-group canvas weathered by such a storm. The reconsidering asks, what stays and needs to be repaired, and what must be shorn off in order to be replaced by something better? Biblical scholars work backwards in that they have already written the narrative that depicts those decisions.

#### 4. GOMER AND THE CONCUBINE: MEDIATED IN THEIR BODIES

Exploring the intertextual relationship of these texts is important, as different texts help to add more layers of meaning that would not have been seen from just one viewpoint. For a study that embraces the necessity of polyvalency, the opportunities that addressing intertextuality provides, is the potential for more possibilities of interpretation. While much of the intertextual connection the study discusses is involved in the texts of Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19, there are yet other layers that may need to be addressed.

Considering Gomer and Hosea's relationship as abusive in nature comes to the fore of our concern as Gomer's voice is never heard in the text. This is not the first time we do not hear from a woman who is *נזנ*, being abused, controlled despite her own attempt to act independently, never given a voice or a perspective in the story being told about her own self. The nameless Concubine of Judges 19 has a similar story, in that she is the one that *נזנ*'s, in so doing, acting independently. She is later abused, both at the hands of the Wicked Men of Gibeah, as well as the hands of her husband. None of the words in the story come from this nameless woman's perspective or voice. Both husbands are supposed to be somewhat a picture of God; one of them literally obeying a command as a prophet to embody the relationship between YHWH and the whoring land; and the other, a Levite, supposed to be a "representative of God."<sup>687</sup> Another note to mention is that Hosea attempts to speak to Gomer's heart in the honeymoon period of sorts, wooing her back. The Levite, or the nameless Concubine's husband in

---

<sup>687</sup> Isabelle Hamley, *Unspeaking Things Unspoken: An Irigarayan Reading and Victimization in Judges 19-21* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019), 151.

Judges 19, also leaves his home to go to speak to his concubine's heart in Bethlehem. Neither episode ends in a positive way. This phrase, "speak to her heart," is also repeated in the story of Tamar (2 Sam. 13) with the cakes she makes for her brother, Amnon. She is raped by Amnon. It is interesting to note that each of these narratives involve some sort of sexual assault, none of which any woman would attest to speak to one's heart, all of which involve control. Susanne Scholz notes that whenever the construction of "speaking to the heart" (דבר אל-לב) occurs in the Hebrew Bible, the "situation is wrong, difficult, or danger is in the air."<sup>688</sup>

Both Gomer and the nameless Concubine are thus, as coined by Cheryl Exum, "raped by the pen."<sup>689</sup> As they both זנה, they must be punished; so not only are they deserving of what occurs to them, they receive the blame for what happens to them and become the paradigmatic picture of what happens to a woman who steps out of the box created for her. Exum's phrase refers to the fact that countless commentators and scholars have perpetuated these beliefs into what is actually more well known as rape culture. Whether or not Scripture itself perpetuates these beliefs is another point of discussion, but the way in which many scholars have passed off these metaphor(s) as justified punishment has consequences, not only for these characters of old, but for those they teach. Nam Hoon Tan points this out in her own setting, looking at a well-used commentary in Hong Kong Christian interpretation by Samuel Tang. She recognizes that the text in general is difficult to interpret, as it jumps from voice to voice, but that ultimately, Tang sees Gomer as "'enslaved' and an 'adulteress' requiring redemption," and the redemption is this discipline, isolation, a forced repentance.<sup>690</sup>

In specifically talking about how the Levite's wife—in her monograph re-named Beli-Fachad,—has been "raped by the pen," Helen Paynter writes that for many in light of this, "she has been viewed as the cause of trouble; her suffering is seen as the will of God."<sup>691</sup> Routledge gives away his position on

---

<sup>688</sup> Susanne Scholz, "What 'Really' Happened to Dinah, A Feminist Analysis of Genesis 34," *lectio difficilior* 2 (2001): [http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/01\\_2/s.htm](http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/01_2/s.htm).

<sup>689</sup> J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 170.

<sup>690</sup> From Nam Hoon Tan, *Resisting Rape Culture*, 72, referencing, Samuel Y.C. Tang, *Twelve Prophets (II) Hosea*, Tien Dao Bible Commentary (Hong Kong: Tien Dao, 1984), 47-48.

<sup>691</sup> Paynter, *Telling Terror in Judges 19*, 72.

comparing Hosea to the Levite in Judges 19, making a connection between the two: their “mistreatment.”<sup>692</sup> The link between Gomer and the nameless Concubine should not be ignored; Gomer herself could be yet another shared memory of the nameless Concubine and the sin of Gibeah in her body and the treatment of her. In both Judges and Hosea, ultimately what occurs is a making sense of the trauma happening to the community in and through these women. They remain objects, they are the *mashal*, objectified for the literary or literal purpose of mediating trauma, through individualized trauma.

Another aspect regards the notion of the “masculine ideal” associated with Hosea. Jeremiah Cataldo writes how, by means of the metaphors of patriarchal marriage in the first three chapters of Hosea, the prophet embodies the image of what the nation itself should be. Moreover, the person of Gomer serves as a way for the author of Hosea to subvert this ideal and to work through trauma. Cataldo states that the metaphors used to cope intergenerationally “highlight a lack of sociopolitical stability as a result of imperial conquest, one that Yahweh did not prevent. Reclaimed sociopolitical stability is the focus of Hosea’s emphasis upon the sexual body as a metaphor for the political one, the violation of which symbolizes for Hosea the trauma of exile.”<sup>693</sup> The *zonah* (זונה) then, simply becomes the image of the social body that runs to other nations for protection and help. Cataldo argues that the working through of trauma would need transform the community and the land, which is a central argument of this thesis.<sup>694</sup> During this time period, there seemed to be a need for controlling the uncontrollable, which is represented by the need to control the sexuality of women, which is also used in feminizing the enemy. But the literati, who would have been the ones in power and would want a God who looked like them, only seeing the emphasis on a strongman in times of great trouble in order to rebuild and not the instability from which this god failed to save, still do not demonstrate working through trauma at all. Similarly, this argument can also be made of Judges 19 in relation to what seems to be an abusive

---

<sup>692</sup> Routledge, *Hosea*, 132.

<sup>693</sup> Jeremiah Cataldo, “Trauma of (un)Civilized (wo)Man in Hosea,” SBL Annual Meeting San Diego 2019, 3.

<sup>694</sup> However, the means by which he gets to this point seems a bit contradictory. His thesis both states the sexual body as representative of the culture at large is important, in that the ideal is this figure of a strong, in control, masculine figure—but argues against Alice Keefe’s proposal in that, while they agree on the social body being the woman’s body, her concerns are equated with quite too much of a modern-day lens. This kind of argument ultimately estimates that because the Bible comes from an inherently patriarchal culture, that to agree with it and thus, the literati who were in power, is to be the subjective, and then, correct viewpoint. This kind of argument fails to see the biases that people always bring into reading the text as a receiver and interpreter themselves.

marriage between the *pilegish* and the Levite, her “unfaithfulness” as deserving of punishment, and the Levite fulfilling the horrific duty in controlling and subduing the issue of her. If, as the study hypothesizes, Hosea read Judges 19, it is wholly unsurprising that Gomer is both different and also a mirror of the *pilegish*.

Much is said about how scholarship affects how these texts are received and perpetuated in modern culture. If the texts are taken literally, abuse of women becomes normalized in even a Christian church setting. Katie Cross calls this a theodicy of blame: “women are expected to conform to standards of purity, and where they do not... their suffering is pedagogical. If they experience an abusive relationship, this is configured as something that is their fault.”<sup>695</sup> How we read is how we live. A feminist interpretation is helpful in the text in that it says no one is deserving of such treatment, regardless of what has been done. This is not said in order to “save” these “poor, victim women,” as another way to colonize, but to recognize that there are oppressive structures in place that have been created by people and can be dismantled by people. Agency must be given to those who are affected to shape what comes after, even if these next steps and their future do not fit the mold of what “we” think should be chosen.<sup>696</sup> Ultimately, feminist interpretation is about liberation, and this does not look like one specific, narrow way.

In considering the horror of the situation that had befallen the entire nation, a singular heinous metaphor would not suffice. As shown in this study, more than one seriously grotesque metaphor(s) is used to speak of the trauma of exile, as is evident in the example of Gomer, which may be read intertextually together with the nameless Concubine. A feminist perspective asks the question if using such a metaphor is even remotely ethical, no matter what it may be describing or depicting, especially in acknowledging the many ways the metaphor(s) itself has already been wielded. There are still more intersections in lenses than those already mentioned, which are not fully explored as it pertains to Hosea, the authorship, and the multitude of receptors, in order to create a cohesive whole that makes sense in a different light of the sin of Gibeah.

---

<sup>695</sup> Katie Cross, “‘I Have the Power in My Body to Make People Sin’: The Trauma of Purity Culture and the Concept of ‘Body Theodicy’,” in *Feminist Trauma Theologies: Body, Scripture, and Church in Critical Perspective*, 23-26.

<sup>696</sup> Rhiannon Graybill outlines these arguments in both *The Bible, Gender, and Sexuality: Critical Readings*, and in her recent release, *Texts After Terror*. These are necessary critiques that must continue to be discussed and wrestled with.

In light of the argument that the text should be read alongside the memories activated by the names of places in Hosea 9-10, Naomi Graetz writes that the underlying message may be one that calls YHWH into question, saying,

Is Hosea, who definitely knows of the Judges 19 text, since there are clear references to Gibeah in Hosea 9:9 and 10:9, hinting that when God tells him to “speak to her heart,” aware of the Levite husband/master of the concubine who also strayed and thus is unconsciously reminding the reader that Hosea’s God cannot be trusted?<sup>697</sup>

Within Graetz’s intertextual reading of Judges 19, Gomer is not necessarily a retelling of the sin of Gibeah per se, but her story, her body can attest to the dis-membering of Israel’s own social body in this exilic and post-exilic context. The text in Hosea *is* a survival text, written by victims who were, in fact, living. Yet, their whole focus on death, destruction, abuse by those in power (whether it be a Suzerain imperialistic power or YHWH themselves—an effective metaphor to use being that of the patriarchal marriage wielded in an un-positive way) was their way of retelling,<sup>698</sup> processing, through a culturally normative way that also throws up a silent fist in protest. Interestingly, the Israelites mediated their trauma through women’s bodies, but many of the characters in each story can work in relation to cultural critique. The writing *says* that God is giving them a way to change what has already occurred, through following covenant, but the victims in the story do not get a chance to share their side. This poetic *mashal* may very well be just that—Gomer’s silence speaking in powerful ways as we hear what is not said. Although the text is also consumed with returning, שׁוּב repeated many times throughout the book as a whole, does Israel want to return to YHWH? Should they?

---

<sup>697</sup> Naomi Graetz, “The Concubine of Gibeah,” in *In the Arms of Biblical Women*, edited by John T. Greene and Mishael M. Caspi (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013), 121-143. She also argues for the intertextual reading based on Ellen Van Wolde’s chapter on Ruth and Tamar’s intertextuality (Ellen Van Wolde, “Intertextuality: Ruth in Dialogue with Tamar,” in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, edited by Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 427) in that: “I. The reader lists the points of **repetitions** in the texts being compared 1) *stylistic and semantic*: micro items like words, or macro units, similarities of themes, i.e., and 2) *narratological features*: similar characters, actions and 3) rhetorical and pragmatic features. If sufficient repetition does not exist, then there is no basis for arguing for intertextuality... III. Productive intertextual reading must be concerned not only with the meaning of one text (T1) in its encounter with another text (T2), but also with the new text created by the interaction of both texts.”

<sup>698</sup> The fixation on repeating and retelling an event is normative behavior for those experiencing PTSD, a “failed enactment,” as there is an attempt to gain mental control over the present and unchangeable past. Robert K. Lifton, “Understanding the Traumatized Self: Imagery, Symbolization, and Transformation” in *Human Adaptation to Extreme Stress: From the Holocaust to Vietnam*, 8-9.



## 5. THE SIN OF GIBEAH; SO WHAT?

By reading Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 as migratory trauma narratives another level of perspective is opened up which changes what can be seen in these passages as a whole, but also, narrowly, by understanding what may not have been understandable before. Within these trying spaces, there is new opportunity to answer the main research question of what exactly the ancient readers and authors would have said the sin of Gibeah was? And one could add, continues to be?

