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Beyond the Equivalence Divide: Developing a Performative Theory of Biblical Translation

A dissertation presented

by

Justine Wilson

to

The Study of Religion Department -

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

New Testament and Early Christian Origins

Harvard University

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Dissertation Advisor: Professor Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza Justine Wilson

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Abstract

This dissertation uses a comparative analysis of Cherokee and Greek scriptures to develop a performative theory of biblical translation that argues that new Christianities are created through processes of translation. This project argues these new Christianities develop by the tracing of alternative lineal memories through collectivized remembrances that trace back to traditional indigenous beliefs and practices rather than to the early Church in first century Palestine. The narrativizing of these collective lineal memories create not only individual and communal identities, but also governing/sovereignty structures as well. This dissertation further argues that collective remembrance also entails collective forgetting. When these collective lineal memories are selectively evoked, they can result in the collective forgetting of inconvenient historical events and subject entire classes of people to abjection when their presence interferes with desired communal identities and sovereignty structures.

This dissertation also includes an examination of oral traditions and hymnody because I argue they are as integral to the field of biblical studies as the study of written scriptures. This project is interdisciplinary and creates conversation partners with scholarship in translation studies, performance studies, memory studies, postcolonial studies, and Native studies. This project argues one cannot understand what is happening in processes of biblical translation outside of these interdisciplinary dialogues. Finally, the dissertation concludes that every biblical

translation project has strong ethical considerations that cannot be fully appreciated outside a performative understanding of biblical translation. This work contends that biblical translation can create new communal identities through the tracing of lineal memories that can function both subversively and regressively based on changing contexts.

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I have long believed that any scholarly work is the product not of any single individual, but of committed persons, communities, and organizations who share in a vision of exploring questions that can reshape previous conceptualizations and ideologies. This dissertation is a living testament to that.

So first I would like to thank my dissertation committee for their graciousness in reading, commenting, critiquing, and challenging my work in hopes of sharpening its insights, and tightening the analysis (all within an acceptable page limit). And I want to especially thank my advisor, Elisabeth, for her unfailing faith that I would eventually finish this project despite all evidence to the contrary. Her persistence over the years enabled me to reach this point, and I can only say with the deepest gratitude, thank you for all your encouragement, and all your advice and support. You've been like a mom to me. For her continual open ear and willingness to help me work out theoretical Gordian knots while processing life's struggles, I want to thank Karen for her professional and personal guidance over the years–it's meant more to me than you could ever know. And for Qwo-Li, you've been an amazing conversation partner whose work I tremendously admire–thank you for helping me through this project.

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frustrations, you've stood by my side, picked me up when I could not, and believed in me when I doubted myself. If I can do a small fraction of what you've accomplished, I will have led a life well-lived. Thank you always–you're the best!

Wado

Chapter One: Introduction

In writing a dissertation, one is invariably asked what inspired you to do this project, and how did you get to this point? The focus of this dissertation is developing a theory of performative biblical translation through a comparative analysis of Cherokee and Greek scriptures in conversation with the historical development of Cherokee Christianity. That rather straightforward topic did not, however, have as straightforward a development. As I reflect on how this project come about, I am reminded of both Jacques Derrida and Homi Bhabha in that much of this dissertation was prefigured in ways which were not immediately clear to me, and in ways which I am still exploring and testing. There is a curious phenomenon at work when doing an academic project in that one's work has long before been heralded in ways which one does not fully comprehend. In writing an introduction, I really write an ending that was prefigured on several levels, but yet only belatedly materialized. As Jacques Derrida so eloquently described in *Dissemination*, every preface is in many ways a conclusion–one that was signaled by events both anterior and exterior:

> Upon reaching the end of the pre- (which presents and precedes, or rather forestalls, the presentative production, and, in order to put before the reader's eyes what is not yet visible, is obliged to speak, predict, and predicate), the route which has been covered must cancel itself out. But this subtraction leaves a mark of erasure, a remainder which is added to the subsequent text and which cannot be completely summed up within it. Such an operation thus appears contradictory, and the same is true of the interest one takes in it. But does a preface exist? On the one hand–this is logic itself–this residue of writing remains anterior and exterior to the development of the content it announces. Preceding what ought to be able

> to present itself on its own, the preface falls like an empty husk, a piece of formal refuse, a moment of dryness or loquacity, sometimes both at once.[1]

In writing this preface, I realize that much of the dissertation that follows is a product of what Homi Bhabha calls belation–that which we act upon and which shapes us comes from a series of anterior projections to which we always arrive after, or belatedly.[2] This belation traces back to two prior exchanges with tribal elders. The first arose when I was discussing tribal politics with one elder, and I asked why she thought people were voting in a particular manner. "People have long memories," was her enigmatic response. Not understanding what this had to do with our discussion on tribal politics, I asked her to clarify. She said that I couldn't understand the way things are today without understanding our history, because much of what people do stem from memories of long-ago events. Over the years I have pondered this insight and have since come to the realization that the use, evocation, and manipulation of memory is one that must be incorporated into any performative analysis, and particularly to the subject matter of this dissertation. Not only does memory shape perceptions and reactions, it is capable of creating material reality. Some of the implications of this performative understanding of memory are apparent in this dissertation, but the broader implications go far beyond the scope of this study, and even biblical studies as a whole.

The second pivotal exchange occurred when, as an undergraduate student, I was deciding on a thesis to research. Working with my advisor, I was encouraged to pursue something with which I had experience so as not to make my project solely an intellectual endeavor. After much

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[1] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (A&C Black, 2004), 9.

[2] Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Men," in *Tensions of Empire*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 93-101.

pondering and consideration, I decided on a topic and rushed to share it with my advisor. “I want to research how Christianity has influenced our Native traditional beliefs and practices.” Pleased with the topic, I waited for my advisor’s feedback and approval. My advisor, who happened to be Choctaw from Oklahoma, consulted with another tribal elder and suggested perhaps I consider ways in which Native traditions have instead influenced Christianity. That intervention began a process of academic and personal reflection that in many ways have come to shape this dissertation. By flipping the direction of my project, I was challenged to see power dynamics in ways which on many levels I intuitively knew, but somehow did not connect with my academic inquiry. I had been a part of Native churches for many years, and that had been an important part of my life. Whenever I moved to a new city, the first order of business was to find a new Native church. And this was true not just for me, but for many in Native communities. The question was why did I and others seek a specifically Native church? And the answer I knew was because Native churches were different–so different that one felt connected to something one did not experience in a non-Native church context.

Every Native church has its unique dynamics and ways in which it negotiates its relationship to traditional Native beliefs and practices, and that process of negotiation is often quite tortured. But when all is said and done, there is a uniqueness to Christianity expressed in Native congregations that is distinct from other Christian churches.

The question of Native traditional beliefs and practices influencing Christianity was in many ways not novel–over the years I have found many Native people intuitively know that on some level. But the fact remains, despite that understanding, my first impulse was to trace the impact of Christianity on traditional practices instead. And I had to ask why. As I looked at the

scholarship in Native studies, it was deeply focused on the (largely negative) impacts Christianity brought to Native communities. And this scholarly discourse affected me such that I had unwittingly framed my perspective within that purview, without exploring whether that framework was at all consonant with what I had experienced, and the experiences with which I was familiar for other Native peoples.

I began to see (and still am in the processing of seeing) how academic discourses provide frameworks and constructs that create alternative discursive realities and impose them onto whole communities–particularly ones that do not always have "voice" in academia. When the subaltern cannot speak (as Gayatri Spivak explored in her seminal essay),[3] others do instead. And that "speaking" can create discursive realities which have little resemblance to actual lived experiences.

I then considered how to bring these experiences into conversation within my dissertation. I did not wish to treat simplistically the category of experience and presume that to be uncomplicated and unproblematic. At the same time, I was not interested in conducting a broad ethnography given the tendency for, as Native scholars have argued, for Native peoples to be subject to "ethnographic entrapment"[4] within the academy. In addition to scholarly sources, I do incorporate the insights of Native peoples I have gained throughout the years as a form of literary anecdote–a type of narrative that in its personalization obstructs and subverts more

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[3] Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 67-111.

[4] Vera Palmer, "The Devil in the Details," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 268.

traditional and accepted narratives.[5] I make no claims to the generalizability of this material but provide them as a supplement to the scholarship presented in this dissertation.

The other thing I learned from my thesis being flipped was to reexamine power dynamics and the direction in which they flow. Initially this resulted in my scholarship taking the opposite position of the binary oppressor-victim construct. Often peoples are depicted as occupying a position of either victim or oppressor, or sometimes switching between the two. And in my early work, I often fell into this construction. But as all ideas are belated, the deeper significance I found was in reexamining power dynamics away from such binary relationships and to try and account for them within a different structure than was typically found in Native studies. For instance, it was problematic to identify Cherokee peoples as solely in the position of the oppressed when many were slaveholders at the same time they were subjected to colonial control. Some of these complexities I did not find so readily addressed in postcolonial or minoritized biblical scholarship which, while certainly helpful for my project, tended to focus on colonized or racialized communities as solely oppressed.[6] As I will discuss later in this dissertation, performance theory provided a foundation to speak to the complexities with which colonized communities engage both the Bible and processes of translation, and the effects of those engagements on larger practices of religiosity and identity formation.

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[5] Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 49-51.

[6] See R.S Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11-43; Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., *Reading from This Place*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 1-34; Vincent Wimbush, ed. *African Americans and the Bible* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 1-48.

Intervention in the Fields of Biblical Translation and Interpretation

One might ask why a study of the Cherokee Bible lies within the field of biblical studies. Traditionally the field of biblical studies has focused on the geographical area of the Levant from the Bronze Age to the first centuries of the common era. But scholars in feminist, postcolonial, and minoritized biblical studies demonstrate the importance of expanding what is perceived to be the scope of biblical studies. As Vincent Wimbush notes, biblical studies have generally been confined to the biblical period in the Near Eastern world, and biblical scholarship has often been centered in Europe. Wimbush asks what would happen if biblical studies were reoriented towards contemporary contexts, particularly those from marginalized communities:

> Among the many assumptions upon which the modern-world practice that is the academic study of the Bible rests: The study of the Bible...is about the past and about difference–the far-distant past that is radically different from the present. The past that is deemed so different from modern is nevertheless held to be to some degree and in qualified ways recoverable, accessible, translatable. But such results are thought to be possible only through certain appropriate and legitimate interpretive methods.[7]

Wimbush argues that this contributes to the Europeanization of the Bible which assumes "something about the present–that the present is pacific and unified, uniform and constant, ascendant and dominant, that it is constituted or determined by a fairly clear and dominant cultural method and hermeneutical spin that needs continuously to be ratified and affirmed by the recourse to the past, to archivalization and memorialization."[8] Wimbush's analysis suggests that the dominant approaches within biblical studies then have the ideological effect of affirming and

[7] Wimbush, 9.

[8] Ibid, 10.

reifying the present-day status quo as the Bible reflects the dominant ideological viewpoint while disavowing this reification under the guise of objectivity. Thus, biblical studies projects that are oriented in contemporary times can provide a helpful corrective.

Tat-siong Benny Liew further argues that biblical studies must be interdisciplinary. "If the field of biblical studies not only institutionalizes and transmits a tradition of interpretive rules and practices but also patrols and guards its boundaries zealously, interdisciplinary readings expose and explode this guild to differences both within and without. With interdisciplinarity, readers of the Bible are no longer confining themselves to sites and practices that have been 'canonized' by the guild."[9]

Feminist scholars have similarly pointed to the importance of expanding the scope of what is perceived to be the field of biblical studies. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues, "critical biblical scholarship is not compelled by merely antiquarian texts. . .it focuses both on the rhetoricality of all scholarly inquiry and on the rhetoricity of texts and the power relations in which they are embedded."[10] Schüssler Fiorenza further states that biblical studies should not just "investigate the literary and historical elements and contexts of a biblical text but also critically reflect on what kind of role the Bible plays today in the social construction of reality."[11] Thus, Schüssler Fiorenza notes, feminist biblical scholarship is not simply about "wo/men" in

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[9] Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Introduction: Reading Ideologies and Ideologies of Reading," in *Reading Ideologies: Essays on the Bible & Interpretation in Honor of Mary Ann Tolbert*, ed. Tat-siong Benny Liew (Londong: Sheffield, 2011), 21-22

[10] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 9.

[11] Ibid, 11.

the Bible, but critically challenges and interrogates biblical studies in general.[12] And of course the intersections of feminist analysis and biblical translation can be seen in the debates around gender-inclusive biblical translations, even among non-feminist biblical scholars.[13]

The insights of Wimbush, Liew, and Schüssler Fiorenza are relevant not only to biblical hermeneutics, but to biblical translation. As I will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, dominant models for biblical translation tend to overlook or ignore the multiplicity of voices and experiences present in the biblical world, and presume a univocal biblical message that can be translated in a manner that affirms certain societal values today. As a result, the multilayers of translations that went into the text to begin with disappear from view. By focusing on Cherokee scriptures as a case study in which the worldview is clearly distinct from dominant society, this project not only troubles the assumptions behind the efficacy of mainstream biblical translation models for Native peoples, but also denaturalizes the biblical text itself. This project thus seeks to build a foundation for future work that can explore the complexities and relationality between indigeneity, culture, memory, and translation in the biblical world as well. Hence, while developing this theory from a Cherokee context, this theory has broad applicability. As Alexander Weheliye notes, racialized communities are often limited to "ethnographic locality" within academia rather than being positioned as sites for the development of theory with broad significance across contexts.[14] In this dissertation, I take up the charge by Wimbush to not

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[12] Ibid, 92.

[13] See for example, Isabelle Rayner, "Inclusive Language Usage in Feminist Bible Translation" (University of Alberta, 2015); D.A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); Mark Strauss, *Distorting Scripture* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998); Luise Von Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the" Era of Feminism"* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997).

[14] Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus* (Durham: NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 6.

simply tell a story about Native peoples through dominant academic models, but to situate Native communities as places by which models of biblical translation in general can be developed.

Many biblical scholars have called for a "decolonization" of biblical interpretation.[15] Such approaches focus both on the Bible as an ideological document as well as the interpreter as ideologically grounded.[16] They also call for a "reading from this place" to demonstrate that biblical interpretation is always socially, politically, and contextually grounded, and that there is no simple access to the past that is not framed by this context.[17] Despite these groundbreaking works, as Musa Dube noted, these analyses have had very little impact in the area of biblical translation.[18] This dissertation seeks to build on this work by not only critiquing the colonial implications of biblical translation, but by articulating a performative theory about biblical translation that takes into account both how indigenous peoples have been impacted by biblical translation and how they have impacted translation. Then, as will be discussed later in Chapter 5, this process has broader implications for the study of biblical translation in general.

Chapter Summary

My dissertation begins by examining the two traditional poles of translation in biblical studies–formal and dynamic equivalence–and shows the theological underpinnings of each and

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[15] Fernando Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000), 182.

[16] Wimbush; Liew; Sugirtharajah; Renita Weems, "Reading Her Way through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible," in *Stony the Road We Trod*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 57-80.

[17] Segovia and Tolbert, 1-34.

[18] Musa W. Dube, "Towards Postcolonial Feminist Translations of the Bible," in *Reading Ideologies: Essays on the Bible & Interpretation in Honor of Mary Ann Tolbert*, ed. Tat-siong Benny Liew (Londong: Sheffield, 2011), 235.

their limitations when dealing with target languages that are linguistically disparate from source languages. I employ a performative biblical translation method to then investigate traditional Cherokee hymns. While hymns may not appear to be under the purview of biblical studies, I argue that sacred texts include both oral and written texts. I then argue for the inclusion of hymnody within the field of biblical studies as a key component where performative biblical translation takes place.