Taking all that has been said with regard to Hosea into consideration, there is recognition that the writing itself is a both/and, using “the traditions of the past as a warning to avoid the disasters which came upon their ancestors, and, at the same time, to support their construction of a new social and religious structure.”<sup>699</sup> The way in which this becomes a both/and is not just within the sentence above, but in the fact that these texts can function both as propaganda and as a way of moving through trauma in rebuilding, creating, a differently pieced together large-group canvas. The text becomes a both/and as it is received and re-read by text receptors, and the opportunity for a differing interpretation dependent upon their circumstances, holding the intergenerational trauma of war and exile while experiencing unrest and colonization, can mean that all of these options hold true. The text could have been a self-blame perspective for one generation, then protest, a hidden transcript against the god that failed them, for another. The text can function as both empowering and damning, depending on interpretation and the *place*, the context from which those interpretations come. As Stulman and Kim write: “How can ‘citizens of the empire’ appreciate the subversive script of a subject people? How are those located at the center able to understand the counter-stories of those in the borderlands? Admittedly, contemporary communities of faith have deployed this literature in the service of the state, but such a reading by and large runs counter to the grain of the text.”<sup>700</sup> What Stulman and Kim forget, is that not only have contemporary communities of faith used this text in service of the state, but as a function of potential propaganda, there is an oddity in how the text also serves in ways that have typically weaponized Othering in order to preserve ethnic identities. There is a plurality here, but also, unity in the very ways in which these texts have functioned to persevere and preserve a whole people group in the wake of the

---

<sup>699</sup> Trotter, *Reading Hosea*, 225.

<sup>700</sup> Stulman and Kim, *You are My People*, 22.

traumatic event of migration. For some in diaspora dealing with the effects of the trauma of migration still comes in waves.

Shelly Rambo's work on trauma discusses much of what it means to live in the liminal space of the middle, the in-between, as "trauma is often spoken about as a dissolution of the death-life boundary."<sup>701</sup> This boundary shattering tends to then redefine the meaning of life itself, "an overflow emerging from the experience of death, even though a person does not experience a literal death—life is reshaped in light of death, not in light of its finality but its persistence." Trauma itself moves people into a place of the middle, the liminal border, with a "new kind of knowledge, a new kind of language."<sup>702</sup> Polyvalency does not then mean that there is not still a general idea of what exactly the sin of Gibeah is; the Ancient Near Eastern audience surely knew what it was as it would not have been called forth as a shared memory if they did not.

Sharp helps to address these possibilities of both deconstruction and reconstruction amidst trauma which is important for considering the sin of Gibeah. One could ask: What will remain of the large-group canvas, what needs to be shorn off further, and what needs to be added? Sharp writes that there are things that desperately need to be dismembered, torn asunder. Hence, these prophecies of Hosea present,

a potent challenge to his implied audience. The challenge is for them to endure a 'self-deconstructing imagination' so that they can learn to rename themselves and discover who God is. A chief effect of Hosea's violent destabilization of the idols of the implied audience is a freeing of the imagination of his hearers. They are freed from the blood-soaked constraints of a past that had been imagined only in terms of illegitimate desire and the subsequent rending of Israel's social body by a punitive God. The obscurity of Hosea's citations of Israel's history and the turbulence of Hosea's shifting metaphors are intended both to imitate the implied audience's lack of comprehension and to remedy it, to destabilize the implied audience and compel the (real) audience to reconstruct themselves as faithful worshippers of the true God.<sup>703</sup>

---

<sup>701</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 25.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid*, 21-24.

<sup>703</sup> Sharp, "Hewn," 55, 69.

With reference to the multiple references to the sin of Gibeah in Hosea 9-10, one may ask what *was* a part of the large-group tent that must be removed; explicitly referencing that they are still engaging in that supposed sin? While the text says there is a double iniquity, it seems too literal in the midst of a metaphorical text to assume that means there are two explicit sins that need to be addressed. What does seem to be an explicit lesson, the *mashal*, is that “Hosea 10:9-10 instructs that genuine repentance involves claiming one’s sinful ancestry rather than distancing oneself from it.”<sup>704</sup> Claiming these cultural memories, as well as witnessing how they are currently being enacted ideologically as reason for their downfall, thus needs a full thick understanding of what the cultural memory is. Without Judges 19, we do not understand what exactly Hosea was calling the audience to account for, but the audience is both complicit and continuing.

## 6. TRAUMA NARRATIVES AND LARGE-GROUP IDENTITY

As a case has been made for receiving and interpreting the text as a trauma narrative, one created out of the events of war and exile, it is still necessary to interpret what this may have meant for a community rather than simply to put trauma into narrative form. If the text is primarily educational, for shaping and forming a community, what is it saying to those reading it beyond a recognition of their pain? Mullen, who writes on how narrative history shapes identities, writes specifically about the Deuteronomistic History that,

when it is recognized that the entire history is constructed as reflection on those events that had led to the exile and had brought about the demise of the nation and threatened the ethnic identity of Judah by dispersing its members among those nations from which it was to be separate and distinct, the narrative accounts serve as moralizing object lessons to a people searching for the ways necessary to regain, retain, and remain an ethnic, religious community and to avoid complete assimilation and dissolution among the nations.<sup>705</sup>

This is what Volkan means when he discusses large-group identity, and when it is threatened, how it gains both importance and is re-shaped and repaired by the storm that affects the proverbial canvas as a form of protection. Yet, a key portion of their own identity had much to do with their national deity, one that does not figure in these texts at all. As discussed in the previous chapter, it seems that often not only

---

<sup>704</sup> Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 165.

<sup>705</sup> Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries*, 84.

in prophetic texts, but in ones marked by trauma, the question of theodicy comes to the fore. Even then, where are God's supposed representatives in a text literally called "judges?" Where is the deliverer?

The scarcity of any type, any person, that comes and rescues in a book that is all about deliverance, is damning. As a parallel story, Genesis 19 has the messengers of YHWH as the ones who come and save, and yet, no one saves anyone in Judges 19, which is a key and crucial difference between the two. Guest, using attachment theory and seeing the attachment between YHWH and the Israelites as inherently masochistic, argues that

put baldly, if the biblical narratives under consideration are late Persian/Hellenistic constructs where YHWH is present 'as a fictional character, much like the incompetent god who loses a bet to his Adversary in the book of Job,' then using stories from Judges in theologies intended to enlighten readers about what God desires, or God's attributes, could be referencing a character who is a flawed and dysfunctional construct.<sup>706</sup>

In light of the proposed subversive narrative that the study hypothesizes this narrative is presenting, there is a function by which God is absent, nowhere to be seen, and this is exactly how they felt when the exile occurred. Another option here is to take the subversion on a similar, yet differing spin, in that the god that these men have constructed, then acted in the name of, is not YHWH at all. Bal points out that there may be judges in the story: "Samson, Jephthah, Beth's husband and father do behave like judges. We must judge such judgement and justice and expose its being anchored in power."<sup>707</sup> Each of these men act from a space of patriarchal authority, and subsequently, women are treated violently. Each of them is deemed heroic in some commentaries, supposedly doing the right thing in God's name. This is an interpretation that many have seen as the "correct" one, as the woman breaks her covenant by *zonah*-ing, using self-blame as the way in which to cope through loss and trauma that follows. Hamley writes that,

A text of terror and abuse read within a phallogocentric society can easily be interpreted as promoting that society's behavioral norms, especially when the textual challenge to the events portrayed comes through irony and an invitation to reflection rather than by

---

<sup>706</sup> Guest, *YHWH and Israel in the Book of Judges*, 1.

<sup>707</sup> Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 245.

replicating the totalitarian discourse of the dominant group and legislating from above.<sup>708</sup>

In revisiting Schüssler-Fiorenza's history *for*, the question remains of which generation post-exile may be the one interpreting these interconnected passages in this particular way. The notion of intergenerational trauma, especially when it comes to reclaiming the Genesis 19 story in order to explain their current situation, portrays that very wrestling with the ideologies that undergird both texts. As a new generation examines the disaster that has come to the large-group canvas, in Volkan's terminology, it may be that through these texts, in either creating or redefining the sin of Gibeah in their readings, they find some semblance of meaning-making, and also, repairing in order to move forward.

In this, there is an opportunity to refuse status quo interpretations. Klein, who sees the whole of Judges as a text of irony, remarks that "the resolution depicts the consequence of the main narratives of the book of Judges as anti-Yahwism in the name of Yahweh."<sup>709</sup> But God is silent in this text. God's silence could also be because they are a figure in the story, embodied by the figure of the Levite, the "type" and representative of God, and the Concubine runs from what she feels is abuse. The action of running away that the Israelites narrate through the *pilegesh*, is subsequently punished. However, Hamley argues that the silence readers experience—while it very well could be a realization on behalf of traumatized people that there is no and will not be deliverance—operates as a form of protest from God. She states that, "God in the text is treated by the men of Israel in much the same way as women: done to, used, ignored, silenced."<sup>710</sup> God acts as a mirror to the women, instead of the way in which the men have created the god of the masculine ideology to bow to.

This could be seen as refusing to endure masculinist responses; in a world dominated by violence and totalitarian aspirations, would a response of power by God be anything but replicating—and thereby identifying with—the male phallogocentric principle? To some degree, God is caught in the web of the logic and grammar of totalitarian male discourse, so that the only response possible is a negative one: either enter the male discourse or withdraw and be silent, thereby identifying with the other silent members of the story. Of course, withdrawing when one has the power to change the course of events is problematic, yet a position of identification with victims

---

<sup>708</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 229.

<sup>709</sup> Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 15.

<sup>710</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 208.

may be less problematic than using the language and weapons of the oppressor. This withdrawal of divine presence needs to be read canonically so that the apparent powerlessness and silence of Yahweh may be seen not as final but rather as part of a pattern of relating to power differently in order to subvert it.<sup>711</sup>

The text, then, is and has been polyvalent. This interpretation that blames the problem of war and exile at the rampant abuses of the culture writ large, being the patriarchy and xenophobic Othering through the lens of migratory trauma. One cannot read the text of Judges 19 and the chapters that follow it and assume all is well.<sup>712</sup> Nationalism can be part of the trauma experience in that one holds the canvas of the large-group tent closely in order to protect it, and one of the key pieces to reasoning with xenophobia at any level. Smith sees this in her interpretation, that “the story might be understood in terms of nation-lust, demonstrating the extent to which men will go in pursuit of nationalism for the protection of men and their property.”<sup>713</sup> The failure to recognize that there are, instead, pieces of the large-group canvas that need to be let go rather than clutched at, is understandable in light of such experiences, and it seems that the author was attempting to say exactly that to their people. It is time to re-make. Hamley writes that it is not simply women who are hurt in a “phallic economy,” but also men. In this economy, “violence is a natural by-product of a culture that seeks to assert the supremacy of the One over Others.”<sup>714</sup> Scholz makes a similar argument, stating “pervasive misogyny, grounded in a phallogocentric order that advances compulsory heterosexuality and combines with other forms of discriminatory practices, leads to further sexual violence; this time against women of other lands and

---

<sup>711</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 223-224.

<sup>712</sup> This quote confirms moral injury in light of the following chapters: “Each of the banning ideologies admits a process of rationalization that implies guilt within the human soul and therefore the potential for critique. The ideology of the ban as God’s justice, in particular, seeks to justify killing in a vituperative, self-conscious way that shouts of self-doubt. The description of the end of civil war in Judges 21:1-11 may be an implicit critique of the ban when that ideology becomes an excuse to kill and conquer,” Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 136-137. As haram is enacted onto Benjamin due to the perceived wrong (it may be the woman, but the story told is the man’s), there seems to be a notion that not only is this not of YHWH, but another creation of making god in their own image, as they allow violence to beget violence.

<sup>713</sup> Smith, *African American Interpretation*, 103.

<sup>714</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 19.

customs.”<sup>715</sup>As Exum says it well: “It is men in this story who bring death and who shift the blame onto women through an encoded message that holds women responsible for male aggression.”<sup>716</sup>

Much of what has been deduced in this chapter aligns with the rhetoric that was introduced in Chapter Two of this study, that many blame the victims and/or survivors of migration for the trauma they endure on their migratory journey, even as it is clear that the very reason for leaving is trauma that may have been induced by those Western countries. Considering the previous feminist critiques of these texts, then, finds a seamless thread woven in the many stories told by those who migrate. The “type” themselves, as migrants, find themselves caught on the threshold, with agency enough to take the risk to leave what was home in order to find safety, only too often to be met with rape on the way, or even to act as sex-worker to afford their means before, during, and even after their journey. Furthermore, rape also occurs to migrants as they arrive at the walled off space they have been told was going to be more safe, while those behind those walls scapegoat migrants as those who are to be feared. While this is not a singular story, as we should refuse the victim narrative given to *all* migrants, this is often statistically what has met those who migrate, and too often, told it is their fault if tragedy occurs. Judges 19, read as a migratory trauma narrative, is an explicit yet subversive critique towards and against those who Other. The condemnation of readers affected by these texts in shock and horror, asks them to see the ideology of necro-politics being worshipped as ultimately all consuming, including consuming their own selves.