In the last two chapters, I focus on the dynamics of memory and translation. My dissertation develops a theory of biblical translation based on performance theory, and then applies that to show how scriptural translation results in the tracing of indigenous lineal memories, and how those collective memories give rise to new Christianities. But just as collective memories necessarily result from translation of sacred texts, I argue that collective forgetting can also occur, and when done on a sustained and systematic basis, can result in the abjection of entire classes of people. Thus, performative biblical translation can have both subversive and regressive tendencies simultaneously. With regard to scriptural translation, I focus on how lexical and grammatical differences between source and target languages result in translations that trace lineal memories within target language communities. Those lineal memories have wide salience within target language communities, and the salience of those memories results in scriptures tapping into collective senses of identity. Because Cherokee biblical texts and hymns are tracing lineal memories not necessarily connected to the early Christian Church in Palestine but rather to traditional Cherokee beliefs and practices as well as Cherokee tribal history, the emerging Cherokee Christianity has as its core another religio-historical foundation than that of the missionaries. Thus, a new Cherokee Christianity is formed

via performative translation. And because those collective lineal memories gesture to systems of coherence, I argue that a new political/sovereignty structure is formed as well–the modern Cherokee tribal government.

Finally, I examine another implication to the tracing of collective lineal memories in performative biblical translation–acts of collective forgetting. In the context of Cherokee Christianity, I look particularly at the treatment of African slavery and Cherokee Freedmen. I argue that as performative biblical translation resulted in the persistence of indigenous beliefs and practices within the Cherokee Nation, it simultaneously selected out from memory those classes of people that were not convenient to these selective lineal memories. As a result, Cherokee Christianity and the modern Cherokee Nation became defined in part to negative reaction to Cherokee Freedmen. I posit Cherokee Freedmen exist within the postmodern state of abjection where they are continually pushed towards the margins, yet function to define the identity of "the center"–here Cherokee Christianity and the modern Cherokee Nation.

Before I can fully explicate my framework, however, it is important to provide an account of the history of biblical translation among Cherokee peoples to set the context for this project.

History of Christianity in the Cherokee Nation

Much of the scholarship dealing with Cherokee history in Native studies has traditionally employed binary constructions. Cherokees are discussed in terms like "the Christians versus the traditionalists", "the mixed-bloods versus the full-bloods," "the assimilationists versus the conservatives," "the pro-removal versus the anti-removal parties," "the pro-slavery versus the

anti-slavery factions," etc.[19] For example, Devon Mihesuah's analysis of Cherokee women holds that, "Some Indians—especially educated Christianized ones—aspire to be like whites, while at the same time many traditional, dark-skinned women had no desire to fit into white society."[20] Here the linkages are made between "Christian" mixed-bloods and assimilation/acculturation versus "traditional" full-bloods and unassimilated/unacculturated. Paula Gunn Allen's discussion of the Cherokee removal also seems to correlate assimilation with Christianization:

> By the time the Removal Act was under consideration by Congress in the early 1800s, many of these British-educated men and men with little Cherokee blood wielded considerable power over the Nation's policies…The Cherokee were by this time highly stratified, though they had been much less so before this period, and many were Christianized…[T] he women of the leadership class retreated to Bible classes, sewing circles, and petticoats that rivaled those worn by their white sisters.[21]

Perhaps because of this view, there have been concerted efforts by academic researchers to record accounts of traditional Cherokee spiritual beliefs and practices before they disappear forever. In an attempt to distinguish the "authentic" from the "inauthentic," lines of distinction are continually being drawn between "genuine" traditional Cherokee religious practices and those that have been corrupted by the influence of Christianity. Drawing these lines of distinction have resulted in rather sharp, arbitrary divisions between traditional Cherokee spirituality and Christianity. As James Treat notes, "Native Christians have been called heretical, inauthentic, assimilated, and uncommitted; they have long endured intrusive definitions of personal

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[19] Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 159-183; Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop* (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 37; Devon Mihesuah, ed. *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing About American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 43.

[20] Mihesuah, 43.

[21] Allen, 37.

identity."[22] Even when scholars do note the complexities and shortcomings of these labels, there is still a tendency to describe individuals and events in those terms.[23] In other words, someone is either traditional or Christian, and never the twain shall meet.

This binaristic model fails to take into account the complex dynamics between Cherokee traditions and Christianity. For example, as one Cherokee tribal member commented to me:

> Some traditional Cherokee peoples criticize other traditional Cherokee ceremonial grounds as being too Christian even though they had serious Christian affiliations [themselves]. I've been to their homes where they are playing Jerry Falwell, and yet, they express a very negative view about [these other ceremonial grounds].

Whether Cherokee Christians are viewed as more "civilized" by virtue of their Christianization or "sell-outs" to the dominant culture for the same reasons, this model essentializes Cherokee religious identity. It does so by viewing Cherokee religion as incapable of evolving and incorporating into its belief systems external factors while still retaining integrity as an indigenous tradition. Cherokee identity is portrayed as monolithic and static, and Cherokees are seen only as the passive recipients of Christian missionization. Informed by a Foucauldian analysis of constructed selves and communities, sociologist Steven Seidman argues: "Because the self is always interpellated in many discourses and practices, she is said to occupy contradictory psychic and social positions and identities—in principle, making possible opposition to dominant ideologies…the self is assumed to be socially and historically produced and positioned in contradictory ways to structures of domination and hierarchy."[24]

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[22] James Treat, ed. *Native and Christian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

[23] William McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1994), 111; Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 184.

[24] Steven Seidman, *Difference Troubles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 73.

The relationship between Christianity and traditional Cherokee beliefs and practices is complex and not easily given to victim-oppressor paradigms. This complex interaction of competing forces serves to illustrate how, according to Michel Foucault, "Discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it."[25] As Foucault noted, power is never enacted unilaterally. Rather, social participants interact with each other, not just one upon the other, for "where there is power, there is resistance."[26]

Scholarship on missionary activity in the Cherokee nation during the early 1800s often portrays Cherokees as helpless before the massive onslaught of Christian missionaries–the sheep before the slaughter as it were. Some scholars refuse to credit Cherokees with agency despite many acts of resistance, and exercises of sovereignty or self-determination become reinterpreted as mere reaction to missionization. For example, Robert Berkhofer asserts that it was the desire of missionaries to incorporate schools into their missions, and "[A]s the Indians' values changed due to acculturation…the Cherokee chiefs incorporated a provision into their constitution which showed the value transformation…"Schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged in this nation."[27] But Berkhofer fails to mention that the Moravians, who were the first missionaries given permission by the Cherokee council to establish a permanent

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[25] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 101.

[26] Ibid, 95.

[27] Robert Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 22

mission in 1801, were allowed to do so only on the expressed condition that they opened a school to educate Cherokee children. As Henry Thompson Malone notes, "The Cherokees were definitely more interested in the education which churches had to offer[than evangelization]; and this fact was to be a continuing source of disagreement between Indians and missionaries."[28] Marion Starkey went further by saying, "[T]he chiefs had held the Moravians very strictly to this bargain, once threatening to expel them when they procrastinated about setting up the school."[29] When the Cherokee chiefs confronted the missionaries, Moravian scholar Rev. Edmund Schwarze recorded their response as: "[The Moravians] told some of the Chiefs at Vann's that they had not come to teach school but to tell them the Word of God. The Chiefs replied, they had no ears to hear it!"[30] While there had long been interest on the part of churches and missionary societies to evangelize Cherokees, such activity did not commence prior to 1800. Prior to this, the Cherokee Nation had been enveloped in a series of wars. In addition to several skirmishes with other Native nations in the mid-1700s, Cherokees participated in a series of larger wars beginning with the French-Indian War of 1754-1763 where Cherokees fought on the side of the British. Then there was the Revolutionary War where they continued to fight as British allies. Overlapping the Revolutionary War were the Chickamauga Wars from 1776-1795 that ended with the Treaty of Tellico.[31] Only after the Treaty of Tellico in 1798 did missionary activity

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[28] Henry Thompson Malone, *Cherokees of the Old South: A People in Transition* (University of Georgia Press, 2010), 93.

[29] Marion Lena Starkey, *The Cherokee Nation* (New York: AA Knopf, 1946), 30

[30] Edmund Schwarze, *History of the Moravian Missions among Southern Indian Tribes* (Grove, OK: Stauber Books, 1999), 75.

[31] Emmet Starr, *History of the Cherokee Indians and Their Legends and Folk Lore* (Okahoma: Warden Company, 1922), 27-37; Schwarze, 34-35.

begin within the Cherokee Nation.[32] This is because prior to this Cherokee councils expressly prohibited the intrusion of missionaries into its territories. Prior to 1800, churches in and of themselves were not viewed as having value for Cherokees. The early Moravians noted:

> Since the Brethren in Wachovia live far away from the Indians and are little acquainted with them, their customs, habits and government, but yet would gladly bring them to Christ their Redeemer, I think one should not start hastily with preaching before seeing that there will be an audience, *for by nature, there is a thorough and strong antipathy among the Indians to the preaching of the Gospel. Their idea is that the Gospel is only for whites and that God has destined the Indian for something different and intends that they should bring sacrifices and not forsake the customs of their fathers. Just as a fish cannot live on the ground and birds cannot live in the water, so the Indians should and could not adopt the white man's manning of living* [emphasis mine].[33]

But after the period of treaty making in the 1790s, some Cherokees began to distinguish between Christian churches and the Great Book, or Bible. Colonists often touted the Bible as investing them with divine right and power to acquire Native land and resources. One Cherokee war chief in particular believed that if Cherokees had access to the knowledge contained within the scriptures, they would be able to compete on more even footing.

> To Arcowee, a former war chief in the Upper Towns who had helped to sign peace treaties with President Washington in 1792, the Bible–"the great book" of the whites, called "God's Word"—held many powerful secrets. In this book, Arcowee believed, lay the source of the whiteman's wisdom and knowledge.[34]

As a result, in 1798 the Cherokee council began inquiring among Christian missionaries who may be able to teach them to read the "Great Book" for themselves. And the first missionaries that were given permission to start a mission station within Cherokee lands were the Moravians,

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[32] Schwarze, 42-43.

[33] Schwarze, 39.

[34] William McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 37.

represented by Abraham Steiner and Frederic de Schweinitz. "Arcowee expected that in offering to live among the Cherokees and teach them from their great book, Steiner and de Schweinitz were agreeing to share that knowledge and power with the Cherokees."[35]

It is noteworthy that even at this early date, Cherokees were not primarily concerned with hearing the gospel, but rather in obtaining an education that would teach them how to read and write in the language of the treaties. This is repeatedly expressed in the correspondence between the Moravian missionaries and US government representatives. The Moravian missionaries wrote to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Col. Henley, asking for feedback in setting up a mission station and declaring their intent: "To see what can be done among the Cherokees in preaching the Gospel, and at the same time, in teaching their children to read and write."[36] Col. Henley responded: "I do believe the Cherokees would consent to one or more missionaries among them and would be glad to have their children instructed in Reading, Writing, etc., and I have no doubt they might, *after that,* be brought to like the preaching of the Gospel." (emphasis mine).[37]

The Cherokee wanted to see, among other things, if the rhetoric employed by whites arising out of the Bible corresponded to the actual texts. In addition, as treaty-making intensified during the late eighteenth century, Cherokee leaders felt the need to better their negotiating power by learning the language in which the treaties were written, English. Since it was common for white translators to alter the meaning of treaty language unbeknownst to Cherokees, the

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[35] Ibid, 37

[36] Schwarze, 46.

[37] Ibid, 48.

council decided in 1800 to support schools within the Cherokee Nation's boundaries that would teach its citizens the English language. The stress on the English language is important because the first missionaries, the Moravians, conducted their affairs in German for the most part. Recognizing this, the Cherokee council advised the Moravians that since treaties were not written in German, they were not to teach Cherokees German, just English.[38] Thus, from the beginning, Cherokee councils allowed missionaries into its territory only insofar as the work of missionaries furthered the aims and interests of the Cherokee people.

When looking at denominational presence in Cherokee counties today, by far the largest denomination is Baptist. Just as anecdote, one time a woman approached me wanting to learn more about Cherokee spirituality. She asked whether or not I knew of any Cherokee religious ceremonies taking place with which she could be a part. I told her, "Sure, the Baptist church has services every Sunday at 10:00 am." While the woman failed to see the humor in my comment, I share it simply to highlight the degree to which Baptist churches continue to have an enormous presence in Cherokee territories throughout Oklahoma and North Carolina. As of 2018, the Cherokee Baptist Association counted 44 churches within its jurisdiction.[39] By contrast, the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference counted only 3-4 churches within Cherokee boundaries. I believe the overwhelming success of the Baptist church and the general failure of other denominations among Cherokees lies in their historic adherence to Cherokee cultural norms and national priorities. While there are many denominational practices within the Baptist church that would help explain its popularity among Cherokees, many of these practices were

[38]Ibid, 80.

[39] Cherokee Baptist Association. http://cherokeebaptistassociation.webs.com/history. Accessed April 30, 2018.

also present in the Methodist church. For example, both Baptists and Methodists did not impose stringent seminary requirements for licensing local preachers.[40] Unlike the Presbyterians and Moravians, Cherokee Baptist preachers and Methodist lay leaders were not required to master biblical languages, in addition to English, in order to be qualified to work in the local church. [41] And when the Methodists first began their circuit riding, they held three- and four-day emotion-filled revivals that resembled traditional Cherokee social gatherings. These revivals emphasized singing and testimonials which resonated with traditional Cherokees because of their similarity to traditional ceremonies. [42] This mode of worship, along with the Methodist embrace of Arminianism, as opposed to the Calvinist approach by the Baptists, were likely the chief reasons for Methodists having the most adherents before the Cherokee removal to Indian Territory in 1838. [43]

These denominational practices illustrate some of the natural appeal the Baptist and Methodist churches had for Cherokee members, but it does not fully explain why Baptists have so outperformed other Christian churches, including the Methodist church. I believe the critical difference lies in the social and political stances Baptist representatives took on behalf of the Cherokee people. The foremost example is on the issue of removal. Early on, the Cherokee Nation adopted a strong stance against relinquishing its homelands and moving west to Indian Territory. While the denominations did not necessarily support their missionaries' stances,

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[40] McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870,* 197-198.

[41] Ibid, 197-198.

[42] Ibid, 197-198.

[43] Ibid, 197-198.

American Board/Congregationalist, Methodist, and Baptist missionaries all adopted anti-removal platforms.[44] Missionaries from the Moravians did not adopt as clear a stance, though they did refuse to swear an oath of allegiance to Georgia.[45] The Congregationalists began their mission work among Cherokees in 1817 and counted 150 converts at the time of removal. The Baptists began their work two years later (in 1819) and by 1838 numbered 500. The Methodists did not start until 1822 but claimed 700 members by 1835. Thus at the start of the Trail of Tears, the Methodists had converted greater numbers of Cherokees in fewer years than the other denominations.[46]

But the Trail of Tears became a defining moment in the history of the Cherokee Nation, and as it would turn out, in the history of Cherokee mission activity. While the Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists all initially supported the Cherokee Nation in its fight to retain their land, in the end only the Baptists remained with the Cherokee people up through the Trail of Tears.[47] By 1834 the Moravians had adopted a pro-removal policy and quickly lost most of their converts in the east when they closed their mission stations during that same year.[48] When Samuel Worcester, arguably the most famous missionary to the Cherokees (a Congregationalist), endured imprisonment for refusal to swear an oath of allegiance to the state of Georgia, he earned much respect in the eyes of Cherokee people. He filed a lawsuit

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[44] Ibid, 114-118.

[45] Ibid, 41.

[46] Sheryl Dams Pendzich, *The Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma 1839-1860* (Milwaukee: s.n., 1978), 45-46.

[47] McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870,* 114-118.

[48] Ibid, 41.

challenging the authority of state allegiance oaths which was eventually adjudicated by the Supreme Court. *Worcester v. Georgia* continues to be one of the most significant rulings in Native history since it affirmed the sovereignty not only of the Cherokee Nation, but all Native nations throughout the territorial US and recognized their legal status as surpassing that of states.[49] Later on though, Worcester withdrew his famous lawsuit, advocated for voluntary removal, and left for Indian Territory three years before the Trail of Tears.[50] McLoughlin states, "After this, Worcester and Butler found themselves pariahs in the Cherokee Nation. All they had suffered in the penitentiary counted for nothing when they gave up the fight and sided with the enemies of the Cherokees. Worcester was no longer allowed to use the Cherokee printing press, and the American Board lost the means of publishing tracts and translations. Neither he nor his board ever regained the high position and influence they had enjoyed prior to 1833."[51] The Methodist circuit riders were the first missionaries to openly oppose removal policies. But in 1831, the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Church rebuked the circuit riders for their support of Cherokees remaining on their homelands and essentially adopted a pro-removal policy; consequently, their number of adherents dropped by nearly 200.[52] When Methodist annual conferences openly supported Cherokee removal in 1834, their numbers fell by over 400. Only Baptists remained with Cherokees in the east until their forced expulsion. Evan Jones, the most prominent Baptist missionary, actually traveled with the Cherokee people along the Trail of

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[49] Worcester v. State of Ga. 31 US 515, 522, 1832 WL 3389 (US1832).

[50] William G McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees: Evan and John B. Jones* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 131.

[51] Ibid, 131.

[52] McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839*, 294.

Tears, resettling with them in Indian Territory. As a result, McLoughlin observes, "While the Methodist denomination lost over half of its members between 1830-1838, and while the American Board and Moravians barely held their own, the Baptist denomination increased by over 500 percent."[53] McLoughlin, however, attributes this trend to the following: "[U]ndoubtedly the most significant fact in the Baptists' growth was the dynamic personality of the Reverend Evan Jones and the work of his dedicated native preachers." [54] I argue that a more direct explanation for the rising popularity of Baptists is due in large part to their unwavering commitment to the sovereignty of the Cherokee Nation and their willingness to endure extreme hardship in order to support the Cherokee people at a critical juncture in history. While the Baptists were not the largest denomination prior to the removal in 1838, their numbers grew each time another denomination backed away from supporting Cherokees in retaining their homelands. After the publication of the negative comments stemming from the Tennessee Annual Conference in 1831, the Methodist church's popularity dropped by 15% while the Baptists increased 68%. Similarly, when it became known the Methodists fully supported removal in 1834, their church numbers dropped by 46% while the Baptists grew by almost 58%. This trend of the steady decline of other denominations juxtaposed with the constant increase of Baptists continued into Indian Territory. In 1843, the Moravians had about 80 members, the Congregationalists had 191 members, and the Methodists claimed 1,400 members. While the Baptist church membership only numbered around 750, their temperance societies counted over

[53] Ibid, 319.

[54] Ibid, 319.

1,500 Cherokee members.[55] And in 1860, Baptist church membership increased to 1,600. While the Moravian church rolls increased to 200 in that year, Methodists remained steady in their membership while the Congregationalists decreased to 136 members. It should be noted, however, that the membership figures for the Moravians and American Board include children in their figures, and the increase for the Moravians may be due to the number of children they housed at their boarding school. The figures for the Methodists includes children who were baptized as infants but were not necessarily church members, and any individual attending Methodist classes. Moreover, these numbers include white and black church members as well, not just Cherokees. Since Baptists do not allow children into their church membership, their figures represent only adults who were actual church members. Furthermore, Baptist church membership is comprised almost exclusively from Cherokees.[56]

These two factors demonstrate that the growth of the Baptists and the decline of other denominations following the Trail of Tears are even greater than the numbers would initially seem to indicate. Furthermore, the Baptist church increasingly began practices that resonated with traditional Cherokees. For one, the Baptist church adopted the popular Methodist four-day revivals and hymn sing gatherings. Evan Jones designed a circuit, modeled after the Methodists, where he was able to establish local churches in otherwise overlooked Cherokee communities.[57] After Removal, these churches performed the functions of the traditional Cherokee town council house by serving as educational, political, social, and spiritual centers for each local community.

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[55] Pendzich, 45-46.

[56] McLoughlin, 383-384.

[57] Ibid.

In addition, the Baptist church placed greater faith in the abilities of local Cherokees to function effectively as clergy members which resulted in far greater numbers of Cherokee preachers, particularly Cherokee-speaking preachers, than in any other denomination.[58] As Cherokees gradually assumed leadership within the Baptist church, the church increasingly became an instrument of traditional Cherokee cultural expression. For example, both James Mooney and Jack Kilpatrick point to many traditional Cherokee spiritual leaders serving simultaneously as Christian clergy.[59] Alan Kilpatrick notes, "A cursory survey of Oklahoma church records reveals that a surprising number of these traditional folk healers became ordained ministers, while others served as elders or deacons. Cherokee traditionalists, then as now, seem to make little distinction between their involvement with esoteric forms of magic and their dutiful participation in the worship of the Christian faith."[60] Hence, town council meetings now took place in local Baptist churches and were governed by Cherokee spiritual leaders who operated under the guise of Baptist preachers. Something that had always appealed to Cherokees was the striking resemblance between the Baptist practice of baptism by immersion and the traditional Cherokee ceremonial ritual of "going to the water."[61] Going to the water was an integral part of Cherokee religious life and is still commonly practiced today. Thomas Mails recounts a story describing a

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[58] Ibid, 203-219.

[59] James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee* (Courier Corporation, 2012), 237-38; Jack Frederick Kilpatrick, *The Shadow of Sequoyah: Social Documents of the Cherokees, 1862-1964*, vol. 81 (University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 34.

[60] Alan Kilpatrick, "A Note on Cherokee Theological Concepts," *American Indian Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1995), 395-96.

[61] Alan Edwin Kilpatrick, ""Going to the Water": A Structural Analysis of Cherokee Purification Rituals," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 15, no. 4 (1991), 49-58.

sermon given by a local Cherokee preacher who talked about 'going to the water': "'Now,' the preacher went on to the congregation, 'you can do this, but you don't want everybody to know it. You want to be by yourself and do it very secretly. And you go where there is running water, fast running water, and it wants to be running south, and you want to be on the west side, and that's where the Little People, the Little Ones, work.'"[62] The Baptist church was therefore able in large measure to maintain traditional Cherokee spiritual practices and protect traditional Cherokee spiritual practitioners.

Such cultural sensitivity, however, was often lacking among Methodist churches as evidenced in contemporary Methodist policy in Cherokee, North Carolina. In North Carolina, the Cherokee reservation is divided into several smaller communities (e.g. Painttown, Birdtown, Wolftown, etc.) each of which contains a Methodist church. But during the 1980s, the Methodist Annual Conference for that region decided to consolidate all the Methodist churches on Qualla Boundary (the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' reservation) into one, located within a particular community.[63] What the Methodist church failed to realize was the reason for having so many small Methodist churches on the reservation. The placing of several small Methodist churches throughout Qualla Boundary was not accidental—it was done to preserve the distinctive clan structure of traditional Cherokee society. Each reservation community was organized around and comprised of one of the seven Cherokee clans, and each church served as the central gathering place for that community. When that structure was disrupted, Cherokees did

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[62] Thomas E Mails, *The Cherokee People: The Story of the Cherokees from Earliest Origins to Contemporary Times* (Council Oak Books, 1992), 29-56.

[63] Personal communication, Ben Bushyhead, Cherokee Pastor, October 23, 1999.

not leave their communities to attend worship services in another section of the reservation, and as a result, Methodist attendance dropped to an all-time low. The Baptist church, on the other hand, continues to operate churches in accordance with Cherokee clan and social systems and is by far the most dominant denomination on the Qualla reservation today. In the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, by 1960 there were 42 churches in the Cherokee Indian Baptist Association and only 9 Cherokee churches in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.[64] By 1998, there were no Congregationalist or Moravian churches (the last Moravian mission was replaced by a Lutheran church) and only three United Methodist churches remaining in the Western Cherokee Nation compared to 42-47 Cherokee Baptist churches.[65] As one Cherokee I interviewed aptly surmised, "I think one reason why the Cherokee Baptist church has been so successful is because it has always been Cherokee and an affirmation of Cherokee tradition over and against white Christianity."

Albert Wahraftig aptly notes, "Paradoxically, the myth of Cherokee assimilation has also contributed to the survival of the Cherokee as a people…[I]n response to the final pressures for Oklahoma statehood, Cherokees have seemed inert, hardly a living people. Nevertheless, Cherokee communal life persisted, and is in a surprisingly healthy state. Cherokee settlements remain isolated, and if what goes on in them is not hidden, it is calculatedly inconspicuous."[66] In many instances, Christianity became the mechanism by which traditional Cherokee beliefs,

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[64] Albert L Wahrhaftig, "The Tribal Cherokee Population of Eastern Oklahoma," *Current Anthropology* 9, no. 5, Part 2 (1968), 513.

[65] For a list of current Cherokee Baptist churches in Northeastern Oklahoma, see http://cherokeebaptistassociation.webs.com/cba-churches

[66] Wahrhaftig, 44.

practices, and values were maintained rather than destroyed. Singing church hymns and reading scriptures became avenues in which traditional Cherokee beliefs and practices were retained rather than destroyed. As Laurence French observes, "Most students of contemporary Cherokees would in fact question [the] contention that little trace of the aboriginal belief system has survived among the…Cherokees. Quite the contrary, they have been well integrated into Christian fundamentalism, hence well disguised from the scrutiny of outsiders."[67]

It is within this context the complicated dynamics between indigeneity, colonization and translation emerge within the Cherokee context. But as I will discuss in future chapters, attention to this complexity is essential not only for Cherokee peoples, but to the project of biblical translation itself.

[67] Laurence French, "The Death of a Nation," *Am. Indian J.* 4 (1978), 107.

Chapter Two: Translation as Performance

The field of biblical translation operates through two primary paradigms: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence refers to translation methods that seek a literal, word-for-word relationship between source text and target language whereas dynamic equivalence, as coined and developed by Eugene Nida, is concerned with conveying the meaning of the source text in a comprehensible equivalent into the target language. In this chapter, I will explore the theoretical assumptions of both formal and dynamic equivalence and the limitations of these paradigms in explaining the translation process, particularly when translation occurs across linguistic cultures that are very dissimilar. I will then look at the developments within translation studies in general and biblical translation studies in particular that attempt to theorize practices of translation in colonial contexts. While these developments are critical, this chapter argues that they are insufficient. Instead, I propose a performative theory of translation that more adequately speaks to the complexities of translation and then apply this theory through case studies in the Cherokee Bible.

Formal versus Dynamic Equivalence

Formal Equivalence

Formal equivalence refers to translation methods that seek a literal, word-for-word relationship between source text and target language. With formal equivalence, "fidelity" is measured by the closeness (with closeness often articulated in terms of "accuracy") of the word-for-word relationship between the source and target languages. Thus for formal equivalence, to

be a “faithful” translation is to render as “accurately” as possible the word-for-word phrase from the source text (or “original” text as is commonly phrased in biblical studies) into the target (or vernacular) language.

The most extreme version of formal equivalence would be an interlinear, word-for-word translation. Such a translation ignores even the grammatical constructs of the source language to transmit into a target language verbiage that closely mirrors the source text. Walter Benjamin advocates for formal equivalent approaches to translation, arguing, “Therefore it is not the highest praise for a translation...to say that it reads as if it had originally been written in that language...A real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium to shine upon the original all the more fully. This may be achieved, above all, by a literal rendering of the syntax which proves words rather than sentences to be the primary element of the translator.”[68] Benjamin went so far as to argue that, “The interlinear version of the Scriptures is the prototype or ideal of all translation.”[69] For Benjamin, translation was more than just a technical exercise. Translation had a spiritual component that went beyond either the source or target language text. As such, the only way to perceive this spiritual component was for the target language text to read as a translation rather than as a monolingual composition. It was the foreignness of a translated text that gave a translation heightened meaning and allowed audiences to travel beyond their own linguistically constrained horizons. For Benjamin, translation was not about effective

[68]Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Shocken, 1968), 79.

[69] Ibid, 82.

conveyance of textual information across a linguistic boundary, but rather an opportunity for transcendence for both the translator and the target audience. Transcendence occurs when the limitations of any particular linguistic system are both highlighted and then transgressed by pointing to a horizon of meaning beyond the target language. Benjamin's imperative to "foreignize" translation was a more extreme variation of impulses from previous translation theorists. For example, Friedrich Schleiermacher was concerned about maintaining national linguistic boundaries in the translation process. Schleiermacher contended, "Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader. Both paths are so completely different from one another that one of them must definitely be adhered to as strictly as possible, since a higher unreliable result would emerge from mixing them."[70] Schleiermacher believed translation was a process that would enable Germany to "to carry all the treasures of foreign art and scholarship together with its own, in its language, to unite them into a great historical whole."[71] But to do so, Schleiermacher argued that the "foreignness" of a translation needed to be maintained so that German culture could host foreign scholarship without diluting the distinctiveness of German culture. On a less extreme scale, Wilhelm Von Humboldt advocates that translation should reflect the "foreign" without "foreignness." He states, "If the translator, out of an extreme aversion to what is unusual goes even further and strives to avoid the foreign altogether. . .then all translation and whatever benefits translation may bring to a

[70] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "From on the Different Methods of Teaching," in *Theories of Translation*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: University of Chicago Pres, 1992), 42.

[71] Ibid, 53.

language and a nation are destroyed."[72] But while concerned about the cultural purity of the nation within the translation process, he similarly saw the promise of translation: "To the same extent that a language is enriched, a nation is also enriched."[73]

While echoing these previous themes of foreignizing translation, Benjamin was less concerned about linguistic and cultural purity and more concerned about allowing for the possibility of traveling across linguistic boundaries. If translation is excessively domesticated such that the foreignness cannot even be perceived, linguistic and cultural differences become completely homogenized. Despite Benjamin's important insights, this view of translation is an anomaly in the history of modern translation. Indeed in his own time, Benjamin's translation following his essay on "Task of the Translator" was widely panned as a poor translation specimen. Nonetheless, Benjamin's work is helpful in looking at translation as not necessarily concerned with domesticating a source language text into a target language. It is also helpful in looking at translation as embracing asyndeton and choretic absences in addition to positive literary content. These themes will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

While formal equivalence models are not the dominant model of translation today, they occupy a range of literalness in biblical studies, with interlinears exhibiting the closest word-for-word relationship. But even the most literal models still strive for comprehensibility. While interlinears embrace rather direct word-for-word correspondence between source and target languages, most formal equivalence models will eschew very direct relationships if the resulting

[72] Wilhelm von Humboldt, "From Introduction to His Translation of *Agamemnon*," 58.