## 7. CONCLUSION: A NEW DEFINITION OF THE SIN OF GIBEAH

Viewing Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migratory trauma narratives that depict the Israelites’ experience of war and exile from the land, as well as life in diaspora, gives new meaning to what could be understood under the sin of Gibeah. Defining the sin of Gibeah, as well as creating the link between Hosea 9-10 and Judges with this lens and context, is the very purpose of the study. This study suggests that the following quote by Hamley that she uses in the conclusion of her monograph on Judges 19-21 applies to the intertext of Hosea as well:

---

<sup>715</sup> Scholz, *Sacred Witness*, 150. Cf. also Bal who argues that “The official coherence of war and theology allows for a hierarchy of interests to be established at the cost of a clear view of the relations between the different domains of the life of the people. If the chaos of the land is expressed through the absence of a king and the selfishness of the men’s behavior, then the contempt for women’s lives and bodies and the desire to take absolute power over them, as exemplified in this story in particular, may very well be the cause rather than the consequence of this chaos,” Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 28.

<sup>716</sup> Exum, *Fragmented Woman*, 193.

Judges 19-21 fulfills its function as a bridge of the present that remembers, ensuring the past and its link to the present are acknowledged, thereby forming an invitation to a different future.<sup>717</sup>

In attempting to pinpoint exactly what part was the “sin,” Judges 19 is in fact articulating that the way in which they were operating from a misogynistic, violently masculine ideology or rather, culture, was clearly not working. This perspective re-orientates the story into one that has the audience, throughout the generations, questioning, the ideologies themselves, their very own large-group tent canvas, that would allow these actions to occur. In essence, the whole of the story asks Israel what would they do with the non-male, non-Israelite “other,” as even Jebus is rejected as a site of potential hospitality and the threat lies within the walled city of Gibeah. The text calls for great self-reflection, and internal communal reflection on the very principles that created such a horror. While a dead woman cannot speak, the effect of the woman’s body enables those who behold her to also act upon said emotions.

Also, the book Hosea, while looking ahead to a bleak future for Israel as war and exile are imminent, employs the reference to the sin of Gibeah in the context of this explicit and literal body abused and violated, then torn into pieces, as another metaphor of what was to come to *all* of the tribes. It could be said that both are metaphors for drawing upon what it means to create a semblance of control in the midst of such lack of it, another way to cope with such massive trauma as a collective, large group. Yet, the question remains regarding what message lies beneath this shared memory: Would they resist what they had made the status quo, the sin of Gibeah as a misogynistic, patriarchal way of life that had led them to their own destruction, thinking that was wholly God’s plan? Hosea calls for the need to recognize their past, present, and future as intertwined. As Bo Lim and Daniel Castelo note of the very verses in Hos. 10:9-10, “genuine repentance involves claiming one’s sinful ancestry rather than distancing oneself from it.”<sup>718</sup>

It would be foolish to be yet another voice along with the many commentaries that do not give adequate justice or acknowledgement to the woman of Judges 19, simply brushing aside the violence and havoc of her gang rape and subsequent dismemberment in order to make a broad point. As Jones

---

<sup>717</sup> Hamley, *Unspeakable*, 232.

<sup>718</sup> Lim and Castelo, *Hosea*, 165.



argues in regard to rape culture within Christian teaching, too often the discussion moves simply to the wider situation of Israel or to focus on the male characters in the passage instead... placing blame on the woman as the lesson to learn.<sup>719</sup> However, even with what seems to be a whole text illocution of depravity on multiple levels that transfers intertextually from Judges to Hosea,<sup>720</sup> there might be a call to cast more importance on the woman or, women, rather than less. Dismantling the wreckage that patriarchalism has brought and continues to bring has shown itself on too many women's bodies. Karen O'Donnell, in writing about taking these traumas in the text seriously, says,

The consequence of taking trauma seriously in the theological context... is an impact that reaches far beyond the personal. Such theologies call for radical changes in the way we listen to those who are traumatized, particularly women, but also other vulnerable and marginalized people groups. Such theologies call for a radical overthrow of the status quo and a rejection of toxic cultures that do not care for all people, but rather privilege and testimony of only those in and with power.<sup>721</sup>

The sin of Gibeah, then, is ultimately the sin of Othering. Wherever the action of Othering goes, dehumanizing violence always follows. Ironically placed within the context of hospitality in Judges 19, and prophetic calls to change in Hosea, are ultimately, a call-in that invites the Israelites to obey the law in receiving the "other." The idol here is the patriarchal context in which the stories were set, and those

---

<sup>719</sup> Monica Jones, "Re-Identifying the Sexual Violence of the Bible: A Critical Reading of Past Commentary and its Support of Rape Myth within Christian Teaching," in *The Bible on Violence: A Thick Description*, edited by Helen Paynter and Michael Spalione (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020), 271; Ryan Kuja, "Remembering the Body: Misogyny through the Lens of Judges 19," *Feminist Theology* 25 (2016), 89-95.

<sup>720</sup> The main argument for this comes from Gale Yee in her *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*: "It seems, however, preferable to view 9:9 and 10:9 with several commentators as a reference to the events recounted in Judges 19-21, viz. the rape and death of the Levite's concubine in Gibeah which led to the near extermination of the tribe of Benjamin. Indeed, these Gibeah accounts seemed to have figured prominently during the exilic period, the period of our final redactor, since this was the time when the exilic Deuteronomist appended Judges 19-21 to the Book of Judges. For R2, the 'days of Gibeah,' which according to Judges 19:30 were unparalleled since Israel came up out of the land of Egypt, becomes a fourfold type for the present sinful condition of the people. First, R2 states in 10:9 that from the days of Gibeah, they have sinned. *There they have remained*. In other words, their behavior has remained unchanged since the crime committed then. Second, the original crime resulted in a war against the guilty parties in Gibeah (*milhama*). Likewise, R2 remarks that war (*milhama*) will indeed overtake the people in Gibeah. Third, the mention of the wicked ones in 10:9 is an escalation in the typological comparison. At the earlier time, it would have referred to the inhabitants of Gibeah. Now, R2 applies it to all of Israel. We point out, moreover, the R2 wordplay between *alwa*, "wicked," with the preceding '*al*. Fourth and finally, there is an escalation in the agents of retribution. According to Judges 20:11, the tribes are gathered against the offenders. According to Hosea 10:10, the peoples will be gathered against Israel," 208-209. The other complex argument lies within text reception and interpretation. James M. Bos argues for a Persian-period Hosea as well, bringing up data on the DtR references within the text. James Trotter argues for a *terminus ad quem* in Persian-period Yehud.

<sup>721</sup> Karen O'Donnell, *Feminist Trauma Theologies*, 14.

contexts were not endorsed by YHWH, but challenged; yet, people held on tight to power and control. These ideologies and the behaviors influenced by them are quickly ripped from their hands, as they blame themselves, victim shaming, survival shaming, for the terror that befalls them. Will these narratives participate in the act of creating healing and even change for their society?

The author used both women's bodies to demonstrate the social body of Israel as a whole which was raped through war and dismembered through exile. The woman's broken body could be a commentary on how treatment of women shows how unhealthy society is as a whole, a tale of the true realities and consequences of being seen as "other". Yet, there remains a caution in romanticizing and "appropriating women's suffering."<sup>722</sup> Gender-based violence continues to this day, and the romanticizing of it in the text merits a posture of resistance. Scholz writes that "the ordeal is a reminder of the pervasive and persisting problem in androcentric societies: misogyny and rape are connected problems within a long tradition that stretches back to the stories in the book of Judges. These stories may help contemporary readers to face the horrors of today's ongoing sexual violations of women, children, and some men during peacetime and war."<sup>723</sup> Oppression is vast, and still continuing and pervasive within the ideology of xenophobia and patriarchy, and due to this, many have seen themselves in this text.

For instance, Yoo has seen the silent, unnamed woman in light of the military-comfort women from Korea to Japanese soldiers.<sup>724</sup> Paynter has seen the gang raped to death Jyoti Singh in Delhi in 2012.<sup>725</sup> Smith reads this story from the lens of those sex-trafficked,<sup>726</sup> and the many women who are simply seen as "unrapeable" among sex-workers, or how women of color are perceived in the gaze of

---

<sup>722</sup> Claassens, *Writing and Reading to Survive*, 143.

<sup>723</sup> Scholz, *Sacred Witness*, 155.

<sup>724</sup> Yani Yoo, "Han-Laden Women: Korean 'Comfort Women' and Women in Judges 19-21," *Semeia* 78 (1997).

<sup>725</sup> Lizzie Dearden, "Delhi Bus Rapist blames dead victim for attack because 'girls are responsible for rape,'" *Independent*, March 2, 2015: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/delhi-bus-rapist-blames-dead-victim-for-attack-because-girls-are-responsible-for-rape-10079894.html>.

<sup>726</sup> Mitzi J. Smith, "Reading the Story of the Levite's Concubine Through the Lens of Modern-Day Sex Trafficking," *Ashland Theological Journal* 41 (2009), 23-24.

“White supremacist heteropatriarchy.”<sup>727</sup> In atoning for history and telling the whole truth, reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 together may challenge contemporary readers in my context to reckon with the United States’ own history of violence and sexual violence against people of color taken as property and slaves, the genocide of Native Americans, and the “Manifest Destiny” that occurs over bodies every day. To remember the secondary wife as she migrated and experienced violence, today tells the story of Elena, a migrant from El Salvador, living without a nose due to military personnel seeing her as a threat, and still she fights for rights to asylum.<sup>728</sup> It tells the story of Lupe, a migrant from Honduras, looking to save her family, sexually exploited along her journey by the *coyota* she trusted, and still deported back despite her 3 000 mile journey.<sup>729</sup> It tells the story of the many undocumented and unknown that cross the border, only to be forced back by the “remain in Mexico” policy, where they wait for anyone to process their claims in a place where women are crying out due to rampant femicide.<sup>730</sup> As Carolyn Nordstrom writes in her chapter on “Girls and War Zones” in *Engendering Forced Migrations*, “as girls often represent the most vulnerable and innocent members of society, their abuse renders the most terror: society is most undermined by the violation of those considered most ‘inviolable.’”<sup>731</sup> Her body still speaks.

This chapter looked at both texts of Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 through the lens of migratory trauma narrative. In doing so, the chapter also offered a concise addition as to how the bodies of the Concubine and Gomer in the respective texts are used as sites for trauma to be worked upon for their communities, for better or for worse. Uriah Kim’s poignant remark that offers some direction at what the sin of Gibeah entails, says it well: “Unless we see ourselves in the Other and see the Other in ourselves,

---

<sup>727</sup> Walker-Barnes, *I Bring the Voices of My People*, 109.

<sup>728</sup> Daisy L. Muchado, “The Unnamed Woman: Justice, Feminists, and the Undocumented Woman,” in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 168.

<sup>729</sup> Gena Thomas, *Separated by the Border: A Birth Mother, a Foster Mother, and a Migrant Child’s 3,000 Mile Journey*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2019).

<sup>730</sup> Jorge Ramos, “In Mexico, Women Break the Silence about Femicide, *NY Times*, March 6, 2020: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/06/opinion/international-world/mexico-femicides-amlo.html>.

<sup>731</sup> Carolyn Nordstrom, “Girls and War Zones: Troubling Questions,” in *Engendering Forced Migration*, edited by Doreen Indra (New York: Berghan Books, 1999), 73.

we are in danger of repeating the habit of making enemies of our neighbors, representing the Other negatively in order to sanction our use of violence against them.”<sup>732</sup>

In the concluding chapter of this study, the ongoing significance of using the lens of migratory trauma narratives to interpret the sin of Gibeah as found in Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 will be considered: the disaster that comes with the action of Othering. In the context of the contemporary trauma of migration, this creative, subversive story born out of disaster must be heard still today.