[73] Ibid, 57.

translation in the target language is largely incomprehensible. For example, if a Greek text contains an article before a word that would not normally occur in English, even formal equivalent models would omit the Greek article from its translation. Thus, formal equivalence models utilize some of the practices in dynamic equivalence models in a desire for comprehensibility.

Dynamic Equivalence

Dynamic equivalence seeks to convey the meaning of the source text on the level of thoughts and expressions into a comprehensible equivalent in the target language. And whereas formal equivalence locates "fidelity" of translation in the relationship of word-to-word, dynamic equivalence finds fidelity in the relationship between source text message and target language expression. Dynamic equivalence is the dominant method of translation by both biblical and non-biblical studies translators.[74]

Dynamic equivalence was coined and developed by Eugene Nida, who is the most prominent theorist of biblical translation. Nida's primary goal was to develop a method of translation that could be used to more readily propagate Christian missionization amongst indigenous peoples worldwide. This tight connection between missionization and dynamic equivalence dominates biblical translation method today, particularly outside the academy. Nida proposed translations should communicate the primary theological messages of the source text into the target language in a way that was accessible to target language audiences. According to Nida, translation consisted of three basic factors: "(1) the nature of the message, (2) the

[74] Katharina Reiss, *Translation Criticism-Potentials and Limitations: Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment* (Routledge, 2014).

purpose or purposes of the author and, by proxy, of the translator, and (3) the type of audience."[75] Nida argued that the goal of translation was to produce "in the ultimate receptors a response similar to that of the original receptors."[76] Whereas Benjamin advocated formal equivalence in order to "foreignize" translation, Nida advocated domesticating translation because, "The best translation does not sound like a translation."[77] The missionary imperative behind Nida's approach is clear in his claim that translation should not just convey information but "suggest a particular type of behavior" and make "such an action explicit and compelling."[78] The evangelistic nature of Nida's model is further evidenced in Nida's argument that translation must prioritize the speech of non-Christians over Christians as needed "in making the translation of the Bible effective as an instrument of evangelism"[79] but also by prioritizing the speech of women who are presumed to have lower comprehension, otherwise "the children are very unlikely to have any significant instruction in Biblical content."[80]

The evaluation of translation fidelity is dramatically different theologically between these two translation models because formal equivalence locates the "message" to be conveyed in the source text–with the "original" author and context–while dynamic equivalence locates the "message" in the theological interpretations of the translator. The dynamic equivalence translator

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[75] Eugne Nida, "Principles of Correspondence," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000), 134.

[76] Ibid, 133.

[77] Eugene Nida and Charles Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 12.

[78] Eugene Albert Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Brill Archive, 1964), 158.

[79] Nida and Taber, 31.

[80] Ibid, 32.

must first discern the "truth" of the source text in order to accurately render that truth in commensurate fashion into the target language. In formal equivalence, the divine message lies in the source text signaled to the reader in the target language. But in dynamic equivalence, the divine message lies in the target language itself (when accurately translated by a theologically correct translator). Signs of textual "foreignness" from the source text serve no purpose in dynamic equivalence and serve only to distract readers from the divine message. Thus, archaisms and incommensurable transliterations are eschewed in this translation method. Because dynamic equivalence locates "truth" in the theologically discerned translated text in the target language, it seeks to be readily discerned and comprehended in the vernacular. When issues around commensurability arise in the translation process, the resolution is to find an appropriate or roughly equivalent phrase in the target language that carries an equivalent meaning as the phrase in the source text. The goal is not to maintain a one-to-one relationship between the source and target languages. Rather it is to convey the thought and affect intended in the source text similarly into the target language.

The Power/Culture Turn in Translation Studies

The limitations of the formal vs dynamic equivalence model began to be explored as scholars in translation studies began to engage postcolonial theory in the culture/power turn. This turn has had some limited impact in the field of biblical translation.

While translation has been going on for thousands of years, translation studies as a field has emerged over the past 60 years, with James Holm coining the term "translation studies" in

his essay, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies."[81] Translation in the ancient world was focused on the processes necessary to produce a quality translation. Issues such as the production of affect and the lyricism of prose were less focused on textual fidelity than whether the translated work stirred readers in a particular way. Translation instruction was stirred anew with the advent of translation of sacred texts, particularly in the Christian era. Textual fidelity in the target language was less important than conveying an orthodox theological message within scripture. As with classical translation theory, the merit of a translated work lay in the reception it had with its targeted audience. To achieve this, translations were to be readable and understandable to audiences, and important themes accurately conveyed in the translation.

The next era of translation studies was in the Enlightenment. Again, translation here was viewed as a technical process whose value was determined by how well an agreed upon reading of the material in the source language was communicated in the target language. Translations were focused on getting the "sense" of the original and communicating that "sense" into the target language. Mechanisms for doing so were outlined, and translations that strayed too far from originals, or slavishly followed too closely an original, were criticized.

It was not until the latter part of the twentieth century that translation studies began focusing beyond translation techniques to power dynamics involved at various levels of translation. This shift is often referred to as the power turn in translation. Translation theory has historically been dominated by discussions of translation techniques. Should one adopt a formal, literal approach, translating word by word so as to mimic the source text as closely as possible?

[81] Jame S. Holmes, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000); Jeremy Mundy, *Introducing Translation Studies* (London Routledge, 2001), 6.

Or should one use a more dynamic model, translating the sense of the source text into the target language without slavishly following the exact wording and grammar of the source text? Translation theory in this context is largely instrumental in that it is evaluated according to the challenges posed by technical difficulties of conveying source language content into the target language, with translation being seen primarily a matter of technique.[82]

But as translation developed into a field, scholarship focused on two areas: (1) descriptive translation studies which seeks to describe the phenomena of translation; and (2) translation theory which establishes general principles for understanding translation.[83] In Germany and Europe, translation studies have focused on more functionalist approaches to translation, building on the work of Eugene Nida with scholars like Katherine Reiss, Justa Holz-Manttari, and Hans J. Vermeer.[84]

Meanwhile, particularly in the US, translation studies began to adopt the cultural turn in the 1990s that engaged post-structuralist and postcolonial theory. *Translation, History and Culture* (1990) by Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett was a key text that signaled the move from linguistic approaches to translation and coined the term "cultural turn" as stated by Snell-Hornby's 1990 article in the collection.[85] The turn was anticipated by the work on polysystems and translation norms by Even-Zohar and Toury[86] and by *Manipulation of Literature* edited by

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[82] Edwin Gentzler, *Cotemporary Translation Theories: Revised 2nd Edition* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), 5; Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies: Revised Edition* (London: Routledge, 1991), 2.

[83] Mundy, 10.

[84] Ibid, 72.

[85] Basl Hatim and Jeremy Munday, *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book* (London: Routledge, 2004), 102.

[86] Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury. 1981. "Introduction: Translation Theory and Intercultural Relations." *Poetics Today* II, 4 (1981), v-xi.

Theo Hermans.[87] These works emphasized the importance of seeing translation as not just an exchange among texts but among worlds.[88] Building on this shift, poststructural and postcolonial translation theorists such as Lawrence Venuti, Else Viera, and Tejaswini Niranjana began to focus not only on the worlds at stake in translation but deconstructing the power relations behind the project of translation.[89] Going beyond an instrumental approach to translation, the power turn looked at the sociopolitical power dynamics involved in processes of translation, and the impact of those dynamics not only on the product of translation, but also on the various sociopolitical relationships comprising both the source and target language communities. A particular focus of the power turn in translation studies has been postcolonial relationships and their effects within processes of translation. In such discussions, power dynamics inherent to the translator as well as the disparate power relations between source and target language communities are highlighted rather than obfuscated. The role of the translator is scrutinized as being one of negotiating cultural and political mores and power structures in ways that instrumental approaches to translation tend to neglect.

Venuti, for instance, takes Nida's approach of domesticating translation to task by arguing that his approach commits ethnocentric violence through domestication, but disavows this violence by rendering it invisible.[90] "This relationship points to the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance

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[87] Theo Hermans ed., *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm), 1985

[88] Ibid, 102.

[89] Mundy,13.

[90] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 1995), 61.

with values, beliefs and representations that preexisting in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts."[91] Venuti also contends that Nida's approach presumes an essential, transcendental humanity through time and space,[92] and that the English language in particular is a "transparent discourse on every foreign culture" that enables the translator to elicit a similar response on the target audience as the original audience.[93] This impetus is destabilized in moments of linguistic incommensurability. In fact as Edwin Gentzler notes, Nida's analysis mis/appropriates Noam Chomsky's theory of linguistics to presume a deep structure to language that undergirds all language in keeping with Nida's belief that there is a theological truth that can be universalized across cultures.[94] Roman Alvarez and Carmen Africa-Vidal contend that in dynamic equivalence, essentially the translator becomes the author while disavowing her/his authorial role.[95] "Therefore, the translator's conduct will never be innocent and can lead to a 'labor of acculturation which domesticates the foreign text, making it intelligible and even familiar to the target-language reader, providing him or her with the narcissistic experience of recognizing his or her own cultural other.'"[96] Tejaswini Niranjana further notes that dynamic equivalence often relies on constructions of the colonized/target audience that go unquestioned:

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[91] Ibid, 18.

[92] Ibid, 22.

[93] Ibid, 21.

[94] Gentzler, 54-55.

[95] Roman Alvarez and Carmen-Africa Vidal, "Translating: A Political Act," in *Translation Power Subversion*, ed. Roman Alvarez and Carmen-Africa Vidal (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), 4.

[96] Ibid, 5.

"In forming a certain kind of subject, in presenting particular versions of the colonized, translation brings into being overarching concepts of reality and representation. These concepts, and what they all use to assume, completely occlude the violence that accompanies the construction of the colonial subject."[97] Douglas Robinson further notes that postcolonial translation studies came out of cultural anthropology whose intellectual roots are colonial: "[A]s anthropologists were increasingly influenced by cultural studies paradigms they began to realize they were basically translators and their translation assumptions were basically colonial."[98]

Meanwhile, postcolonial translation theorists have also critiqued formal equivalence models for engaging in what they deemed to be practices of cultural purity and nationalism. Robinson argues that translation of sacred texts and the focus on literalness reveals a fear of cross-contamination of cultures.[99] According to Niranjana, "Translation thus produces strategies of containment. By employing certain modes of representing the other–which it thereby also brings into being–translation reinforces hegemonic versions of the colonized, helping them acquire the status of what Edward Said calls representations, or objects without history."[100] Ovidio Carbonell similarly argues that Orientalism pervades translation in which the "other" is perceived as like the West, but distant and exotic.[101] Translation fixes colonized cultures. It

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[97] Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 2.

[98] Douglas Robinson, *Linguistics an Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 2003), 15.

[99] *Translation and Taboo* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 215.

[100] Niranjana, 3.

[101] Ovidio Carbonell, "The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation," in *Translation Power Subversion*, ed. Roman Alvarez and Carmen-Africa Vidal (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), 83.

functions "as a transparent presentation of something that already exists, although the 'original' is actually brought into being through translation."[102] Translation theory also relies on colonial ethnographic models in which the other is static, primitive, and unchanging and therefore does not require any complicated approach to translation.[103] Lori Chamberlain further argues that this translation model is also gendered. That is, a feminist critique must not only attend to an analysis of what texts get translated, including the erasure of women-centered speech and the erasure of female translators, but how translation is often understood as the faithful or unfaithful wife to the original author, the father.[104] Niranjana suggests that a postcolonial approach to translation does not rely upon monolithic constructions of who "we" are or what the original text is:

> Our search should not be for origins or essences but for a richer complexity, a complication of our notions of the "self," a more densely textured understanding of who "we" are. It is here that translators can intervene to inscribe heterogeneity, to warn against mythos of purity, to show origins as already issued. Translation, from being a "containing" force, is transformed into a disruptive, disseminating one.[105]

Using a Derridan analysis, Susan Bassett notes all communication is essentially translation. But translation "reminds us that there is no absolute meaning, no uncontested original."[106]

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[102] Niranjana, 3.

[103] Ibid, 82.

[104] Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000).

[105] Niranjana, 186.

[106] Susan Bassett, "The Meek or the Mighty: Reappraising the Role of the Translator," in *Translation Power Subversion*, ed. Roman Alvarez and Carmen-Africa Vidal (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), 11. See also Similarly, Willis Barnstone who states: "Reading is an act of interpretation, which is itself an act of translation" Willis Barnstone, *The Poetics of Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 7. "The act of formal translation involves an interpretive reading of the source text" ibid, 21. Quoting Barbara Johnson, Barnstone notes that "the original text is always an impossible translation that renders translation impossible" ibid, 42.

Eric Cheyfitz has specifically theorized the relationship between translation and colonization with respect to Native peoples in the Americas. "Translation was, and still is, the central act of European colonization and imperialism in the Americas."[107] Cheyfitz argues that Indigenous genocide began with the translation of the Indian into a religious and legal fiction: "a material resource to be exploited and a spiritual object to be saved."[108] Conquest was thus based on not only the principle of terra nullius–a land without people—but also on the principle of a people without a language."[109] Essentially this colonial project presumed that all languages were "the translations of a single universal language," but some languages have a lesser status in the language of Man.[110]

The Power Turn in Biblical Translation

The power turn in translation studies, however, has not had as strong an influence in biblical translation. Rather, biblical translation debates have centered around addressing the tension between "fidelity" to the text versus rendering the text capable of missionizing to cultural others as captured by the formal versus dynamic equivalence paradigm.[111] Consequently, biblical translation tends to focus on translation as technique rather than operate from a theory about

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[107] Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism* (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1991), 104.

[108] Ibid, 105.

[109] Ibid, 105.

[110] Ibid, 106.

[111] Athalya Brenner and Jan Willem van Henten, eds., *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 45, 123-150.

what transpires during processes of translation.[112] But Lamin Sanneh noted that these debates have colonial overtones:

> In Bible translation, hitherto taboo ethnic groups and their languages and cultures were effectively destigmatized while, at the same time, superior cultures were stripped of their right to constitute themselves into exclusive standards of access to God. In affirming weak and stigmatized languages and cultures, Bible translation bid farewell to Western cultural prerequisites for membership in the human family. Bible translation breathed new life into local languages and equipped local populations for participation in the emerging new world context.[113]

Sanneh's analysis seems to neglect the fact that the text is always already a translation. As Jeremy Punt points out:

> Clearly the whole of what is often rather blithely referred to as 'the Bible' is–to generalize–the result of an intricate political process, from the oral traditions through manuscripts, versions and selection through the construction of canon(s) through the development, maintenance and transformation of translations and interpretive traditions to the comparatively elaborate modern translation and interpretation venture imposed on the Bible. To maintain the innocence of the choices made throughout the historical development of the biblical canon and as continued in its translation and interpretation today, seems naive.[114]

But Sanneh's analysis helpfully points to the presumption is that some languages historically have been understood to have the potential to have an "authoritative text" and others do not. Exemplifying this presumption is Judith Frishman who argues that, "In conclusion, in a

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[112] John A. Beck, *Translators as Storytellers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 2-11.

[113] Lamin Sanneh, "Domesticating the Transcent. The African Transformation of Chrisitanity: Comparative Reflections on Ethnicity and Religious Mobiliation in Africa," in *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Jan Willem van Henten (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 71-72.

[114] Jeremy Punt, "Translating the Bible in South Africa: Challenges to Responsibility and Contextuality," ibid, 121-122.

post-Enlightenment world, no translation will ever occupy as important and universal a place that which the Targum in Jewish life or the Septuagint in Christian life had occupied."[115]

These assumptions as represented by Frishman have been critiqued by feminist and postcolonial biblical scholars. Some feminist scholars have addressed the gendered politics of biblical translation. Mary Phil Korask notes that patriarchy impacts the process of translation – different word choices can promote "male images and values and demote female images and values."[116] Meanwhile other scholars such as Caroline Vander Stichele and Elizabeth Castelli contend that the "scene of the crime" of patriarchy may in fact be the source material. A feminist analysis may require us to trouble that as well as the process of translation.[117] Castelli further suggests a model of "collaboration" in which the translator also becomes the author.[118] Tina Pippin makes a similar argument about what she perceives to be the anti-Jewishness in the book of John to which any translation is either inaccurate or continues to support anti-Judaism. "The problems are in the heart of Christianity; there is no radical root, no politically correct safe space in the Gospel of John or in the New Testament. It is the responsibility of translators and readers to transform this history, this gospel message."[119]

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[115] Judith Frishman, "Why a Translation of the Bible Can't Be Authoritative: A Response to John Rogerson," ibid, 35.

[116] Mary Phil Korsak, "Translating the Bible: Bible Translations and Gender Issues," ibid, 132.

[117] Caroline Vander Stichele, "Murder Shewrote or Why Translationmattres: A Responseto Mary Phil Korsack's 'Translating the Bible'," ibid.; Elizabeth Castelli, "*Le Belles Infideles/*Fidenity or Feminism? The Meanings of Feminist Biblical Translation," in *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (New York: Crossroad, 1993).

[118] Castelli.

[119] Tina Pippin, ""For Fear of the Jews": Lying and Truth-Telling in Translating the Gospel of John," *Semeia* 76 (1996), 94

Engaging in a specifically postcolonial feminist analysis, Musa W. Dube argues that Bible translation is undergirded by patriarchal and imperial theologies.[120] Indeed, she contends that the project of biblical translation has as its aim, "translating the colonized to become subjects of the empire."[121] Quoting Gomang Seratwa Ntloedibe-Kuswani, Dube notes that the assumption behind biblical translation is that "the Bible is the source that cannot be changed, while the language and culture into which the Bible is translated are receptor languages that must and can be changed to make room for the Bible."[122] She further asserts that while Bible translation has concerned itself with preserving the integrity of the source text (Bible), there has hardly been any translation that fails to do violence to both the so-called original and targeted cultures and texts.[123] In the end, Dube concludes that formal and dynamic equivalence models are basically the same, because they both presume that translators are communicating just the text and failing to see we are also "translating cultures, subordinating culture, and installing the domination of some over others."[124] Similar to Punt, Dube critiques the idea of fidelity to the text since "there is no original copy of any book that has been canonized in our Bible," and hence "the ideology of 'faithfulness to the source text,' therefore, really serves some other purposes than preserving the original text.'"[125] She calls on Bible translation scholars to engage

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[120] Dube, 216.

[121] Ibid, 216.

[122] Ibid, 220.

[123] Ibid, 222.

[124] Ibid, 226.

[125] Ibid, 234.

postcolonial and feminist theory, and believes they largely have not "since a translation is inevitably also an interpretation, there is no reason why changes that have informed the scholarship if biblical interpretation should not also inform translation practices."[126]

Despite the growth of postcolonial/minoritized/feminist biblical criticism, there has been only one *Semeia* issue that focused on biblical translation. In the introduction, Randall C. Bailey and Tina Pippin critique both the dynamic and formal equivalence model for presuming a universal truth. Instead, they argue, "the Euro-American academy, whose claims to formal or dynamic equivalence have been reinforcements of and masks for hegemonic ideologies. The biblical texts we have are corrupted. So all translation is corrupted; all translators are corrupted. There is no original, and the texts we have are decaying."[127] In the same volume, R.S. Sugirtharajah calls for a postcolonial translation of the Bible that will "rewrite and re-translate the texts as well as the concepts against the grain. Rewriting and retranslating are not a simple dependence upon the past, but a radical remoulding of the text to meet new situations and demands."[128] He also calls for an intertextual reweaving of scriptural texts in the process of translation.

Sugirtharajah further develops his analysis of postcolonial biblical translation in *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* in which he describes translation as a

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[126] Ibid, 235.

[127] Randall C. Bailey and Tina Pippin, "Race, Class, and the Politics of Bible Translation: Introduction," *Semeia* 76, no. 1-6 (1996), 1.

[128] R.S. Sugirtharajah, "Textual Cleansing: A Move from the Colonial the the Postcolonial Version," ibid, no. 7-19, 16.

"negation" that divests colonized peoples of meaning from their own cultures and sacred texts.[129] He suggests that the role of the translator in the post-colonial context is to "promote tolerance and understanding" rather than be overly concerned about fidelity to the source text.[130] Sugirtharajah presumes a unidirectional process in translation in which the colonizer culture impacts the colonized but that the colonized has no impact on either the text, tradition, or the colonizer. He does note, however, that the colonized also have multilayer identities and argues for the need of multiple English translations given the diversity of peoples within a national context like India.[131] Dolores Yilibuw similarly calls for a "transformation translation" that will promote the liberation of the colonized.[132] Robert Carroll focuses on translation as a "cultural weapon."[133] According to Carroll, "Every translation of the Bible is an attempt to provide as accurate a translation as possible *within the constraints set by the prevailing ideology of the group translating and publishing the Bible*.[134] While Carroll notes that translation "is not just a static activity whereby one language is reproduced...in a different language as if the receptor language were some inert substance,"[135] he does not explore the consequences of that reality.

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[129] Sugirtharajah, 151.

[130] Ibid, 172-173.

[131] Ibid, 175-176.

[132] Dolores Yilibuw, "Tampering with Bible Translation in Yap," *Semeia* 76 (1996), 32-33.

[133] Robert Carroll, "Cultural Encroachment and Bible Translation: Observations on Elements of Violence, Race and Class in the Production of Bibles in Translation," ibid, 45.

[134] Ibid, 39.

[135] Ibid, 51.

Carroll also notes that the Bible is a double translation but does not suggest the implications of that for the biblical text as it relates to translation.[136]

The work of these scholars is important to the field of biblical translation and postcolonial/feminist/minoritized approaches to the Bible and should be more seriously engaged by biblical translation scholars. While providing an important foundation for my project, the *Semeia* issue also tends to rely upon a colonizer/colonized binary. While seeking to challenge Orientalist paradigms of the "other," they do not address how new identities become created through the process of translations. Thus, I turn to performance theory as a helpful site to expand on this work and to develop a performative theory of translation in which new identities are created.

Translation as Performance

While the use of performance as a methodology has played a role in many disciplines for several decades, it has not traditionally been used in the field of biblical studies. Unfortunately, performance theory has not achieved the same status as other methodologies in large part because it has been so historically interdisciplinary. Rather than view this interdisciplinarity as a limitation, however, I see it as an opportunity to engage in dialogue with a host of conversation partners who are not typically associated with biblical studies. In this section I apply concepts arising out of performance theories and utilize them with my own theory of performativity to examine sections of the Cherokee Bible. I seek to develop a theory of performativity that redefines texts as performative acts, the enactment of which 'performs' in part to not only to protect indigenous sovereignty and preserve traditional beliefs and practices, but to create those

[136] Ibid, 49-50.

very sovereignty structures themselves. In addition, performative readings of sacred texts decenter the primacy of epistemology, thereby shifting the focus away from meaning making to kinship making or relationality, from objective translation to ethically motivated inscription, and from individual understanding to collective constructions of sovereignty.

The following is an overview of how performance theory has arisen and been utilized in certain key disciplines, namely the social sciences, folklore, linguistics, and theater/performance studies. Because of the breadth of disciplines being discussed, I wish to qualify my overview by saying these are not comprehensive genealogies of performance theory in each discipline, but rather general tracings of an episteme. These tracings do not presume an underlying coherence in their development, though critical moments of cross-fertilization are definitely present. Neither do they seek to espouse a unified understanding of performance theory since such does not exist. But I do hope to at least provide a sense of the diversity of expression within performance studies.

Performance - Social Sciences

Performance theory is often traced back to its beginnings in anthropology, but I would like to extend back to the work of Georg Simmel.[137] While trained as a philosopher, Simmel was heavily influenced by the social sciences. His work in psychology and sociology interrogated notions of modernity by arguing that modern historical materiality and objectification is undermined through the transgressive forces of social "play." It is the public performance of play, imagination, and sociability that effectively deconstructs the boundedness of modern subject/object identity formations and modalities of material exchange. Thus, it is the social

[137] Georg Simmel, *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

arena where the unpredictability of social performances allows modern society to articulate its ethical imperatives and transgressive social possibilities. Simmel discusses Western philosophy's obsession with epistemology and the fetishizing of it over that of eros. For Simmel, the limits of human knowledge function as a moment of transcendence where in seeing our limitations, we seek to transcend them, and this moment of transcendence becomes the moment of ethics. Thus, Simmel articulated a philosophy that decenters epistemology in favor of social interaction, where the telos of epistemology is ethics, and where the boundaries of modern material culture are transgressed and transcended through creative social play.[138]

I start with Simmel because he attends to aspects of performance that later become separated–performance as social play and performance as ritual. The development of ritual performance becomes a central theme to 19th and 20th century sociologists and anthropologists, and the subversive potential in "play" is developed more fully in psychoanalysis and poststructural literary studies.[139] But I think it is worth noting that this schism was a later development, or at least not always the case as seen in Simmel.

Turning to the development of performance in ritual, there are a number of theorists who develop this theme in the social sciences. Emile Durkheim describes the work of ritual performances as creation of social cohesion and solidarity.[140] But he distinguishes the actual ritual or rite from a purported belief system surrounding it. And for Durkheim, it is the area of beliefs where the more exciting and important work of social and individual expression takes

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[138] Ibid, 134.

[139] J. Kristeva and T. Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 26.

[140] Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religion*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), 257.

place.[141] This dichotomization between ritual and belief, action and thought, is an underlying dialectic that tends to characterize social science accounts of ritual performances. Catherine Bell traces this dialectic in the field of anthropology and provides a wonderful critique of Clifford Geertz.[142] Geertz argues that not only do ritual performances serve as moments of reconciliation between conceived and lived realities, moments where the two realities converge and coincide, they also serve as a window for the detached observer to capture a glimpse into the worldview of the other. Thus, not only does Geertz effectively articulate a hypostatization between ritual and belief, he further dichotomizes participant from observer.[143] The participant/observer distinction will arise again in theater and performance studies. But for now, I highlight some of the troublesome tendencies in social scientific renditions of performance and ritual.

Perhaps the best-known scholar for his work on ritual performances is Victor Turner. Like Geertz, Turner develops a theory of performance based on a structure/antistructure model.[144] For Turner, there are moments of liminality where individuals exist in between social categories. These liminal spaces become sites of rituals, and it is through rituals that social dramas are embodied, expressed, and performed. [145] But this view leads to an essentially similar version of Geertz where society forms the backdrop, the normative structure underlying existence, and where resistance to that structure is manifested in ritual performance. And similar to Geertz, it is in ritual performances, or social dramas, where the outsider is given an

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[141] Ibid, 129.

[142] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 25-35.

[143] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, vol. 5019 (Basic books, 1973), 110-118.

[144] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 94-113.

[145] Ibid. 94-113.

opportunity to view the world of the insider, though in limited form. For Turner, the purpose of performance is to contrast mundane life with ritual life, and Turner's focus is on ritual life in a manner which minimizes the significance of performance in mundane life. [146] Here again, we can see the problematics that arise in positing an innate insider/outsider designation. The insider functions as the unthinking actor, whereas the outsider inhabits the privileged position of thinking translator and interpreter of the unreflective performer. These analyses also reflect a pervasive theme of consumerism where ritual performances are seen as functioning to whet and satisfy the objective observer/scholar's appetite for experiencing transcendence and creating relationships of refractive alterities, always without reciprocity. Hence, the moment of transcendence for the outside observer functions simultaneously as the moment of commodification for the insider/actor. It begs the question if transcendence in this paradigm necessarily involves a prior moment of objectification of the other; in other words, transcendence can only be achieved through colonization.

Bell is not the first scholar to identify this dynamic within anthropology, nor is she the first to articulate a theory of ritual (she prefers the term ritual over performance) that seeks to undo such homologization. The early work of Marcel Mauss complicates such subject/object identity formations prevalent in anthropology and argues for a notion of gift that extends the life of the giver to the gift in the act of giving.[147] Thus, a gift is not an inanimate other, a neutral material object employed in the ritual act of gift-giving, but rather through the gift-giving ritual, the gift is imbued with a personality that creates an effective social bond within the communal

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[146] Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Books, 1988), 21-32.

[147] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (WW Norton & Company, 2000), 83-107.

context. Rather than relying upon a subject/object identity construct, Mauss, through his ethnographic work on gift-giving, narrates a subject/subject/subject construction that performs social cohesion without necessary loss of individual subject particularity (although the middle subject's "personality" formulation, I would argue, becomes a moment of excursive assimilation of alterity).

Mauss' work on gifts becomes an essential ingredient in later theological writings, especially among feminist theologians like Rosemary Radford Ruether, and among postmodern theologians such as John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock. Indeed, Pickstock's rendition of ritual and performance in her book *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, serves as a specifically Christian exemplar of the performative aspect of liturgy as the stabilization of all reality, where meaning and intention fully coincide.[148] The rite of Eucharist is where speech recreates both the congregation and the world in which they are situated. "This is my body" is not a mere utterance in the Eucharistic rite, but performative in creating new identities of the ecclesia and redefined relationships to one another and the divine.

Performance – Folklore

Albert Lord's book, *The Singer of Tales*, is the first work in the field of folklore and mythology that embarks on a systematic reappraisal of oral tradition and performance.[149] Lord examines folklore traditions in the Balkans in the early part of the 20th century. He worked several years recording examples of storytelling traditions and in so doing, recast previous

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[148] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (JSTOR, 1998), 169-197.

[149] Albert Bates Lord, Stephen Arthur Mitchell, and Gregory Nagy, *The Singer of Tales*, vol. 24 (Harvard University Press, 2000), 124-154.

notions of oral literature present at that time. Lord challenged the idea that oral traditions were products of pure memorization–either memorized in rote in shorter examples, or loosely memorized in longer examples. He illustrated that recurring motifs in larger oral epics functioned as part of the techne of composition–these motifs served as moments in the oral tradition that allowed the oral composer to mimetically arrange the rest of the narrative content. Rather than viewing oral composers as memorizing a text the way modern people do when delivering a speech from memory, Lord described a sort of apprenticeship where youth sat and listened to the performance of oral epics as they naturally occurred in the life of the community (during weddings, special feasts and holidays, etc.). By the time an apprenticed storyteller was a mature adult, the formula for composing oral epics had been successfully mastered to the point where Lord was able to record such storytellers repeating extensive oral narratives after just one exposure to a particular story. This illustrated how long epics like Homeric epics or biblical texts could be transmitted orally over a vast period of time with a high degree of accuracy.[150] It also showed that apparent redundancies within texts functioned not as scribal errors or even traces of competing traditions, but as recurring oral motifs that allowed for the effective transmission of oral literature. Lord's work was very influential in Homeric studies (especially with Gregory Nagy) in that the presumption of a written urtext behind Homeric epic was now depicted as an unfounded assumption.[151] Elements within ancient texts that might appear to be corruptions or scribal emendations of an original source text were really remnants of oral performance formulae. Nagy went on to describe in detail the exact formulaic components contained with

[150] Ibid, 124-154.