---

<sup>732</sup> Kim, “Ideological Criticism,” in *Judges & Method*, 180.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: COMMUNION

*There are many stories of war to tell. You will hear them all. But remember among those who were lost, some made it through. Among the dragons there will always be heroes. Even there. Even then. And of those tales ending in defeat, tales of death and orphans wandering among the ruined, some ended the other way too. (Wayétu Moore)<sup>733</sup>*

*We are responsible to areas beyond the bounds of place not because of what we have done, but because of what we are. (Doreen Massey)<sup>734</sup>*

*We can surely agree that there is no justification for studying and attempting to understand, the causes of human suffering if the purpose of one's study is not, ultimately, to find ways of relieving and preventing that suffering. This clearly applies to the study of human displacement, given the scale of the phenomenon and the level of suffering that must be observed, documented and analysed by anyone wishing to carry out empirical research on it. (David Turton)<sup>735</sup>*

### 1. RESISTING NECROPOLITICS

To understand the sin of Gibeah as Othering has far-reaching implications that continue till this day in intersecting oppressive ideologies. The creation of borders is often part of what it means to Other another, and a way to scapegoat around the real issue behind it. As it pertains to the United States, although Harsha Walia's research also includes Australia, Canada, the EU, Israel, Japan, and New Zealand in her research on nationalistic borders, there is a blatant connection between borders and "the violences of dispossession, accumulation, exploitation, and their imbrications with race, caste, gender, sexuality, and ability."<sup>736</sup> A politic of exclusion needs hierarchy; the powerful get to decide who belongs. These are not only "social relations from which we emancipate ourselves" in modern contexts, but also seems to be an explicit call to do so through the interconnected stories that featured in this study as the heinous episode of Judges 19 is fully condemned in Hosea 9-10.

---

<sup>733</sup> Wayétu Moore, *The Dragons The Giant The Women*, 248.

<sup>734</sup> Doreen Massey, *Geographies of Responsibility* 86, 5-18.

<sup>735</sup> David Turton, "Who is a Forced Migrant?" in *Development Induced Displacement*, edited by De Wet, 32.

<sup>736</sup> Harsha Walia, *Border & Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), 213.

Thus far, the study has demonstrated what it may look like to begin reading biblical texts through the lens of migration. Chapter Two of this study offered an analysis of the process of migration as it pertains to the receiving country, the United States in particular, addressing issues involving the politicized language in what is mainly a humanitarian issue. A central aspect of using migration as a lens is the role of interpreting the migration experience through stories, not only by those who migrated, but for generations thereafter. These patterns of producing and re-producing in contemporary narratives of migration became a model by which to understand biblical texts such as featured in this study. With reference to the historical awareness of what could have occurred to the peoples of ancient Israel in their exile at the hands of both Assyria and Babylon, the chapter made a case for reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 as migratory narratives.

A central aspect of this study concerned also the effect of migration not only on location, but also on both individual and collective consciousness. Chapter Three of this study argued for a holistic interpretation of migration in ensuring that trauma is understood as a large part of the process and experience. The notion of trauma, however, is not easily pinned down or even understood, as those who experience it themselves also find it difficult to give meaning or words to it. This chapter outlined the many different aspects of trauma, as well as how these manifestations of trauma may find expression in story and literature. As trauma hermeneutics is a growing field of research, this chapter provided ways in which to understand these texts of migration as migratory trauma narratives that offered the hermeneutical framework for this study.

Chapter Four of this study then presented the rationale for characterizing Judges 19 as a migratory trauma narrative. In terms of a historical analysis, this chapter placed Judges 19 in the context of the post-exilic time period, which exhibits close correspondence to Deuteronomistic History. With reference to genre, this chapter showed through the lens of migration and trauma how the narrative transcends previously maintained boundaries, blending folklore, horror, and the anti-hero story into historiography. It was furthermore shown how Judges 19 creatively wields characters to make a potentially subversive point, a point which necessitates a feminist critique as well. In the dismembered body of the *pilegesh*, the study began to imply Othering as violent and the iniquity of Gibeah itself.

Chapter Five of this study made a case for Hosea 9-10 as a migratory trauma narrative. Starting with a historical analysis, the study drew on the current debate in scholarship with many scholars viewing Hosea as a text with much earlier foundations, and others making a case for the text being composed in a post-exilic context. A further important aspect of this chapter pertains to the references to Sukkoth and a number of place names, allowing for readers and hearers of the text to associate those spaces and places with memories. These memories transformed into metaphor, as evident in Gomer, a character from Hosea 1-2, whose abusive marriage serves as a paradigm that extends throughout the whole of the book. In terms of literary criticism, the potential of this violent rhetoric was discussed, as well as the ethics that introduce the importance of feminist biblical interpretation.

Chapter Six of this study continued to develop the intertextual relationship between Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10. These migratory trauma narratives were fleshed out in terms of a polyvalency of options for interpretation. The intertextual references between these two passages also shed light on the female characters in both texts: the *pilegish* and Gomer, whose similarities lend themselves to be the very place in which trauma is mediated for their people. This chapter makes a case that the narrative representation of these characters be done in a way that implicates not themselves but shows the horror and abuse of war and migration in terms of symbolism. In doing so, this chapter made a case that the sin of Gibeah could be understood as the sin of Othering.

The concluding chapter of this study will now continue to consider ways in which the sin of Gibeah has been interpreted to mean Othering in different communities, albeit, by another name. Thus, even though we do not specifically invoke the sin of Gibeah, the biblical trauma narratives that portray the sin of Gibeah in terms of Othering draw our attention to what is currently happening in the United States in terms of the trauma caused by migration. With special reference to some contemporary narratives of migration that portray the trauma experienced by immigrant communities in the United States, the study will show how similarities between biblical and contemporary migratory narratives span across borders and boundaries. Furthermore, the reading of this text through the lens of migratory trauma narratives also invites further opportunities for researching other passages and troubling texts found in Scripture. Naming these two specific sections still calls for further ethical considerations, not only in calling Othering a sin, but also, in employing trauma narratives in research and as a viable lens

for study. In recognizing the Concubine's dismembered body, the study finishes in dangerous remembrance.

## 2. RECEIVING MIGRATORY TRAUMA NARRATIVES IN POLYVALENCY

The whole of the study would not be possible without the use of the migratory trauma narrative as key to understanding certain portions of Scripture. While the combination of trauma narrative with the specificity of what the migratory trauma entails has been alluded to in other scholarship, this study makes it a necessity to see the two as intertwined and, on another level, multiplicative in nature. While different cultures certainly have different words and language for trauma and migration, translating them both literally and figuratively into a text that is re-making, and allowing them to be reshaped by those who hold the stories dearly and as truth, is formative and part of a semblance of recovery. Mullen writes on this interplay from the perspective of those attempting to make sense of these narratives, stating that,

All 'life texts,' canonized or not, are continually in an interpretive flux, for each new experience or event or epoch forces the reinterpretation and reintegration of the past if it is to remain meaningful. The result of this is that the form and content, at least at the interpretive level, are continually changing. The task of the critic is to attempt to reconstruct, as fully and substantively as possible, those cultural contexts in which a text might be located and to address the functions of the text for that situation as a type of 'frozen frame picture' that might be relevant in reconstructing and understanding the history of the interpretations of the past by certain religious and cultural groups.<sup>737</sup>

These canonized texts of Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10, which in this study were read through the lens of the trauma associated with migration, can also mean something entirely different dependent on timing and context. The polyvalency of these texts is important to note, to hold in tension with other interpretations, especially in modern contexts as they are received and taught in their own biased ways. For this reason, understanding the sin of Gibeah through the lens of trauma and migration as the sin of Othering, may help us to consider the ways one may act in the world for the better. While in the context of the Jewish liturgy of Lamentations, Jennifer Koosed's research on trauma transforming through time and in different contexts is helpful:

As the trauma of exile rolls through the centuries, with each new generation taking it up and transforming it, the liturgy evolves. Anxiety is present, but always anxiety embedded in other affects. Jewish liturgy and ritual stitches together multiple

---

<sup>737</sup> Mullen, *Narrative History*, 42.



historical and geographical contexts, along with their multiple emotions and affective responses, like a mosaic or a crazy quilt. By doing so, not just the pain of trauma is present, but also the creative impulse to gather up that which has been broken, recover that which has been turned into trash, and reassemble it into a kaleidoscope of ever-changing meaning.<sup>738</sup>

Understanding and wrestling with texts affected by trauma means to hold multiple emotions in tension at all times, and to look away from resolving those emotions. Graybill challenges readers to literally read texts of terror in a way that pushes through the un-comfortability of what she deems is “fuzzy, messy, and icky.” In her own work on Judges 19 in the book, she asks readers to simply “hold space for unhappiness, including unhappy readings,” offering us an “essential alternative to readings of sad stories that either fetishize trauma or privilege catharsis over holding space for complexity and unhappiness, including the complexity and unhappiness of both sexual violence and narrative.”<sup>739</sup> Allowing the unhappiness of the text to fester, and be memorialized in Scripture, and seeing the text gain a new life in different communities as it speaks to them is a paradoxical terrible gift. Reading Judges 19 as a text of trauma, specifically one impacted by and through migration and exile, allows this “after” to occur without demanding a certain outcome. However, in partially disagreeing with Graybill, the after does create effects in the reader and hearer of these texts, and on purpose. While the Concubine’s body cannot be brought back together, and interpreters should resist “saving” the “other,” there is a space in which the text, and even her own body parts, causes self-reflection and responsibility: Musa Dube writes that “one of my major assumptions of reading the text is that it is about reading the world, not only to understand it, but also to change it.”<sup>740</sup>

Stef Craps brings a challenge to those who read trauma narratives and allow them to simply be explained away by oppressive situations. If one of the goals in research with trauma is to not only bear

---

<sup>738</sup> Jennifer L. Koosed, “Echoes of How: Archiving Trauma in Jewish Liturgy,” in *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible*, edited by Fiona Black and Jennifer Koosed (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 50-51.

<sup>739</sup> Graybill, *Texts After Terror*, 170.

<sup>740</sup> Musa Dube, “Talitha Cum! Calling the Girl-Child and Women to Life in the HIV/AIDS & Globalization Era,” as presented to the Women’s Commission Meeting of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), Johannesburg, February 12-13, 2002, 23: <http://koed.hu/talitha/musa.pdf>.

witness, but also, become more holistic in the approach to study, it is necessary to take Craps' words to heart:

The ultimate goal is to disarticulate the past from the present: the traumatized person must come to understand that the event is over and need not go on causing harm in the present. Thus, immaterial recovery—psychological healing—is privileged over material recovery—reparation or restitution and, more broadly, the transformation of a wounding political, social, and economic system. Insofar as it negates the need for taking collective action towards systemic change, the current trauma discourse can be seen to serve as a political palliative for the downtrodden.<sup>741</sup>

Crapps reminds us that we cannot ignore the material needs of those who have suffered trauma. This implies the awareness that trauma does not merely affect one mentally, but also materially. We must address both. Trauma itself is not individual or communal alone but holds political implications.<sup>742</sup> This is why it is absolutely necessary to heed Graybill's warning of colonization. Introspection and action are needed, especially in light of the research provided in the study of United States white evangelicals—we need to consider if the sin of Gibeah is one that is currently being committed. There has been no learning from the past, no recompense for the sin, as in fact, like the Levite, we have taken her body parts and made it *our* victimization story instead. This is injustice. The double edge of the narrative's use to describe his people's own trauma through war and exile as well as the imagery of gender-based violence towards migrants, still speaks today and begs us to wit(h)ness, implying a range of meaning that moves from a legal bearing witness to being with, being beside the victim/survivor in a "gesture that is much more than mere ethical solidarity."<sup>743</sup> The study will look at this opportunity in a relearning of this sin in public spaces, as well as what the lens of migratory trauma narratives can do for future research.

---

<sup>741</sup> Stef Craps, "Wor(l)ds of Grief: Traumatic Memory and Literary Witnessing in Cross-Cultural Perspective," *Textual Practice* 24/1 (2010), 55-6.

<sup>742</sup> For more on this point, see researcher David Treleaven: "Trauma is not just an individual tragedy—it is rooted in larger social systems that shape our lives. When we peel back the layers of a traumatic experience, we find that they're bound up within a larger social context," in "Trauma is Always Political: Social Context in Trauma Informed Practice," *Omega Institute*, June 1, 2018: <https://www.eomega.org/article/trauma-is-always-political>.

<sup>743</sup> Griselda Pollock, "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma," *EurAmerica* 40/4 (2010), 829-886.

### 3. FROM BIBLICAL STORIES OF MIGRATION TO MODERN MIGRATORY NARRATIVES

A good example of the enduring importance of stories that narrate the trauma of migration is a number of modern migratory narratives that one could say share what has been described as the sin of Gibeah in the biblical stories featuring in this study. The modern-day tale of Wayétu Moore's migration performs a similar function to the biblical stories of migration, in telling her family's story of migration, as well as writing a subversive narrative concerning what happened in Liberia. In using distance, she creates a story of sorts to use coded messages to explain these occurrences, and while not naming people, she uses the anonymity and ambiguity to her advantage: dragons and princes are coded, even though they reside on both sides of the civil war that waged, in order to depict that greed and imperialism always wins, but every human being loses. She writes, "death is not the end," as power evolves and shape-shifts over time in order to garner control.<sup>744</sup> As she is relocated to the United States for refuge, and makes her home, she encounters extreme racism. As she still tries to make sense of what happened in her childhood, she returns to Liberia in an attempt to re-connect with who she is herself. She re-claims, re-makes, her story.

Castillo's book, *Children of the Land*, is more of an explicit account of being Othered in the United States. While enduring temporary blindness due to the very stress of migration, he watches as his father is deported by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and later, his mother temporarily detained in a modern-day concentration camp. At the very end of his story, he takes the dozens of copies of his documents and turns them into pulp. "I wanted it to become something more than the sum of its parts—a rearrangement of the details of my life into a better outcome. Everything that went into the bucket was still there, nothing had gone away... the pulp would never return to what it was before. It was irreversible."<sup>745</sup> Castillo calls this his baptism, taking the pulp and creating anything he wanted to out of it. He made a series of four-legged creatures, "a record of myself that held my secrets... the images and numbers were erased, but nonetheless they were there, coded."<sup>746</sup> The entire book is a replaying of his trauma both through migration and under the constant threat of deportation as he lived undocumented. It ends with him moving towards a new something, a re-making. And yet, he adds that "I believe most in

---

<sup>744</sup> Moore, *The Dragons*, 31.

<sup>745</sup> Castillo, *Children*, 352.

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid*, 353.

my body in the precise moment of pain, not in the reflection afterward. Memories lie to me, and this is why my body can never be a map.”<sup>747</sup>

Similar to the migratory trauma narrative of Hosea, poetic form that recalls past ancestors’ memories intertwined with cultural memory and current happenings, Joukhadar’s *The Map of Salt and Stars* weaves poetic form into the dual story of metaphorical narrative and memoir in order to add weight to the witnessing, and in so doing, add meaning. While the two different sets of characters encounter great strife on their long journeys away from what was home, one group without the proper papers to travel, the other group facing a metaphorical desert, a poem interrupts, called “Jordan/Egypt:”

Beloved, I  
 am blind. See,  
 here, my hands  
 before my face—my crooked hands, the ones I used  
 to hold you with. We used to feel joy. Now I am blind, and there is  
 sand in my eyes, beloved. I cannot see your face. I feel nothing but  
 bone. My body is blind and my heart has gone numb. I decay  
 like the cut end of a palm branch. Lips basalt black, the  
 dry wadi of my spine, skin torn like cloth. I have  
 wandered too long under the coin of the sun. I am a  
 single ache. I fall down. I long for water, for the  
 cool ribbon of your hair, but the dunes slice on  
 before me. I go willingly to my banishment. How often  
 I think of you and wonder where you are, but you have  
 turned your face. My mother and my sister cloak  
 themselves in ashes. Do I mourn your absence, O beloved,  
 or is it you who mourn mine? I turn my face from that womb  
 of cypress in the valley and descend. The heavens lie heavy on  
 my back. My skin burns, dry parchment, stolen voice. Beloved,  
 you bury me. I will sing for you until the day we walk again in  
 the gardens, until I plunge my face into the green depths and swim up  
 to where you are. Wait there for me under the navel of the night,  
 your face pressed like a mirror to the moon.<sup>748</sup>

---

<sup>747</sup> Castillo, *Children*, 355.

<sup>748</sup> Joukhadar, *The Map of Salt and Stars*, 113.

The poem stands alone as a work of art, as informative of this experience, and yet leaves something to the imagination. One needs to understand the additional stories in order to make sense of the poem itself, in that the child lost her father in the main story and looks for him in everything, even as she is far from where he was. But in another breath, it could also be the other way around, the father who is dead, speaking to those he loves. There is enough ambiguity for polyvalency and a multitude of differing options, depending on the place from which one reads. Yet, the frame is in fact trauma, more specifically, a migratory trauma narrative.

One does not want to sanitize the texts of the trauma, of the rending of individual and communal bodies through heinous acts, by then politicizing what occurs, but it bears repeating that the personal is political. Reiterating Fiorenza's history *for* helps to recollect that from a modern-day text reception lens, understanding the book of Hosea as a migratory trauma narrative does have implications for what is happening now. First, migration itself is one of the most normal, and yet, one of the most politicized actions, hampered by rules and regulations as to the "right kind" of person that can migrate, which all center around white supremacy. Because of this, in the case of forced migrations due to war, the narrative is often flipped into one that we read of Gomer: we blame the victim. Smith-Christopher, reminding readers that "exile is the reality, whether chosen or forced, for an unprecedented percentage of the world's people in movement in the twentieth century, and this reality demands our attention,"<sup>749</sup> reads exilic biblical texts from the side of the victims. Liisa H. Mallki, writing about national identity among refugees, writes about how much of even scholarship on those who migrate, tend to blame them, saying, "it is striking how often the abundant literature claiming refugees as its object of study locates 'the problem' not in the political conditions or processes that produce massive territorial displacements of people but within the bodies and minds (and even souls) of people categorized as refugees."<sup>750</sup> We cannot "presume a tame, even if not entirely comfortable, existence in light of an analysis informed by the experience of exiles throughout history and the evidence of trauma in the Hebrew literature after the experience."<sup>751</sup> What is written is a history *of*, but these are real bodies, human beings, faced with

---

<sup>749</sup> Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 28.

<sup>750</sup> Liisa H. Mallki, "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorializing of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," in *Culture, Power, and Place: Explorations in Cultural Anthropology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 63.

<sup>751</sup> Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 66.

absolute trauma that, regardless of what self-blame rhetoric may be used as coping mechanism, is not chosen.

The implications, then, beyond part of the puzzle for a better understanding of what could be the sin of Gibeah, which will be addressed in the following section as an explicit answer to history *for*, are ones that call out the false binaries given in current contexts, as well as a move away from a victim-blaming mentality. For the many times migrant mothers are scolded because they brought their children away from trauma, to then experience further trauma on the journey and potentially more trauma due to the politics at hand in the United States, is to victim-blame. In the words of poet Nayyirah Waheed, “you broke the ocean in half to be here. Only to meet nothing that wants you.” In recognizing the personal becoming political, is to not only recognize how these issues are not simply within one’s personal morality, but within the very ideologies and structures that have placed forced migrants at the bottom of the unrighteous hierarchy.

Each of the stories of Joukhadar, Moore, and Castillo can either draw us to shock and horror that engages reflection on our own life and choices, and the very ideologies that perpetuate them, or they can simply reaffirm xenophobia and Othering. In each of these stories, there is a choice to make in interpretation. Those who migrate are telling their stories, they are not voiceless or without agency. Even if their message may be coded, or saying something that does not fit a pattern of universal liberalism, with “hidden transcripts” lying underneath the surface, it is an ethical opportunity to listen, and change. As the section has shown ways in which a migratory trauma narrative lens can be applied to the text of Judges 19, how then, does it connect to Hosea 9-10, in defining the sin of Gibeah? Will modern-day text receptors listen responsibly, or continue to perpetuate status quo in their own interpretations?

#### **4. THE SIN OF GIBEAH AND ANTI-IMMIGRATION RHETORIC**

While the Sin of Gibeah has not been defined as Othering in scholarship until now, many scholars have recognized some symbolism in what it means to dis-member someone, or rather, what the function of dismemberment does in society. Mitzi Smith continues in her reading on Judges 19 that, “To dis-member someone is to systemically deny them social equality and to confine them to unprotected and abusive spaces and relationships; it is to remove them from participation in social relationships that they

would otherwise enjoy if they were free and respected as human beings.”<sup>752</sup> On a similar note, Julie Faith Parker remarks in her article on this context that “dismemberment quells disruptive threats to society... functioning to strengthen androcentric hegemony.”<sup>753</sup> The act of dismemberment itself is permeated with the violence of Othering, and in the same way the effect readers typically feel after Judges 19, or many portions of Hosea including chapters 1-3 and 9-10, tends to conjure up disgust and even disillusionment. Yet, both texts are those of trauma, describing the body of a people marked by exile and migrations effects. In speaking of the sin of Gibeah, of the woman’s dismembered body in all of its unhappiness, there is a call to be bold about what trauma really entails, and for that trauma to be heard.<sup>754</sup>

In 2019, in the heat of the anti-immigration rhetoric and politics in the United States under the Trump Administration, Pope Francis was called to comment on migration. While flying to Rome, he commented directly to reporters, “those who build walls will become prisoners of the walls they put up. This is history.”<sup>755</sup> The prophet Hosea would agree with this statement, asking the Israelites to consider their own history, their participation in Othering as they begin to experience what it means to be “other” in war and exile. Remembering the woman’s body takes not only the actual speech act of Judges 19:30 seriously but takes trauma seriously. Unfortunately, it seems that the United States culture at large does not take this trauma seriously at all. Walia demands a move away from governing through exclusion, which has been a large part of the history of the country in general.<sup>756</sup> Telling the truth about the nation’s history, an unpopular activity, does produce consequences. Karen O’Donnell remarks on these consequences in relation to theology, yet still with application in the immediate study, stating,

The consequence of taking trauma seriously in the theological context, not least feminist accounts of trauma, is an impact that reaches far beyond the personal. Such

---

<sup>752</sup> Smith, *African American Interpretations*, 103.

<sup>753</sup> Julie Faith Parker, “Re-membering the Dismembered: Piecing Together Meaning from Stories of Women and Body Parts in Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” *Biblical Interpretation* (March 2015): [https://brill.com/view/journals/bi/23/2/article-p174\\_2.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/bi/23/2/article-p174_2.xml).

<sup>754</sup> Kelle, *The Bible and Moral Injury*, 167.

<sup>755</sup> Eli Watkins, “Pope Francis: ‘Those Who Build Walls Will Become Prisoners of the Walls they Put Up,’” *CNN*, April 1, 2019: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/01/politics/pope-francis-wall/index.html>.

<sup>756</sup> Walia, *Border & Rule*, 79-80.

theologies call for radical changes in the way we listen to those who are traumatized, particularly women, but also other vulnerable and marginalized people groups. Such theologies call for a radical overthrow of the status quo and a rejection of toxic cultures that do not care for all people, but rather privilege and testimony of only those in and with power.<sup>757</sup>

It is ironic that power can create trauma, or rather, the wielding of power in abusive ways, which is one of the many faces that Othering masks itself with.<sup>758</sup> The cost for those in power, white people in particular, is radical; yet it involves new spaces for that large-group canvas to be repaired, and to participate in offering reparations to the ones they have destroyed. This is the opposite of what white supremacy is invested in, and so the echo of the sin of Gibeah is a divestment of that ideology and ownership of fault.

Churches, too, would need to own their complicity. Involving migration, and the pervasive spread of white Christian nationalism, the most recent studies have shown that this conservative membership “was a significant and consistent predictor of anti-immigrant stereotypes, prejudice, dehumanization, and support for anti-immigrant policies.”<sup>759</sup> Some of this, the authors of the article add, are due to rampant falsehoods and fear-mongering pervasive in right-wing politics. Nicholas Pruitt, researcher of the history of mainline Protestantism and the reception of migrants has noted that xenophobia became part and parcel of the faith as they began to lose cultural power.<sup>760</sup> Once more, where power waxes and wanes, so too do morals. Rather than an attempt to understand what their sacred text might say about these specific issues, their political stances have been shaped around power.

Rather than leave people abandoned, hands on the threshold, dismembered in society both literally and figuratively, Willie James Jennings calls those of Christian faith to the space of communion.

---

<sup>757</sup> O’Donnell, *Feminist Trauma Theologies*, 14.

<sup>758</sup> Erin Runion, “Palpable Traumas, Tactile Texts, and the Powerful Reach of Scripture,” in *Affect Theory*, 182.

<sup>759</sup> Al-Kire, Rosemary L., Michael H. Pasek, Jo-Ann Tsang, Joseph Leman, and Wade C. Rowatt, “Protecting America’s Borders: Christian Nationalism, Threat, and Attitudes toward Immigrants in the United States,” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, (January 2021): <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220978291>.

<sup>760</sup> Nicholas T. Pruitt, *Open Hearts, Closed Doors: Immigration Reform and the Waning of Mainline Protestantism* (New York: NYU Press, 2021).



The space of communion is always ready to appear where the people of God reach down to join the land and reach out to join those around them, their near and distant neighbors. This joining involves first a radical remembering of the place, a discerning of the histories and stories from whom that land was the facilitator of their identity. This must be done to gather the fragments of identity that remain to learn from them (or at least from their memory) who we might become in that place... so that land is never simply released to capitalism and its autonomous, self-perpetuating turnings of space inside commodity form.<sup>761</sup>

The space of communion requires honest reflection on both history and the traumas inflicted throughout history. Even if religion and religious language is removed from discussion on the sin of Gibeah, there seems to be no recognition of the damages being enacted onto people's bodies both individually and communally. The inability to see the "other" in oneself continues to bleed all over the world.