[151] Gregory Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 10-33.

ancient epics, and that these formulae were essentially oral in structure and function. Thus, the ethnographic work of Lord and the formulaic tracings of Nagy have paved the way for a new understanding of ancient texts, particularly sacred and biblical texts, that have as their source an oral epic tradition rather than a written source text. Longer epics did not necessarily see their first life as a composed text from early sayings or snippets of oral tradition. Rather, ancient texts (especially biblical texts) could have been handed down in their longer forms orally without substantial loss of narrative content.

Another important contribution came when Lord was able to show that each performance of an oral tale bore the distinctive marking of a particular storyteller. The unique way in which each tale, though relating the same story, is told illustrated another central thesis in Lord's work– composition in performance. It was in the actual performance that composition took place. The idea of composition in performance was taken up by Steven Caton in his work with Yemeni storytellers.[152] He recorded several instances where villages settled disputes through battling storytellers. Each storyteller would utilize the traditional formulae of oral traditions for that community and compose during their oral performance an oral poetic argument for the dispute being settled in their favor. After a series of back and forth oral performances between the warring parties, village elders would decide whose oral compositions were the most compelling and thus the dispute would be settled. The ability for a storyteller to compose in performance and inscribe community ideals, values, and worldview in that performance became hallmarks of respected oral practitioners. This idea of composition in performance traces the introduction of

[152] Steven C Caton, *" Peaks of Yemen I Summon": Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemeni Tribe* (Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 1990), 3-50.

particular ideologies and theologies into the fabric of oral traditions as they are generated. As a result, theologies do not create the rituals surrounding them; rather, it is through communal oral performances that theologies are born.

Performance – Linguistics

The performative use of language is traced back to the work of J.L. Austin and Emile Benveniste. The presentations of J.L. Austin were part of the William James lectures delivered at Harvard in 1955.[153] Austin sought to outline a category of language that did more than just describe things and events, but instead performed an action. Austin was responding to the dominant trend in the field of linguistics instituted by Ferdinand Saussure–structuralism–where language was seen as an arbitrary overlay over a field of signifieds. Signifiers operated semiotically by differentiating the signified from what it was not. Thus, meaning functioned negatively (i.e. this is a chair because it is different from a table, lamp, couch, etc.). The value of language lay in its ability to differentiate between signifieds, and the signifieds were conceived in terms of meanings and concepts rather than material phenomena.[154] Thus the focus of language study shifted from the diachronic to the synchronic, from the development of language to the grammar of language. Under Saussure, language value derived entirely from the internal relations among signs within a particular system. The focus of study for structuralism was on the paradigmatic (as opposed to syntagmatic) use of language. In other words, Saussure argued the relation of signifiers should be studied under the grammatical paradigm of language rather than

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[153] John L Austin, *How to Do Things with Words, Ed. Jo Urmson and Marina Sbisá* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 1-12.

[154] Ferdinand De Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 65-100.

in the temporal succession of utterance. Utterance for Saussure was the work of parole, and outside the work of linguistics, at least how he articulated it.

Austin's work responded to this decontextualization of language that was part of the academic milieu at the time. Austin sought to capture a theory of language that functioned as more than just descriptive overlay and related only arbitrarily to its signifieds, and whose arrangement could be adequately accounted for through delineating set grammatical patterns. Thus, Austin developed the category of the performative. This was a special function of language that did not merely describe, it did. For example, when a duly authorized figure proclaims, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," something has actually been performed. [155] For Austin, the actual utterance becomes significant–it changes the conditions of the world in its very utterance. Hence, action cannot be separated from utterance; rather, the utterance becomes the action. This was a category of speech Austin felt traditional linguistics could not account for but occurred on a regular basis in everyday speech. The problem for Austin, at least in his lectures, was trying to derive a method for differentiating performative language from descriptive (or constative) language. In his final lecture in the series, it is apparent he was never able to adequately distinguish the two on any consistent basis.

Stanley Tambiah draws upon the work of Austin and Turner in describing ritual in terms of performative language.[156] Tambiah, like Bell, recognizes the tendency towards delimiting the ritual to cognitive analysis by the observer. He therefore stresses the social dimension of performance and its efficacy in creating bonds of social cohesion. For Tambiah, Austin's theory

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[155] Austin, 8.

[156] Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 78, 317.

of performative language is flawed in that Austin fails to account for the inherent social dimension of language. In other words, the words uttered at a wedding ceremony, "I do," derive value in their ability to create networks of social relationships recognized by the larger social context. To focus only on the husband and/or wife's utterance as opposed to the larger social schema in which the wedding is situated focuses the attention of the semiotic away from its most potent performative potential–that is the realm of the social.

And this is where the work of Judith Butler arises. Butler identifies both the insight of Austin as well as the quagmire he created.[157] By trying to maintain the traditional category of constative language, Austin continually encountered problems distinguishing when an utterance actually did something and when it merely described. A particularly vexing situation for Austin was the instance of dramatic play. If saying "I do" during a wedding ceremony was performative, what about an actor saying "I do" during a wedding ceremony in a play? Austin called this use of language parasitic and non-performative, but Butler intersects linguistic theory with psychoanalysis to derive a theory of language that is both performative and inscriptive. Butler draws upon Althusser to detail the sociopolitical and institutional power that regulates utterances, and she gives particular attention to the phenomena of naming. When a baby is first born, the proclamation "It's a girl!" functions not as a descriptive statement, but a performative utterance. It begins the lifelong construction of gender that is inscribed onto material bodies. [158] Thus, for Butler, utterances that appear descriptive or constative are really socially performative. Statements such as that from the hypothetical doctor do not describe gender, but construct it.

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[157] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge Press, 1990), 44-45.

[158] Ibid, 44-45.

The power of such performatives lies in their deceptive nature–they appear to describe an objective reality when in fact they are constructing an oppressive social system that has no inherent connection to materiality. We are trained from the moment of our birth to see gender as either male or female. This is so effectively inculcated that we ascribe such binary gender differentiation as being biologically innate. [159] But Butler argues that the apparent obviousness of gender differentiation is really only the result of their repetitive performatives, with the result that bifurcated gender identity becomes the only possible paradigm by which gender can be conceived and assessed. (On a completely tangential note, while Butler doesn't refer to this example (presumably because she is unfamiliar with it), there are other societies, particularly Indigenous societies, that do not view gender as either male or female.)[160] The power of Butler's argument is that she addresses the fundamental questions Austin could not resolve–when is speech descriptive and when is it performative? While Butler does not say speech cannot function descriptively, at least potentially any utterance can simultaneously or exclusively function as a performative.

Emile Benveniste, a contemporary of Austin, does not use the term "performance" or "performative," but many scholars specializing in the study of language identify his work as key developments in the performative use of language. Benveniste sought to show how ostensibly neutral grammatical categories actually were discursively performative.[161] In his analysis of the

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[159] Ibid, 91.

[160] Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds., *Two-Spirit People* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 1-20.

[161] É. Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (University of Miami Press, 1971), 206-208.

French verb, Benveniste analyzes the effect of using the passé simple in French historiography. By using this particular morphology, it creates a double narrative–one of history and one of discourse. [162] By distancing the narrator from the events narrated, a double subjectivity is created which has as its end the fictive inscription of the reader into an historical narrative constructed by a hidden "other." The result is a perpetual sense of historical anteriority, or what Homi Bhabha would term "belatedness" that continually confronts the reader. But this narrative anteriority has a performative value later taken up by Claude Lefort which seeks to create a semblance of unbroken historical continuity for the purposes of empire.[163] Lefort argues that to the extent that a nation can construct the myth of historic continuity is the extent that it is able to articulate the platform and justification for empire. This is why every nation during the age of empire engages in writing grand national histories that trace a trajectory back to the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. The apparent seamlessness of the national historical narrative creates a bolster for continued political, economic, and geographic expansion. Thus, for Lefort, every grand historical narrative is in some way an historiographical project of imperialism. And this tenet rests upon the work of linguists in the French and Swiss traditions such as Benveniste. It should be noted that to a certain extent, the impact of Benveniste's work has been primarily felt in Europe while Austin's legacy is more pronounced in the United States.

Jacques Derrida, like Butler, is also very interested in Austin's account of performative language. Derrida focuses on Austin's notion that in order to give an account of felicitous conditions for performative statements, and as a corollary assess the proper intention of those

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[162] Ibid, 206-208.

[163] Claude Lefort and J.B. Thompson, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (MIT Press, 1986) 200-205.

performing performative utterances, the context of speech utterance must be narrowly construed– so narrowly, in fact, that occasions of complex utterance, as in the instance of lines being performed in a play, are seen as not only not performative, but parasitic to real speech contexts. But for Derrida, all speech depends upon notions of iterability and absence.[164] In essence, all speech becomes something that is both quote and signature. Illocutionary acts derive their force from chains of signification – ritual functions precisely because it is the continual non-identical repetition of specific acts (speech or otherwise) which produce certain effects within communities. Thus, the efficacy of any ritual derives in great measure from the efficacy of previous rituals of the same sort, and in differentiation of rituals or acts of other sorts (i.e. the notion of the distinguishable signature). Because Austin has such a closed account of ritual context in which speech acts occur, the power of utterance is transferred entirely onto the speech actor. But this results in further difficulties in being able to adequately assess any speaker's intentions fully at the time of utterance[165] (here Derrida's account of intention in Otobiography is helpful).[166] As a result, Austin must disassociate many forms of utterances from being performative because the intention of the speech actor is too intermingled with other speech contexts. This becomes foundationally problematic for Derrida since all linguistic contexts are open and contested and inextricable from other contexts of utterance. To try and isolate context

[164] Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwester, 1988)., 7.

[165] Ibid, 17-18.

[166] J. Derrida and C.V.M. Donald, *Oreille De L'autre* (University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 1-40.

the way Austin does is to deny the iterability of an utterance, and without iterability, that can be no performatives for Derrida.[167]

But for Derrida, there is a critical turn in the iterability of utterance–the turn to the ethical. Derrida discusses the limits of authorial intent and uses as an example the work of Nietzsche. [168] While Nietzsche certainly preceded World War II, his work later was utilized as propaganda by the Nazis. Derrida asks to what extent can Nietzsche be held accountable for the use of his work by agents of genocide? Derrida ultimately concludes that while the knowledge of the appropriation of Nietzsche's work certainly could not be entirely premeditated by Nietzsche, he nonetheless ultimately bears some responsibility in the historical echo his work creates. Derrida asks why it is that Nietzsche's work was appropriated and not another's? This question signifies a tendency within a writing to be used for purposes that may be oppressive, and the author is ultimately accountable for the afterlife of his/her work. Thus, the ethical dimension of scholarly writing reaches new heights in Derrida's account of performative language.

Performance - Theater and Performance Studies

Butler's work is directly taken up by cultural critics and theorists in performance studies. By performance studies, I am referring to the study of fine arts that is traditionally performed before some sort of audience. And one of the earliest precursors to this type of performance discourse is Mikhail Bakhtin. Writing in the early 20th century, Bakhtin undertook an analysis of the public function of carnival in its larger social context.[169] The carnival functioned as a sort of

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[167] Derrida, 7.
[168] Derrida and Donald, 1-40.

[169] M.M. Bakhtin, M. Holquist, and C. Emerson, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (University of Texas Press, 2010), 21.

text that not only illustrated but performed the ambivalences in society around communal perceptions of life. What Bakhtin sought to illustrate was the necessarily dialogic nature of such performances and the inextricability of the various voices or "texts" involved in their production. Thus, there could be no discernible boundary between the actor/participant and the audience/observer. Bakhtin, as well as the other theorists discussed in this section, have laid the foundation for artistic experimentation exemplified in one of the leading schools in performance theory today–New York University. Theorists such as Peggy Phelan, Richard Schechner, Fred Moten, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett began defining a new field of thought drawing upon the collective disciplines discussed thus far. But the unique contribution they have made is in applying such theory to the actual practice of performance. Schechner's collaboration with Victor Turner is applied to avant-garde street theater.[170] Schechner pays special attention to the liminal space created by performances like guerrilla theater and challenges the observer/participant divide that often characterizes more traditional forms of artistic performances. In street theater, everyone is a participant, and the extemporaneous dialogue illustrates the contingency behind every performance. Peggy Phelan uses Butler's understanding of performative speech to analyze and deconstruct civil disobedience protests orchestrated by pro-life movements. Phelan particularly draws upon the notion of unmarked speech and coded language as both cultural signifiers as well as constructions of power. She traces the marking, unmarking, and remarking of silence to trace male hegemony in sociopolitical discourse.[171] And Fred Moten uses the paradigm of improvisation as embodied in jazz to redefine African-

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[170] Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 22.

[171] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 130.

American aesthetics and redefine black social justice movements. Moten expands on composition in performance to narrate not only a specific performance, but an entire movement and community.[172] The productivity from the compositional moment in performance is generative of not only transformative ideologies, but also the very material conditions underlying any social movement.

Performance Theory and Biblical Rhetorical Criticism

As with performance theory, rhetorical criticism within biblical studies concerns itself with speech acts. As George Kennedy explains, rhetorical criticism can be distinguished from form and literary criticism in that its origins are within the speech act rather than the text. "Rhetoric originates in speech and its primary product is a speech act, not a text, but the rhetoric of historical periods can only be studied through texts."[173] The Bible was intended to have an impact on the hearers of it, and hence it is necessary "to read the Bible as speech."[174] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza further contends that rhetorical criticism is thus a critique of both "language and ideology" that does not presume an ability to conduct an objective of value-free interpretation. Rather, the relationship between the text, the intended audience, and the interpreting audience all exist through networks of power. "Language is always already a construct, an exercise of power, and an action that either continues the ideologies of domination

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[172] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1-24.

[173] George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 5

[174] Ibid, 6. See also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Response to John R. Lanci: Transforming the Discipline-the Rhetoricity/Rhetoricality of New Testament Studies," in *Genealogies of New Testament Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Troy W. Martin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 181

or tries to interrupt them. Interpretation is not simply a one-way street as in the positivist discovery of a single meaning of the text. It is rather a multivocal discourse that seeks by means of arguments to persuade and to convince."[175] As such, Antoinette Clark Wire notes that rhetorical criticism shifts the emphasis on the text from dogma to persuasion.[176] Thus, as John Lanci explains, rhetorical criticism requires as much engagement with the socio-historical contexts of interpreters as it does the text being interpreted.[177]

Because the origins of rhetorical criticism are within the speech act rather than the text, it does not have to be limited to positive textual content. As noted by James Scott,[178] many things are not recorded in public transcripts/received texts, particularly the transcripts from those who are socially marginalized. Being able to read 'otherly' is a way of intervening. This practice can occur with rhetorical criticism – by identifying what is not said, and how it is unsaid, rhetorical criticism can illuminate intended audience, intended author, and speak to a text behind the text.