Erika Lee's research on the history of xenophobia in the United States in her book entitled *America for Americans*, spans the recorded instances of not only general disdain for the immigrant, but also the vast popularity of those who take those stances politically, from the very inception of the country itself, making it quite clear that hatred for one's neighbor is simply part of the nation's foundation. Separating children from their parents due to migration is also a central part of our history: 1619 being the beginning of separating families through slavery; 1860 the beginning of ripping Native American children from their families into assimilation camps or boarding schools; 1930 the beginning of the currently ongoing separation of Mexican and Central American parents from children; and about a decade later, separating Japanese family members from one another in internment camps.<sup>762</sup> Lee also makes clear the different epochs in time as laws have shifted and changed depending on the context, for better or for worse. Yet even the reforms have caused a recurring echo, or rather, lament, as a degree less of dehumanization is still just that, dehumanization; there has always been reform without justice. As the chapter has shown, churches across the nation have played the part of xenophobe and have likewise, been silent and complicit, as they forget their own God and their two basic commandments, and in so doing, fail to love God themselves.

---

<sup>761</sup> Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 286-287.

<sup>762</sup> Gena Thomas, "U.S. must amend for a centuries-long history of separating children from parents," *Tennessean*, July 29, 2020: [https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2020/07/29/immigrant-family-separation-homeland-security/5538744002/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2020/07/29/immigrant-family-separation-homeland-security/5538744002/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

If the saying is trustworthy that, “how we read is how we live,” then understanding some of these texts both historically and literarily as migration narratives has great implications for how orthopraxy should follow. Yet, the sorrowful reality is that often, even when stating facts, it does not make a difference when it comes to shifting people’s deeply held narrative: “empirical realities rarely, if ever, govern the logic of those stereotyping.”<sup>763</sup> While this study will discuss more on that notion in the final section, it will continue to propose that one cannot read migration narratives without using a lens of trauma, thus making them migratory trauma narratives.

Research on Othering that includes the impact as well as ways in which to un-learn it, is and has been accessible for quite some time. Yet, rephrasing terms and introducing literature from the perspective of the other could and should also be another first step in this necessary deconstruction, as well as continuing research in biblical studies.

## 5. VALUE OF RESEARCH

In both Judaism and Christianity, Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 are seldom if ever mentioned in lectionaries. The silence of the unnamed woman is still not given voice, nor is even the literal text being obeyed to “consider it, take counsel, and speak (Judges 19:30).” As Mitzi J. Smith writes, “biblical interpretation is political,”<sup>764</sup> the readings and understandings of these texts, or rather, the lack thereof, also having political ramifications. The silence from American evangelicalism on sexual crimes continues,<sup>765</sup> where we see the trending #churchtoo and #silenceisnotspiritual<sup>766</sup> as a necessary

---

<sup>763</sup> Miles, *Constructing the Other*, 31.

<sup>764</sup> Mitzi J. Smith, *Insights from African American Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 1.

<sup>765</sup> Downen, Robert, Lise Olsen, and John Tedesco, “Abuse of Faith: 20 Years, 700 Victims: Southern Baptist Sexual Abuse Spreads as Leaders Resist Reforms,” *Houston Chronicle*, February 10, 2019: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/investigations/article/Southern-Baptist-sexual-abuse-spreads-as-leaders-13588038.php>.

<sup>766</sup> Aaron Earls, “Churchgoers Split on Existence of More Sexual Abuse by Pastors,” *LifeWay Research*, May 21, 2019: <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/05/21/churchgoers-split-on-existence-of-more-sexual-abuse-by-pastors/>. See also: Emily McFarlan Miller, “Female Evangelical Leaders Call on the Church to Speak Out on Violence Against Women,” *Religion News Service*, December 20, 2017: <https://religionnews.com/2017/12/20/female-evangelical-leaders-call-on-church-to-speak-out-on-sex-abuse/>.

movement following the advent of #metoo. Phyllis Tribble says of Judges 19, connecting it to her current context:

We can recognize the contemporaneity of the story. Misogyny belongs to every age, including our own. Violence and vengeance are not just characteristics of a distant, pre-Christian past; they infect the community of the elect to this day. Woman as object is still captured, betrayed, raped, tortured, murdered, dismembered, and scattered. To take to heart this ancient story, then, is to confess its present reality. The story is alive, and all is not well. Beyond confession we must take counsel to say, ‘never again.’ Yet this counsel is itself ineffectual unless we direct our hearts to that most uncompromising of all biblical commands, speaking the word not to others but to ourselves. Repent. Repent.<sup>767</sup>

Moreover, the silence becomes entirely mute given the current lack of support of the North American administration and their treatment of peoples who have migrated to the United States. As mentioned in the section on background and motivation, the church’s support of the policies and ethics of the previous president and party connects the silence regarding issues that affect not only women, but also refugees. The dismembered character in Judges 19 could conceivably represent these issues separately, but also as they intersect specifically with migrant women. This study would hope to show the value of trauma narratives regarding refugees in prophetic terms, offering a reading of these texts that seeks to engage in truth-telling regarding the injustice that has been condoned for so long when it comes to migrants.

These narratives are furthermore helpful as they break both the explicit and implicit silence on the many issues that affect refugees and women; refugees and women need to see their stories represented and talked about. Telling these stories matters. Rumfelt argues that the narrative process offers a healing role, survivors of traumatic experiences who tell their stories are more able to process through loss as they “are no longer frozen in time; rather, they are advocates, ones who tell a story in the present about the past so as to create a better future.”<sup>768</sup> Morrow also highlights the use of storytelling as a coping strategy for victims as a way to protect themselves from a repetition of what they have endured, and also to reconstruct the self, writing that, “[t]he role of storytelling as a means for recovering from

---

<sup>767</sup> Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 83.

<sup>768</sup> Rumfelt, “Reversing Fortune,” 339.

overwhelming experiences of violence is well-known. Narratives provide at least a partial solution to the lack of coherence between the present and the past that is brought about by trauma.”<sup>769</sup> If institutions can begin to speak about the traumatic unspeakable, there might just be new places for healing, shalom, and life to come from what is broken. Much like Julia O’Brien as she critiques the prophetic horrific imagery, perhaps we too “will find God not simply in the words of Scripture but instead in our wrestling with them.”<sup>770</sup>

## 6. POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

First and foremost, while trauma hermeneutics is not new, it is still a recent field of research and the possibilities for new developments are endless. Due to this, something such as a migratory trauma narrative can be something novel, and open to further exploration. Migratory trauma narratives, or at least the combination of understanding migration and trauma together in literature, is something that can challenge previous interpretations in exilic and post-exilic studies. Research from this lens should not stop at a reading of Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10; as has been demonstrated, much more can be and should be understood in Hosea as a whole as it bears the marks of migratory trauma. As research indicates that much of the Hebrew Bible was written post-migration, there is much more to work through in light of new understandings. Exploring this in light of the New Testament, would also be well worthy of inquiry.

It is imperative that we make use of the opportunities to continue to learn from those who are historically excluded, including those who have migrated. Current migratory narratives, of which many are appearing, including books in general about narrating personal trauma, must be guides. Much of scholarship is wary of simply relying on experience, but there is ontological knowledge that we should begin to mine and understand when researching that which is so deeply personal and communal. Holding scholarship open to interpretation here is paramount, allowing for myriads of interpretations to emerge, as trauma does not look one way, nor does it process in a way that is linear. Referring again to Graybill, this aligns with what is “messy,” or simply put, not tidy. Many of us would prefer to clean up

---

<sup>769</sup> Morrow, “Deuteronomy 7,” 282.

<sup>770</sup> O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, 60.

what is messy, trauma being one thing many are eager to clean up, but there is plenty of space in the “after.”

In this after, there is often a tendency to clean up the biblical text itself, explaining away the horror and “icky” that finds itself on most pages, in an attempt to save even God himself. Learning instead to dwell in the after, to stay in the middle, may surprise many who are attuned instead to either a “cop-out hermeneutic,” or a paranoid reading.<sup>771</sup> What research might be done if scholars lingered longer? The binaries can no longer hold.

## 7. OUR “AFTER”

There is no way to put the Concubine’s body back together again, no way to un-do the abuse Hosea inflicts onto Gomer, no way to un-write the words of trauma told in and through the sin of Gibeah. But for readers, their stories do not end on the pages told. Amid the unhappiness that these stories wholly embody, Tribble brings to mind the paradox of what can follow: “If art imitates life, scripture likewise reflects it in both holiness and horror. Reflections themselves neither mandate nor manufacture change; yet by enabling insight, they may inspire repentance. In other words, sad stories may yield new beginnings.”<sup>772</sup> Similar things still happen today in the current context—dismemberment, domestic abuse, acts of gender-based violence, and the shock and horror of war and migration, the literal sin of Gibeah happening in every place. Yet, these stories give double sight from past and present in order to provoke change for the future. To anyone reading the Hebrew Bible, and receiving these stories, there is the choice to allow the Concubine’s body to become *our* dangerous memory.

Rodríguez, who writes about the “femicide machine” in Ciudad Juárez, calls for confronting the issue of the shocking number of murders of women in the area in two specific ways. The first is “a search for justice and truth for these victims of male barbarity that has been normalized by institutions,

---

<sup>771</sup> Susanne Scholz writes on the cop-out hermeneutic as what is called by its users as an apparently neutral space, but definitely accommodating towards currently held power structures. For more, read her chapter “Reading Rape Texts Beyond a Cop-Out Hermeneutics in the Trump Era,” in *Rape Culture and Religious Studies*. A paranoid reading, or a hermeneutic of suspicion, is defined by Graybill and Even Kosofsky Sedgwick as “anticipatory, reflexive and mimetic,” *Texts After Terror*, 22-23.

<sup>772</sup> Tribble, *Texts of Terror*, 2.

and at the same time challenging the official position that denies the facts of these crimes.”<sup>773</sup> The second is where he echoes both Fiorenza’s “dangerous memory,” and the author of Judges 19, asking for “a confrontation between the present and the past: an insistence on memory, in light of official disdain and oblivion.”<sup>774</sup>

Rodríguez’ references in his book an installation of a subversive art piece created by Santiago Sierra entitled “Submission: Word of Fire” (See figure 2 below).

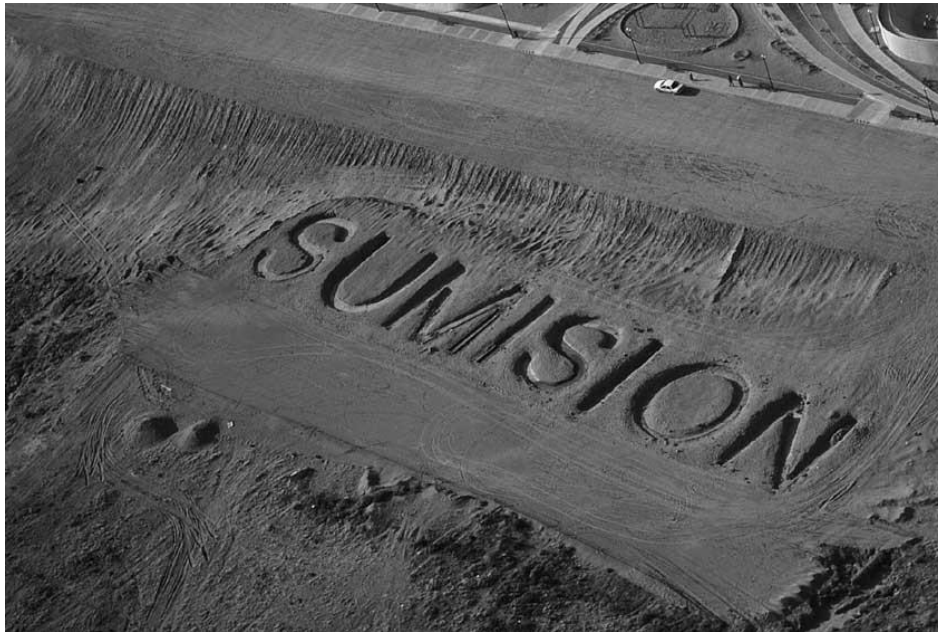


Figure 2.<sup>775</sup>

---

<sup>773</sup> Rodríguez, *The Femicide Machine*, 81.