Schüssler Fiorenza further notes, similar to performance studies theorists, that language "is not reflective but active-performative."[179] Biblical texts in particular do not just describe

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[175] "Response to John R. Lanci: Transforming the Discipline-the Rhetoricity/Rhetoricality of New Testament Studies", 180

[176] Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 6

[177] John R. Lanci, "Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and the Rhetoric and Ethic of Inquiry," in *Genealogies of New Testament Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Troy W. Martin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).. To illustrate, Karen L. King contends that many anti-Judaic readings of biblical scriptures "reflect altogether too clearly the anti-Semitism of our own contemporary contexts" Karen L. King, "The Gospel of Mary Magdalene," in *Searching the Scripture*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York: Crossroads, 1994), 608

[178] James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, 317); *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 79.

[179] Schüssler Fiorenza, "Response to John R. Lanci: Transforming the Discipline-the Rhetoricity/Rhetoricality of New Testament Studies," 173

oppressive realities, but rather these speech acts actively create oppressive realities. "Androcentric or, better, kyriocentric language claims to be generic language while at the same time marginalizing or obliterating elite and multiply oppressed wo/men from hegemonic cultural-religious discourses altogether."[180] But what if language does not just create the symbolic order that marginalizes women and other oppressed groups, but creates their identities in the first place? A performative theory of biblical translation builds on rhetorical criticism to examine how language and translation operate meta-epistemologically to create identity, community, and the world at large.

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[180] *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies*, 93

Chapter Three: Towards a Performative Theory of Biblical Translation

In the previous chapter, I examined how rhetorical criticism generally focuses on how narrative functions descriptively or prescriptively. A performative theory of translation allows us to see how narrative also performs and creates. While narrative as performance can create many things, I want to focus on how narrative can create identity and community, or more accurately, identity within the context of community. As discussed in the previous chapter, Judith Butler analyzes how identity is created through narrative acts of performative repetition. Yet as Denise Da Silva notes, even for scholars such as Butler, while they articulate identity as performance, they still unwittingly presume identity through the lens of the self-determining subject. That is, identity is not often articulated in relation to other identities. The problem with this framework, argues Silva, is that the self-determining subject articulates itself over and against those subjects which are not self-determining. This division fundamentally becomes a racial one.[181] Building on Silva, Andrea Smith argues that the response to the white self-determining subject is not to articulate alternative racialized identities that are self-determining, but to understand identity through radical relationality.[182] Essentially, rather than understanding that I know who I am, because I am not you, I understand who I am because of you. This kind of relationality I

[181] Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xiii-xxiv.

[182] Andrea Smith, "Native Studies at the Horizon of Death," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 207-234.

articulate as kinship, in which one's relationships constitute one's very being.

Furthermore, this relationality or kinship does not just exist between humans but among all of creation. As many Indigenous scholars have noted, colonialism is a process by which land gets transformed from a set of relationships to a commodity that can become property and thus controlled by the settler state. As Andrea Smith further argues, colonialism cannot be understood simply as the theft of indigenous lands, but the creation of something called land that can then be stolen.[183] Or as Patricia Monture-Angus suggests, colonialism transforms land from a relative to an object.[184] In other words, the kinship between land and indigenous peoples is understood as being foundational to individual and communal identity. It is a radical relationship because neither land nor people are intelligible without the other. This radical relationship is what transforms land from mere spatiality into a cultural performative—from Western "space" to indigenous "place." By "place," I mean that "place" is conceptualized as a set of particular relations in the natural world (with definite material and geographic referent) rather than an inanimate object that can be commodified. "Place" is constantly involved in negotiating new systems of meaning among individuals and communities. It is dynamic by nature, constitutive of the identity or "being-ness" of a particular indigenous people.

I do not equate "being-ness" with existence. Rather, I am using ontopraxy to describe a way of being in the world, a participation in the lifeways of a people that are inherently relational. To sever these relationships poses a foundational trauma to a person or a people.

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[183]Andrea Smith, "Sovereignty as Deferred Genocide," in *Otherwise Worlds: Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness*, ed. Tifffany Lethabo King, Jenell Navarro, and Andrea Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, Forthcoming), n.p..

[184] Patricia Monture-Angus, *Journeying Forward* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1999), 36.

There is a story that says when Cherokees were forced along the Trail of Tears, they were driven westward until they were forced to cross the great Mississippi River. This river formed the westernmost boundary of the historic Cherokee Nation. When some of the elders of the Nation came to the river bank, their spirits were unable to cross. So, they laid themselves down along the banks of the Mississippi and died. Their spirits literally were unable to exist outside the traditional "place" of the people. This is one reason why an observer noted that virtually every elder over 65 passed away before arriving in Indian Territory. This is how I see the performance of "place" and language through narration performing communal and individual ontopraxis. Hence, being-ness is not a state of a mere existence; rather, it is a way of being, or ontopraxy, that describes the performance of being in the world which is both creative and generative of individual and communal lifeways. It is this being-ness that I term kinship.

I am concerned not just with how a performative analysis sheds light on how narrative creates identity, but how it creates kinship. Like Butler, I argue that narrative does not function epiphenomenally. In other words, narrative is not understood as an arbitrary overlay onto a material world of referents. Instead, narrative is necessarily connected to its material referent. It is in the communicative engagement unique to particular communities, with utterance serving as a special performance of such engagement, where not only is meaning transmitted, but where material referents themselves are constructed. Hence, Butler's performative speech suggests that not only does the symbolic world not exist outside of narrative, but neither does the natural world. This is because narrative is performative not only symbolically, but also in materially constructing persons, communities, the natural world, and the interrelationships between everything. To stay with the instance of utterance, to speak a name, is to establish some system

of relationships that, depending on context, can fundamentally construct or affect the actual referent to which the name attaches. While this is generally true, it is more readily apparent in indigenous contexts. For instance, if a person grew ill in traditional Cherokee culture, that person may be renamed as it was understood that a negative set of relationships have developed around that name. The new name would be closely guarded so it could not be casually uttered and exposed to harmful use as a result of its connection to the person whom it named. Thus, narration, ontopraxically creates identity and kinship.

Furthermore, narration creates kinship through time and space – synchronically and diachronically. First, kinship is created synchronically through the establishment of community boundaries. As already noted, Benjamin and his paradigm of formal equivalence finds texts as sources of transcendence that point to an ultimate meaning. But he presupposes a temporal linearity at work. That temporal linearity is not neutral and, according to Vine Deloria Jr., can mask a hidden claim to universality, the stretch to a singularity that hides its cultural and political specificity and values.[185] Meanwhile, Nida and dynamic equivalence seek to effectively communicate a particular message through the text, and where the text interferes with that, to modify the text so as to clarify a particular textual message. Here the agenda of the translator is explicitly to missionize a specific message so as to arrive at a correct belief or orthodoxic understanding. But as Vine Deloria Jr. points out, orthodoxy works in such a way as to obscure its bounded-ness. Thus, it lends towards the crossing of boundaries through instilling a uniform belief system without accounting for the contingency of that belief system.[186] The project is not

[185] Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red* (Golden: North American Press, 1992). 62-77.

[186] Ibid.

just to control bodies, but control thoughts and ensure subordination via ideological subjugation. This is Gramsci's notion of false consciousness–the values of the elite become seen as "common sense values" to be taken on by the non-elite even if it is to their detriment.[187]

Both Benjamin and Nida understand the narrative function of the translator, but see that task being properly performed differently in order to accomplish different goals. But Deloria would respond both ultimately perform the function of propagating a Western narrative that elevates temporality and orthodoxy as normative and appropriate. Benjamin Whorf notes that those types of "universals" are never in fact universal, and their cultural particularity can be evidenced when juxtaposed with other language systems.[188] So whereas for Benjamin, linguistic differences point to a great whole, for Whorf, linguistic differences point to a greater differentiation. For Whorf, any narrative is necessarily contingent and particular–unlike for Benjamin and Nida.

At the same time, Althusser brings up another aspect of narratives–their ability to inscribe. This process of inscription into a larger hegemonic ideology is known as interpellation. It always makes provisional acts of subversion.[189] As much as people may contest their condition or an ideology, their position and functioning within that ideological framework effectively places them within the hegemonic narrative and constrains their ability to contest and subvert.

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[187] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 12th ed. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 210-216.

[188] Benjamin Lee Whorf et al., *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Mit Press, 2012), 270-272.

[189] Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (Verso Books, 2014), 115-120.

This is an example of how hegemony surreptitiously reasserts itself in the face of contestation. One can write and interpret narratives in furtherance of a dominant ideology, or one can write and interpret narratives to contest that dominance, but both become defined in relation to the other and are understood and constructed due to that belation or iteration. Thus, narratives construct ways of thinking, but that process can never be fully controlled. Thus, ideologies are communicated via narration, but always deconstructed by those very narrations in the same moment. In essence then, narration performatively creates community synchronically through the production of the "common sense" of a community that is presumed but never stable.

In addition, narration creates kinship not just synchronically, but diachronically. I particularly want to focus on translation as a mode of narration that creates kinship through time. Deloria sheds light on this analysis. He argues that Native peoples have a different sense of time than is presumed to be commonsensical in western society. According to Deloria, Native time is circular rather than linear, and hence Native peoples understand their ancestors as well as future generations as essentially contemporaneous with themselves.[190] This framework in turn has been criticized by other Native scholars as dualistic and simplistic.[191] However, despite its limitations, Deloria's analysis points to the importance of understanding kinship as existing through time. In particular kinship exists through time through memory which connects generations diachronically.

I argue that translation as mode of narration creates kinship through time through the

[190] Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red* (Golden: North American Press, 1992), 62-77.

[191] Scott Lyons, *X-Marks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 9.

production of lineal memories. By lineal memory, I mean a memory that traces genealogically through a people or community. As with Butler, I am not presuming a prior "people" or "community" that are then remembered. Rather, performance of memory creates the people or the community that echoes across time and space.

Some of the scholarship in Native studies can shed light on this relationship. Scott Lyons and Marcus Briggs-Cloud challenge the idea that indigeneity and tradition are things that operate essentially as a memory that is then passed down to future generations.[192] If indigeneity or tradition is a thing, they argue, it can then be lost. But if it is understood as a verb, then tradition is what indigenous peoples are doing now. If some traditions are no longer passed down or some memories are no longer remembered, there is nothing that stops Native peoples from creating new memories or traditions through their practice. As Lyons contends, we must critically examine "the genocidal implications that are always inherent in the notion of Indian identity as timeless, stable, eternal, but probably in the minds of most people still 'vanishing.' Being vanishes. Doing keeps on doing."[193] Thus, indigeneity itself is a performance. Indigenous performance enacts a moment fully locatable, yet transcendent (synchronic/diachronic) through both space and time in which all, including creation and those who have gone before and those yet to come, fully participate without loss of particularity. In such a performance, there can be no objective observers outside of these relations; all are part of the kinship networks created through translation. In this way, indigeneity is not orthopraxic, but rather ontopraxic.

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[192] Marcus Briggs-Cloud, "The United States as Imperial Peace: Decolonization and Indigenous Peoples," *Journal of Race Ethnicity and Religion* 1, no. 13 (2010), 13-14.

[193] Scott Lyons, *X-Marks*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2010: 60.

Performance of indigenous memory is further complicated by the phenomena of echo. The process of reading back into a tradition is the act of echoing. Traditions are re-memoryied and re-interpreted through creation of echoes. But echoing is performative on several registers, the entirety of which can never be fully predicted nor anticipated. Echoing traditions can function as moments of subversion and liberation, and this tendency I call subversive echo. An example would be the popular oral tradition within the American Indian Movement that when Columbus first invaded this hemisphere, he was so struck by the peaceful nature of the Taino (the first nation Columbus encountered), that he described the indigenous inhabitants in his journal as being *una gente* in Dios–a people in God. This was where the term *indios* first arose–from Columbus' description of Native peoples being "in Dios." This is one reason why some Native peoples embraced the term "Indians" since it is seen as a marker of indigenous cultural superiority. Because I have heard this story so often, I was curious to see the actual journals of Columbus to locate where this phrase occurred. And what I discovered was that while the actual phrase itself did not occur, the gist of the phrase clearly was there. But the power of subversive echo is that it lies in excess of any historical moment. And this is because the power of echo is found not in the past tradition which is being reclaimed or recovered, but in its multi-temporal kinship relationship established between communities and traditions. While one might argue the subversive use of "Indian" is based on a fictive genealogy, I would argue quite the opposite. What is being recalled through the performance of the subversive echo is the often overlooked oral tradition which attests to the inherent goodness and balance within indigenous communities prior to European contact. This oral tradition has oft been cited to counter centuries of the dominant society's depiction of Native peoples as being inherently primitive, warlike, and

savage. Thus, subversive echoes create powerful challenges to sociopolitical hegemonies through processes of mimetic narratology.

But echoes do not always function subversively–they can also be regressive. This is frequently the case in regards to women's role in society. When Wilma Mankiller ran for principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, she related being told many times that that was not a traditional role for Cherokee women. An elder commented that early Cherokee history is filled with female political leaders, but through regressive echo, women's leadership has been erased from the historical memory. When Mankiller attended her first town meeting, only five people came to hear her speak, and all five of them were relatives of hers.[194] The people in the community were protesting Mankiller's political aspirations and expressed their protest through their absence. Thus, regressive echoes can function just as powerfully as their subversive counterparts.

It is also important to note that the kinship created through language can also occur through absence. As previously discussed, rhetorical criticism points to the possibilities of not limiting narrative analysis to positive textual content. That is, the disjunctures within a text and the gaps that occur as a result of these disjunctures are sometimes seen as obstacles to understanding the larger meaning of a text. I propose rather to interpret these textual gaps, or chora, as the vehicle through which a text not only functions performatively, but also is able to rise to the level of performance. Fernando Segovia argues for an aporetic approach to postcolonial biblical interpretation. He states that aporias in the text point "to a fundamental lack

[194] Wilma Mankiller, *Mankiller* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 241-250.

of unity or coherence in the text."[195] In other words, aporias represent the asyndetons and orthogonicity present within texts. And these disjunctures become moments where textual incoherence can best be seen. In this sense, aporias represent a type of textual gap where the underlying textual logics do not neatly correspond. But my use of chora differs from aporia in that, building on the work of Kristeva,[196] I articulate chora as a gap that is not simply an incongruence or even absence, but rather a space of potentiality. Reading choretically means imbuing textual gaps and absences with potential meaning and the power to interpellate. Traditionally, chora within texts are seen with lesser importance, figuring primarily to highlight the possible disjunctures within the positive content of a text. But in the performative model of inquiry that I have outlined, the function of chora becomes more significant. Chora can be indispensable to a text's effective performance. While all texts have choretic aspects to them, however, some texts may operate primarily through chora. An example would be certain classes of powwow songs. One corpus of powwow songs consists primarily of vocables rather than words. Yet, these songs do convey meaning, even without the use of words. As will be discussed later, Cherokee hymns may consist of very few words, but convey meaning primarily through chora.

The genealogical trace of a text is performed not only in the positive content, but also in the purposeful absence of textual continuity and delimitation. The lack of textual delimitation results in a performative textual liquefaction through which communities are able to effectively

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[195] Fernando Segovia, "Cultural Studies and Contemporary Biblical Criticism," in *Reading from This Place*, ed. Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 10

[196] Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 25-26.

inscribe kinships to their own ancestral communities. Hence, the choretic text is characterized by liquefaction, i.e. the moments/spaces in which textual content dissolves into absence without loss, and where that apparent absence becomes constitutive of a text's performance. This liquefaction simultaneously under and over-determines a text, and the continual play between contrasting determinations becomes a central characteristic of indigenous texts, and is, in large part, what enables the function of a text to perform individual and community ontopraxis. Thus, the inscription of memory can arise from both positive textual content and through chora.