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>775</sup> Santiago Sierra, *Submission (Word of Fire)*, October 2006, March 2007: [https://www.santiago-sierra.com/200704\\_1024.php](https://www.santiago-sierra.com/200704_1024.php). “In an empty and deserted piece of land in Anapra were excavated each one of the letters that constitute the word SUMISION (submission). Anapra is a zone located in the west side of Ciudad Juarez, a few meters away from the border with USA, it is one of the zones where the US government is planning to build a huge wall, similar to the one built in Berlin during the Cold War. These lands are the meeting point between the states of Chihuahua, New Mexico, and Texas, and are considered among a project for the construction of an international crossroad to New Mexico. At the north of the border are the Texan city of El Paso and the military facilities of Fort Bliss. This zone is also known by the entrance of North American police forces into Mexican territory to apprehend alleged criminals or by the blood poisoning of children caused by the lead produced at the ASARCO foundry, American Smelting and Refining Company. It is located at the margins of the Black Christ Mountain, a place for annual pilgrimage and the site where have been abandoned the corpses of brutally murdered working woman.”

At the very place where intersecting oppressions have met, Sierra used these massively raised letters that would be lit on fire for imperial powers to view from above, namely, the United States. For the United States, it could be seen as a piece that indicates surrender and agreement with what is occurring; but for those on the ground, it is a damning critique that attempts to preserve the historical reality. No matter where and when, the sin of Gibeah must not be forgotten, nor its victims and survivors, as it stains what was and begs to be resolved for the future.

This study, by reading Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 through the lens of migration theory and trauma hermeneutics, sought to offer a new way of viewing these texts. Using these methods as a guide, Hosea 9-10 and Judges 19 were both shown to come from either Israelites amidst exile, or generations later. By means of a historical and literary analysis of these texts, but most importantly, by reading these narratives through the lens of the trauma of migration, the intertextual connections between Judges 19 and Hosea 9-10 were uncovered. This study concluded that by reading these two texts together one could argue that the undefined sin of Gibeah is an ideological critique against the use of Othering, which in both texts is displayed in quite horrific ways. Essentially, this study thus advocated for a “space of communion,” to see the “other” in oneself, as one way in which those committing this sin can begin to change. An honest look at both the United States’ history and the white church’s history, calls for reparation for and repentance of committing this sin.

Poet Lyrae VanClief-Stefanon writes on the two women in Judges 19, using her art form as wit(h)ness. While the Concubine can no longer speak, the poet has words that encapsulate the communion necessary to continue on this dangerous memory of re-membering her. May it be so.

*I am  
not forsaken  
and no  
war  
will silence  
my bones.  
This Earth  
drinks  
my  
blood  
in remembrance  
and no*

*man  
will silence it.  
I have put  
my story  
into  
my sisters'  
mouths  
and we  
will sing  
and we  
will wail  
and we  
will shout.  
Amen.*<sup>776</sup>

---

<sup>776</sup> Van Clief-Stefanon, *Black Swan*, 36.



**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Abadie, Philippe. *Des Héros Peu Ordinaires: Théologie et Histoire dans le Livre des Juges*. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2011.
- Adogame, Afe, Raimundo C. Barreto, and Wanderley Pereira da Rosa, eds. *Migration and Public Discourse in World Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.
- Agger, Inger and Søren Buus Jensen. "Testimony as Ritual and Evidence in Psychotherapy for Political Refugees." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 3 (1990):115-130. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00975139>.
- Ahn, John J. *Exile as Forced Migrations: A Sociological, Literary, and Theological Approach on the Displacement and Resettlement of the Southern Kingdom of Judah*. New York: De Gruyter, 2011.
- Ahn, John J. and Jill Middlemas, eds. *By the Irrigation Canals of Babylon: Approaches to the Study of Exile*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012.
- Albaladejo, Angelika. "Care and the Caravan: The Unmet Needs of Migrants Heading for the US." *BMJ* 363 (December 2018). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k5315/>.
- Albertz, Rainer. *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003.
- Albertz, Rainer, James D. Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle, eds. *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations—Redactional Processes—Historical Insights*. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2012.
- Alexander, Jeffery C. *Trauma: A Social Theory*. New York: Polity Press, 2012.
- Al-Kire, Rosemary L., Michael H. Pasek, Jo-Ann Tsang, Joseph Leman, and Wade C. Rowatt. "Protecting America's Borders: Christian Nationalism, Threat, and Attitudes toward Immigrants in the United States." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* (January 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220978291>.
- Alter, Robert. *The Hebrew Bible: Prophets*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019.
- Amit, Yairah. *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing*. Boston: Brill, 1999.
- Andermahr, Sonya and Silvia Pellicer-Ortín, eds. *Trauma Narratives and Herstory*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013.
- Andersen, Francis I. and David Noel Freedman. *Hosea*. Anchor Bible Commentary. Volume 24. Garden City: Doubleday, 1980.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Fransisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987.

- and Cherríe Moraga. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2015.
- Arnold, Patrick M.S.J. “Hosea and the Sin of Gibeah.” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51(1989): 447-460.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Avioz, Michael. “The Role and Significance of Jebus in Judges 19.” *Biblische Zeitschrift* (January 2007): 84-91.
- Balaev, Michelle. “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory.” *Mosaic* 41/2 (2008).
- . “Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered.” In *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Ballengee, Jennifer and David Kelman eds. *Trauma and Literature in an Age of Globalization*. New York: Routledge, 2021.
- Becker, Eve Marie, Jan Dochhorn, and Else K. Holt, eds. *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimensions: Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond*. Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014.
- Ben-Amos, Dan. “Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres.” In *Folklore Genres*. Dan Ben-Amos, Editor. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976.
- Benoit, William. “Image Repair on the Donald Trump ‘Access Hollywood’ Video: ‘Grab them by the P\*ssy.’” *Communication Studies* 68/3 (June 2017): 243-259.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2017.1331250>
- Benton-Cohen, Katherine. *Inventing the Immigration Problem: The Dillingham Commission and its Legacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018.
- Ben Zvi, Ehud. “*Hosea*.” *The Forms of the Old Testament Literature*. Volume XXIA/1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- and Diana Edelman, eds. *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Bird, Phyllis. *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Black, Fiona and Jennifer Koosed, eds. *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019.

- Boase, Elizabeth and Christopher G. Frechette, eds. *The Bible through the Lens of Trauma*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.
- Boda, Mark J., Frank Ritche Ames, John Ahn, and Mark Leuchter, eds. *The Prophets Speak on Forced Migration*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.
- Boling, Robert G. *Judges*. Anchor Bible Commentary. Garden City: DoubleDay & Company, 1975.
- Bookman, Milica Z. *After Involuntary Migration: The Political Economy of Refugee Encampments*. Lexington: Lexington Books, 2002.
- Bos, James M. *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea: The Case for Persian-Period Yehud*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Brenner, Athalya, ed. *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- , ed. *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Brenner, Athalya and Gale A. Yee, eds. *Joshua and Judges: Texts in/at Contexts*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.
- Brett, Mark G. *Political Trauma and Healing: Biblical Ethics for a Postcolonial World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Butler, Judith. *Prekarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004.
- Candar, Basak. "Framing the World: Texts that Circulate and People who Cannot." In *Trauma and Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Jennifer Ballengee and David Kelman, Editors. New York: Routledge, 2021.
- Cantú, Francisco. *The Line Becomes a River: Dispatches from the Border*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2018.
- Carr, David. *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins*. London: Yale University Press, 2014.
- Caruth, Cathy, ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1995.
- Castillo, Marcelo Hernandez. *Children of the Land: A Memoir*. New York: Harper Collins, 2020.
- Cataldo, Jeremiah. "Trauma of the (un)civilized (wo)man in Hosea." SBL Annual Meeting 2019. San Diego.

- Chen, Michelle. "Bodies Against Borders." In *Not that Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture*. Roxane Gay, editor. New York: Harper Collins, 2018.
- Claassens, L. Juliana. *Writing and Reading to Survive: Biblical and Contemporary Trauma Narratives in Conversation*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020.
- Cobb, Kirsi. "Reading Gomer with Questions: A Trauma-Informed Feminist Study of How the Experience of Intimate Partner Violence and the Presence of Religious Belief Shape the Reading of Hosea 2.2-23." In *Feminist Trauma Theologies: Body, Scripture, and Church in Critical Perspective*. Karen O'Donnell and Katie Cross, editors. London: SCM Press, 2020.
- Cohen, Elizabeth F. *Illegal: How America's Lawless Immigration Regime Threatens Us All*. New York: Basic Books, 2020.
- Craps, Stef. "Wor(l)ds of grief: Traumatic memory and literary witnessing in cross-cultural perspective." *Textual Practice* 24/1 (2010). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502360903219808>.
- . *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989). Accessed June 17, 2020: <https://philpapers.org/archive/CREDTI.pdf>.
- Cruz, Gemma Tulud. *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.
- Cunningham-Parmeter, Keith. "Alien Language: Immigration Metaphors and the Jurisprudence of Otherness." *Fordham Law Review* 79/4 (2011): 1545-1598. <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4733&context=flr>.
- Daneli, Yael. *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. New York: Plenum Press, 2010.
- Day, Peggy, ed. *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.
- Dearman, J. Andrew. *Hosea*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Dharamraj, Havilah. "Judges." In Brian Wintle, ed. *South Asia Bible Commentary*. Rajasthan, India: Open Door Publications, 2015.
- Downen, Robert, Lise Olsen, and John Tedesco. "Abuse of Faith: 20 Years, 700 Victims: Southern Baptist Sexual Abuse Spreads as Leaders Resist Reforms." *Houston Chronicle*, February 10, 2019. <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/investigations/article/Southern-Baptist-sexual-abuse-spreads-as-leaders-13588038.php>.

- Edenburg, Cynthia. *Dismembering the Whole: Composition and Purpose of Judges 19-21*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.
- Edwards, Griffin Sims and Stephen Rushin. "The Effect of President Trump's Election on Hate Crimes." *SSRN*. January 14, 2018. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3102652>.
- Emmerson, Grace I. *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judean Perspective*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984.
- Erikson, Kai. *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994.
- Exum, Cheryl. *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
- Eyerman, Ron. "Social Theory and Trauma." *Acta Sociologica* 56/1 (2013): 41-53.
- Fleming, Daniel E. *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Floyd, Michael H. and Robert D. Haak, eds. *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2006.
- Franke, Chris and Julia M. O'Brien, eds. *Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets*. New York: T&T Clark, 2010.
- Freedman, Jane. "Taking Gender Seriously in Asylum and Refugee Policies." In *Global Migration: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*. Kavita Khory, Editor. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Gafney, Wilda C. "A Pastoral Epistle on Texts of Terror." February 7, 2020. <http://www.wilgafney.com/2020/02/07/a-pastoral-epistle-on-texts-of-terror/>.
- Gay, Roxane. ed. *Not that Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture*. New York: Harper Collins, 2018.
- Glanville, Mark R. *Adopting the Stranger as Kindred in Deuteronomy*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018.
- Glenny, W. Edward. *Hosea: A Commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus*. Septuagint Commentary Series. Boston: Brill, 2013.
- Goudeau, Jessica. *After the Last Border: Two Families and the Story of Refuge in America*. New York: Viking, 2020.
- Granofsky, Ronald. *The Trauma Novel: Contemporary Symbolic Depictions of Collective Disaster*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

- Graybill, Rhiannon. *Texts After Terror: Rape, Sexual Violence & The Hebrew Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- , Meredith Minister, and Beatrice Lawrence. *Rape Culture and Religious Studies: Critical and Pedagogical Engagements*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019.
- Groody, Daniel G. “Jesus and the Undocumented Immigrant: A Spiritual Geography of a Crucified People.” *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 298-316.
- Gruber, Mayer I. *Hosea: A Textual Commentary*. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017.
- Guest, Deryn. *YHWH and Israel in the Book of Judges: An Object-Relations Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Hamley, Isabelle M. *Unspeakable Things Unspoken: An Irigarayan Reading and Victimization in Judges 19-21*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019.
- Herman, Judith, M.D. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- Hernández, César Cuauhtémoc García. *Migrating to Prison: America’s Obsession with Locking Up Immigrants*. New York: New Press, 2019.
- Indra, Doreen, ed. *Engendering Forced Migration*. New York: Berghahn Books, 1999.
- Janzen, David. *The Violent Gift: Trauma’s Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History’s Narrative*. London: T&T Clark, 2013.
- . *Trauma and the Failure of History: Kings, Lamentations, and the Destruction of Jerusalem*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019.
- . *The Necessary King: A Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic Portrait of the Monarchy*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013.
- Jennings, Willie James. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Joukhadar, Zeyn. *The Map of Salt and Stars*. New York: Touchstone, 2018.
- Keefe, Alice A. *A Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Kelemen, Michele. “White House to Cap the Number of Refugees Allowed Into the U.S.” *NPR*, September 18, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2018/09/18/649060370/white-house-to-cap-the-number-of-refugees-allowed-into-the-u-s>.

- Kelle, Brad. *The Bible and Moral Injury: Reading Scripture Alongside War's Unseen Wounds*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020.
- Kelle, Brad E., Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright, eds. *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011.
- Kendi, Ibram X. *How to Be an Antiracist*. New York: One World, 2019.
- Khory, Kavita R, ed. *Global Migration: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Kim, Grace Ji-Sun and Susan M. Shaw. *Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018.
- Kim, Uriah. "Postcolonial Critique: Who is the Other in the Book of Judges?" In *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. Gale A. Yee, editor. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007.
- Klein, Lillian R. "The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges." *JSOT* 68. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2001.
- Landy, Francis. *Hosea*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Lasky, Richard. "Introduction." In *Symbolization and Desymbolization: Essays in Honor of Norbert Freedman*. New York: Other Press, 2002.
- Lee, Erika. *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States*. New York: Basic Books, 2019.
- Lim, Bo H. and Daniel Castelo. *Hosea*. The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.
- Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984.
- Luiselli, Valeria. *Tell Me How it Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2017.
- Kirmayer, Laurence. "Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Narrative, and Dissociation." In Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, eds, *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York: Routledge, 1996. 173–198.
- Machado, Daisy L. "The Unnamed Woman: Justice, Feminists, and the Undocumented Woman." In María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodríguez, eds, *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. 161-173.

- Macintosh, A.A. *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997.
- Macklin, Audrey. "Refugee Women and the Imperative of Categories." *Human Rights Quarterly* 17/2 (May 1995): 213-277.
- Magdalene, Rachel. "Ancient Near Eastern Treaty-Curses and the Ultimate Texts of Terror: A Study of the Language of Divine Sexual Abuse in the Prophetic Corpus." In *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets*. Athalya Brenner, editor. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.
- Manning, Patrick. *Migration in World History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Mays, James Luther. *Hosea*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969.
- McFarlan Miller, Emily. "Female Evangelical Leaders Call on the Church to Speak Out on Violence Against Women." *Religion News Service*, December 20, 2017. <https://religionnews.com/2017/12/20/female-evangelical-leaders-call-on-church-to-speak-out-on-sex-abuse/>.
- McLean-Farrell, Janice A. "When Women Leave: Examining the Intersection of Personal Development in the Lives of Afro-Caribbean Women in New York City." In *Migration and Public Discourse in World Christianity*. Afe Adogame, Raimundo C. Barreto, and Wanderley Pereira da Rosa, Editors. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.
- Menakem, Resmaa. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies*. Las Vegas: Central Recovery Press, 2017.
- Miles, Johnny. *Constructing the Other in Ancient Israel and the USA*. The Bible and Modern World. Volume 32. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.
- Montoya-Galvez, Camilo. "Thousands of Migrant Children were Sexually Abused in U.S. Custody, HHS Docs Say." *CBS News*, February 27, 2019. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/thousands-of-migrant-children-were-sexually-abused-in-u-s-custody-hhs-docs-say/?ftag=CNM-00-10aab7e&linkId=64101296>.
- Moore, Wayétu. *The Dragons The Giant The Women: A Memoir*. Minneapolis: Greywolf Press, 2020.
- Müllner, Ilse. "Lethal Differences: Sexual Violence as Violence Against Others in Judges 19." In Athalya Brenner, ed., *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Na'aman, Nadav. "Jebusites and Jabeshites in the Saul and David Story-Cycles." *Commentarii Periodici Pontificii Instituti Biblici*. 94/4 (2014): 481-497.
- Nam Hoon Tan, Nancy. *Resisting Rape Culture: The Hebrew Bible and Hong Kong Sex Workers*. New York: Routledge, 2021.



- Nayeri, Dina. *The Ungrateful Refugee: What Immigrants Never Tell You*. New York: Catapult, 2019.
- Nelson, Hilda Lindemann. *Damaged Identities, Narrative Repair*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Neusner, Jacob and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds. *“To See Ourselves as Others See Us:” Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity*. Latvia: Scholars Press, 1985.
- Nguyen, Viet Thanh, ed. *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives*. New York: Abrams Press, 2018.
- Niditch, Susan. *Judges: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
- . *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1993.
- . *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- O’Brien, Julia M. *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
- Oded, Bustenay. *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Weisbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1979.
- O’Donnell, Karen and Katie Cross. *Feminist Trauma Theologies: Body, Scripture, and Church in Critical Perspective*. London: SCM Press, 2020.
- Parker, Julie Faith. “Re-Membering the Dismembered: Piecing Together Meaning from Stories of Women and Body Parts in Ancient Near Eastern Literature.” *Biblical Interpretation* (March 2015). [https://brill.com/view/journals/bi/23/2/article-p174\\_2.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/bi/23/2/article-p174_2.xml).
- Park-Hong, Cathy. *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. New York: One World, 2020.
- Paynter, Helen. *Telling Terror in Judges 19: Rape and Reparation for the Levite’s Wife*. London: Routledge, 2020.
- and Michael Spalione, eds. *The Bible on Violence: A Thick Description*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2020.
- Pearce, Hannah. “An Examination of the International Understanding of Political Rape and the Significance of Labeling it Torture.” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 14/4 (2003): 534-560.

- Phan, Peter C., ed. *Christian Theology in the Age of Migration: Implications for World Christianity*. New York: Lexington Books, 2020.
- Pickering, Michael. *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Pierce, Sarah and Jessica Bolter. *Dismantling and Reconstructing the U.S. Immigration System: A Catalog of Changes Under the Trump Presidency*. Migration Policy Institute, July 2020.
- Pierce, Zachary P. "Let Us Not Be Like Sodom: Revisiting the Cultural Critique of Genesis 19:1-11 in the Age of Trump." Institute for Confronting Religious Violence Inaugural Conference: Spring 2017.
- Pollock, Griselda. "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma." *EurAmerica* 40/4 (2010): 829-886.
- "President Trump Issues Executive Orders Suspending Refugee Program and Barring Entry by Individuals from Specified Countries." *American Journal of International Law* 111/3 (2017): 764-76. doi:10.1017/ajil.2017.55.
- Pui-Lan, Kwok. *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- RAIO. "Credible Fear of Persecution and Torture Determinations." *Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate Officer Training*. April 30, 2019.  
<https://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com/gfx/mkt/11/10239/10146/2019%20training%20document%20for%20asylum%20screenings.pdf>
- Rambo, Shelly. *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010.
- Rehn, Elisabeth and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building*, Progress of the World's Women 1. New York: United Nations Development, 2002.
- Rodríguez, Sergio González. *The Femicide Machine*. Los Angeles: Semiotext, 2012.
- Routledge, Robin. *Hosea*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic Press, 2020.
- Ryan, Rogers. *Judges*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007.
- Samers, Michael and Michael Collyer. *Migration*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Schaffner, Brian F. "Follow the Racist? The Consequences of Trump's Expressions of Prejudice for Mass Rhetoric." *Department of Political Science & Tisch College*. September, 2018.  
[http://www.ashford.zone/images/2018/09/followtheracist\\_v2.pdf](http://www.ashford.zone/images/2018/09/followtheracist_v2.pdf)

- Schneider, Tammy J. *Judges*. Berit Olam. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Scholz, Susanne. *Sacred Witness*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.
- Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Scott, James M., ed. *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*. Boston: Brill, 1997.
- Sharp, Carolyn. "Hewn By the Prophet: An Analysis of Violence and Sexual Transgressions in Hosea with Reference to the Homiletical Aesthetic of Jeremiah Wright." In *Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets*. Chris Franke and Julia M. O'Brien, Editors. New York: T&T Clark, 2010.
- . "Character, Conflict, and Covenant in Israel's Origin Traditions." In *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*. Gale A. Yee, Editor. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018.
- Smit, Laura and Stephen Fowl. *Judges & Ruth*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2018.
- Smith, Mitzi J. *Insights from African American Interpretation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017.
- Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. *A Biblical Theology of Exile*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.
- . "Reading Exile Then: Reconsidering the Methodological Debates for Biblical Analysis in Dialogue with Sociological and Literary Analysis." In John J. Ahn and Jill Middlemas, eds., *By the Irrigation Canals of Babylon: Approaches to the Study of Exile*. 2014. 139-157.
- . *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015.
- Snyder, Susanna. "The Art of Wounded Hope: Forced Migration, Prophecy, and Aesth/Ethics." *Political Theology* 19/6 (2018): 497-516.
- Sparks, Kenton L. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005.
- Spronk, Klaas. *Judges*. Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2019.
- Stulman, Louis J. "Reading the Bible as Trauma Literature: The Legacy of the Losers." *Conversations with the Biblical World* 34 (2014): 1-13. <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.eaglelink.cornerstone.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAn3939205&site=ehost-live>.

- and Hyun Chul Paul Kim. *You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010.
- Sweeney, Martin A. *The Twelve Prophets: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry*. Berit Olam. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Tal, Kalí. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Thomas, Gena. *Separated by the Border: A Birth Mother, A Foster Mother, and a Migrant Child's 3,000 Mile Journey*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2019.
- . "U.S. must amend for a centuries-long history of separating children from parents." *Tennessean*. July 29, 2020. [https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2020/07/29/immigrant-family-separation-homeland-security/5538744002/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2020/07/29/immigrant-family-separation-homeland-security/5538744002/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).
- Tisby, Jemar. "The Familial Language of Black Grief." *The Atlantic*. June 10, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/06/familial-language-black-grief/612847/>.
- Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Trotter, James M. *Reading Hosea in Achaemenid Yehud*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- "Trump Administration Ends Participation in Global Compact on Migration, Citing Concerns Regarding U.S. Sovereignty." *American Journal of International Law* 112/2 (2018): 311-313. doi:10.1017/ajil.2018.36.
- UNHCR. "Figures at a Glance." Last modified June 19, 2018. <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.
- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. *Trauma at the Border: The Human Cost of Inhumane Immigration Policies*. Briefing Report, October 2019.
- Van Clief-Stefanon, Lyrae. *Black Swan*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel, M.D. *The Body Keeps the Score*. New York: Penguin House, 2014.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth, eds. *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*. New York: Guilford Press, 1996.
- Vayntrub, Jacqueline. *Beyond Orality: Biblical Poetry on Its Own Terms*. New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Vecchione, Patrice and Alyssa Raymond, eds. *Ink Knows No Borders: Poems of the Immigrant and Refugee Experience*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2019.

- Villavicencio, Karla Cornejo. *The Undocumented Americans*. New York: One World, 2020.
- Visser, Irene. "Trauma in Non-Western Contexts." In *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316817155.010>.
- . "Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects." *Humanities* 4 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.3390/h4020250>.
- Volkan, Vamik D. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. New York: Basic Books, 1998.
- . "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity." *Group Analysis* 34/1 (2001): 79-97.
- Walia, Harsha. *Border & Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021.
- Walker-Barnes, Chanequa. *I Bring the Voices of My People: A Womanist Vision for Racial Reconciliation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019.
- Weaver, Ann M. "The 'Sin of Sargon' and Esarhaddon's Reconceptation of Sennacherib: A Study in Divine Will, Human Politics and Royal Ideology." *Iraq* 66. Nineveh: Papers of the 49<sup>th</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Part One (2004): 61-66.
- Weems, Renita. *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- West, Natalie, ed. *We Too: Essays on Sex Work and Survival*. New York: The Feminist Press, 2021.
- White, Gregory. "The 'Securitization' of Climate-Induced Migration." In *Global Migration: Challenges in the Twenty-First Century*. Kavita Khory, Editor. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Williams, M.T., I.W. Metzger, C. Leins, C, and & D. DeLapp. "Assessing racial trauma within a DSM-5 framework: The UConn Racial/Ethnic Stress & Trauma Survey." *Practice Innovations* 3/4 (2018): 242-260. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pri0000076>.
- Wilson, John P. and Boris Droždek eds. *Broken Spirits: The Treatment of Traumatized Asylum Seekers, Refugees, and War and Torture Victims*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2005.
- Wolf, Alisson B. *Just Immigration in the Americas: A Feminist Account*. Rowman & Littlefield: New York, 2020.
- Wolff, Hans Walter. *Hosea*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1974.
- Yamada, Frank M. *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible: A Literary Analysis of Three Rape Narratives*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008.

Yee, Gale A. *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea: A Redaction Critical Investigation*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 1987.

———, ed. *Judges & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007.

———, ed. *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018.