To summarize then, it is not just that identity is performed through repetition, as Butler would argue, but rather it is performed through the creation of kinship – or relationships with other beings both animate and inanimate. In this way, identity cannot exist outside its relations. Translation then is necessarily a performative mode of narration that creates kinship, both synchronically and diachronically. In particular, because translation creates kinship diachronically, it is a performance that evokes and structures memories which then connect lineally through narratological rememorying whereby communities are connected across time to other moments, events, and systems of relationality. Generally in biblical translation, it is understood that the translator is negotiating or transmitting a relationship between the receiving community and the community of the first century church. While that is happening, I argue that translation also serves to create kinship with not simply the first century church, but with the traditional beliefs and practices of that receiving community

A performative understanding of narration and translation then reframes the role of the translator as one who helps create worlds, identities, kinship, and possibilities. Furthermore, the translator does not stand outside the relationships created and the translator's own identity is

shaped in the process of translation. I am not restricting the role of translation to writing or written texts. Instead, I understand "writing" in the Derridean sense as signifying the mode of expression by which genealogies are conveyed. As Derrida argues: "By radically separating language from writing. . .by giving oneself the illusion of liberating linguistics from all involvement with written evidence, one thinks in fact to restore the status of authentic language, human and fully signifying language, to all languages practiced by peoples whom one nevertheless continues to describe as 'without writing.'" [197] The lifehood of peoples and communities, then is not just expressed in "writing," but is given birth through writing in general, and translation in particular.

Given that the translator does not merely describe/transcribe/prescribe but rather creates, the ethics of the translator figure prominently into any textual analysis. It does so by the performance of tracing through translation particular lineal memories and lineages of thought. Whereas Benjamin highlights the task of the translator as being one of ontological importance in that s/he is fundamentally performing the revelation of true language, the moment where intentionality and affectivity fully coincide, Foucault shows that any discursive practice is embedded in larger discourses of power and is unable to be represented outside such institutional structures.

Thus, while Benjamin's genealogy of language ultimately leads to an ultimate truth of true language, Foucault's genealogy of discursive practices originates with and is maintained through power, and such power is encountered through sociopolitical institutions and traditions.

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[197] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 120.

In synthesizing Benjamin with Foucault, I argue that translators are pivotal political actors who shape social discourse through not only their mode and method of translation, but even in their choice of translation projects. But the effect of translators extends beyond discourse to the creation of ontopraxis. Each act of translation, particularly in the case of sacred texts, effectively creates new forms of religiosity that participate inextricably with the indigenous traditions into which they are being translated. Thus, each translation of New Testament texts creates alternative Christianities with divergent theological and sociopolitical ramifications. Furthermore, not only are new systems of religiosity created, so also are particular structures of sovereignty. The emergence of modified sacred language and alternative forms of representation can fundamentally change the world of possibilities for the people to whom translation is directed, though often in ways counter to the intentions of translators because of strategic hermeneutical practices by interpreting communities (such as subversive echo).

Douglas Robinson notes that Nida's theory is a disavowed performative approach to translation because the translator is implicitly engaged in the act of trying to convert someone to Christianity. Dynamic equivalence is based on trying to "impact" the reader so that a text would have the same impact on a reader as it had on an original/source language audience.[198] He explains that translation studies have often rejected the idea that the translator can engage in performative utterances because the translator is simply relaying the content of another's performative utterance.[199] However, Robinson notes that "performances are always

[198] Robinson, *Linguistics an Translation Studies*, 17.

[199] Ibid, 46.

transformations, never pure reproductions."[200] Hence translation is always a transformation that disavows itself. Each translator is also an author because each translation creates a new performance within the community in which it is performed. The translator is responsible for the contours of that performance, though never in complete control over it. While there may be a desire for specific outcomes, performance is always subject to indeterminacy so that the translator is also limited in what s/he is able to effect. In attempting to achieve certain affects, there is virtually no control over effect, and this indeterminacy becomes the area where true creativity and innovation is located in performance.

The question then becomes what are the power dynamics inherent within those relationships? To whom is the translator accountable and why? What role does the target community play in the process? What portions of the community are being used as "informants" or "partners" and what portions of the community are being overlooked/ignored? What is the relationship of the translator to target communities after translation projects are completed? What are possible afterlives of translation projects, and what are the ramifications of those afterlives for target communities? These become all legitimate, even necessary questions and critiques in a performative methodology.

Case Study – The Cherokee Bible

A relatively close relationship between source and target languages is presupposed by formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. But when widely disparate source and target languages are juxtaposed, I argue another presumption is revealed behind formal equivalence

[200] Ibid, 66.

models—that of language commensurability. By drawing upon Benjamin Whorf's notion of linguistic in/commensurability–or the in/ability of languages to adequately convey the sense of an utterance or text across a linguistic divide[201]–I show how challenges related to commensurability in translation processes create performative moments for translators and audiences. Formal equivalence tends to presume the grammatical features of one language generally resemble counterparts in other languages such that a close or faithful word-for-word rendering is possible (and indeed, even desirable). In the Cherokee language, however, such close relationships are often difficult to establish. For example, in Greek, verbal conjugations occur in six parts: first, second, third person singular, and first, second, third person plural. But Cherokee verbal structure is far more complex. In addition to the first, second, and third person singular verbal forms, verbs also appear in duals (we two, you two, s/he and I) as well as complex plurals (everyone but not me, everyone but not you (singular), everyone but not us, and everyone including all).[202] To translate any first, second, or third person plural from Greek into Cherokee requires a judgment call by the translator about the universality of the text in question. For example, the phrase "Our Father" that begins what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer has no direct counterpart in Cherokee. Translators have to choose which "our" in Cherokee. Theologically, one might assume the most inclusive sense of "our"–"our" referring to everyone–would have been chosen. Instead, an exclusive form of "our" was used. This and other examples highlight translation choices potentially influenced by certain political and theological

[201] Whorf et al, 82-112.

[202] Brad Montgomery-Anderson, *A Reference Grammar of Oklahoma Cherokee* (University of Kansas, 2008), 51-102.

holdings from Cherokee translators at the time. More importantly, translation problems posed by grammar create opportunities for fashioning another religious system that can vary substantially from its dominant counterpart. Translation then becomes a creative act that has the potential to create new religious systems, either by translator intent or without it. I argue that the issue of intent is largely irrelevant in a performative analysis of translation because translation always exceeds authorial/translator intent due to the inherent mediated nature of such texts/writing.[203]

One method for dealing with incommensurable concepts in source and target languages in formal equivalent approaches to translation is the creation of neologisms. When an appropriate word or phrase does not exist in the target language, a translator can create a new word in the target language to symbolize the source language concept. We see this occurring in the translation of evil in portions of the Cherokee New Testament. In Greek, the use of *πονερός* is differentiated from *κάκος* in that, among other things, *πονερός* connotes malicious intention in a way *κάκος* does not necessarily convey. In the New Testament, *κάκος* is a general term used for wicked or evil and does not necessarily evoke intention or premeditation. Whereas *κάκος* is ostensibly used as an objective description of bad or wicked acts, *πονερός* is often used as a subjective depiction of the evil moral conduct of people. In other words, a particular thing or event may be seen as bad (i.e. *κάκος*), but someone's immoral behavior can make him/her an evil person (i.e. *πονερός*). As a result, "evil" is often used in English to translate *πονερός* to capture ill intent, whereas "wicked" is often chosen in English to convey bad acts denoted by *κάκος* (though that is not consistently carried out in translation).

[203] Derrida, "Signature Event Context", 1-23.

Here is how the word "evil" appears in three specific contexts:

Matt 12:45 (NRSV): Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So it will be with this evil generation.

Eph 6:12 (NRSV): For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

I John 2:13 (NRSV): I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one.

Just as in English translations, Cherokee translators seemed to have some slippage in the words they chose to translate evil. But in the above passages, a very particular Cherokee term was utilized that is not frequently seen elsewhere.

The most obvious Cherokee word choice to translate evil would have been *asgani.* This is the same word for sin, and literally means "left" in Cherokee.[204] The idea is that walking in a good way means keeping to the right, so straying off a good path means going to the left. Sin, then, refers to going astray. This is fairly comparable to the Greek word for sin, *ἁμαρτία*, which in ancient times was an archery term used to describe missing the mark.

[204] My Cherokee translations in this dissertation derive from my own knowledge of the language, consultation with Cherokee language speakers, and the following reference material: Brad Montgomery-Anderson, *A Reference Grammar of Oklahoma Cherokee* (University of Kansas, 2008); Durbin Feeling, *Cherokee English Dictionary* (Tahlequah: Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, 1975); Feeling, *The Cherokee Language: A Beginning and Intermediate Course* (Unpublished, n.d.); Gregg Howard, *Cherokee Glossary* (Dallas: Various Indian Peoples Publishing, 2004).

But in the above passages, another term is used, and is actually a neologism created by Cherokee translators. In the Cherokee translation of these verses, the word *unegvtsidv* is used.[205] This word is literally translated "white hell."[206] It comes from the root word *unega* meaning "white." This is the same word used to express the English language (the language spoken by whites), and its derivative is used to refer to white people. Thus, in reading Matthew 12:45, the evil generation referred to by Jesus can be possibly interpreted as referring to the white generation in the Cherokee text. This translation has correspondence with the Greek because the word *πονερός* ascribes a certain amount of intent or agency behind the egregious behavior of a person. In other words, not only is the action itself wrong, those doing the action are seen as morally corrupt. Since the New Testament was being translated immediately before and after the Trail of Tears, the allusion to whites dispossessing Cherokees of their homelands, robbing them of their possessions while causing the deaths of one-quarter of the tribal population is potentially quite potent. In Ephesians and I John, the struggle against the spiritual forces of darkness and evil may be a compelling symbol of the Cherokees battling to retain their ancestral lands against encroaching white colonization. Cherokees may have envisioned the evil one referred to in I John as none other than the white settler himself. From a Cherokee point of view, whites could have embodied the very essence of evil, and therefore the Cherokee struggle against removal could be interpreted as one elevated to cosmic proportions and seen as no less than a holy and

[205] Cherokee New Testament. American Bible Society. Republished in Tulsa: Cherokee Language and Culture, 1995, Matt 12:45, Eph 6:12, 1 John 2:13.

[206] Kilpatrick, Alan. "A Note on Cherokee Theological Concepts;" 397.

spiritual war foretold in scriptures.[207]

Another method for dealing with incommensurable vocabulary in translation is found in dynamic equivalent approaches. In this approach, one would take a word or phrase in the target language that the translator believes possesses roughly the same impact on the target language audience as the concept supposedly had on source language audiences. For example, in the Cherokee language, there is no word for "lamb" as sheep are not native to Cherokee lands. So how is one to translate the recurring "Lamb of God" phrase found in Johannine literature? Rather than creating a neologism, in dynamic equivalence the method is to adopt an indigenous equivalent that conveys a similar meaning. For Cherokee scriptures, the choice was made to translate "Lamb of God" as "Deer of God," or *ahwi-agina*. But in so doing, Jesus Christ now traces not just to Johannine concepts of messiahship, but potentially also to traditional Cherokee narratives around a prominent figure in Cherokee oral tradition—that of Little Deer.

Ahwi-agina literally means "young deer." But in choosing this name, another chain of significations is drawn by the translators. In Cherokee society, there are seven clans, one of which is the Deer Clan. So to describe Jesus as the "Young Deer of God" can effectively inscribe Jesus into the tribal clan structure. Furthermore, there is a traditional Cherokee story about "Little Deer" who watches over the other animals, particularly the other deer, who are often

[207] While it goes beyond the scope of this project, it should be noted another consequence to neologisms in translation is how they alter target languages, and the effect that has on target language communities. Native language revitalization projects are quite prominent in tribal communities throughout the US due to massive language loss or threat of loss. When an indigenous language is no longer extant, how can that language then be revitalized? Through the written or oral record of that language. And for many Native communities, a primary source of written materials in Native languages are translated biblical texts. When several neologisms have been inserted into biblical translation projects, they become part of the written record that later becomes revitalized by future Native community members. This transformation of the language can become the new baseline by which Native communities are able to communicate and draw their identity.

hunted for food and provisions by Cherokee. It is said there was a time when the people began hunting the deer without giving thanks and killed them only for sport or a small part of their body. The rest of the deer carcass would be left to rot in the open by wayward hunters. This was a great offense and the deer held a council and sent their chief, Little Deer, to the Cherokees to warn them they were out of balance with the natural world, and they must hunt only for necessity and use every part of the animal–otherwise they would grow very ill. Each day, Little Deer traveled over the land to see if the deer were being treated with respect, until one day, Little Deer found another deer laying upon a path, killed for his antlers and nothing more. A great sickness was visited upon the people, and the only way they could be healed was by seeking medicines from the plant world. Ever since, the people learned to hunt only when survival required it, to always give thanks for the life that was given, and to never waste the gifts the deer brought to them.[208]

When Jesus is referred to as *ahwi-agina*, it can evoke the traditional story of Little Deer (*ahwi-usdi*). The Christological ramifications are such that Jesus is endowed with a very powerful mission of advocating for and protecting the most vulnerable members of creation, and to visit justice upon those who inflict harm upon such creatures. Since the fourth gospel was the earliest biblical text translated into Cherokee in the 1820's, the political context in which the translation took place is very significant. This was the time when Georgia colonists were increasingly encroaching onto Cherokee lands, and a decided effort was made by the Georgia government to extinguish Cherokee national sovereignty. Missionaries were instructed to take an

[208] There are many versions of this story, but one of the oldest is find in James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees* (Nashville: Charles and Randy Elder Publishers, 1982), 250-252

oath of loyalty to Georgia or face expulsion from the Cherokee Nation. This loyalty oath was contested by the Cherokees and by two missionaries resulting in the famous Worcester v. Georgia Supreme Court case. It was in this decision that the sovereignty of Native nations was formally established and articulated, and the jurisdiction of Georgia over the Cherokee Nation was checked by the Court. To view Jesus as the one who will give voice to those being oppressed becomes all the more powerful given the historical circumstances surrounding this passage.

In choosing to translate Jesus as the Young Deer of God, another line of memory is traced, and this lineal memory effectively inscribes not just an alternative traditional Cherokee belief system, but also a form of indigenous sovereignty—all contained within the ostensive structure of a Christian sacred text. In choosing to translate Jesus as *ahwi-agina*, the translator has developed a set of kinship relationships that are sociopolitical in nature. Through narratological rememorying, Cherokee language and place are evoked in such a way that form an indigenous ontopraxis for the people that exceed both the intent of the translator and the source language content of the New Testament. This renarrativizing of biblical texts through dynamic equivalent models of translation serve as moments of textual performance where new theologies and religiosities that trace to indigenous cultural traditions are created.

Historical Context of Cherokee translators

When the missionaries first came to the Cherokees en masse in the early 1800s, the issue of language immediately arose. None of the missionaries knew how to speak Cherokee, and relatively few Cherokees were conversant in English. Some missionaries, most notably the

Moravians, made little attempt to learn Cherokee.[209] Others made some effort, but when confronted with the difficulty of learning the language, decided such efforts were unfeasible. Faced with a monumental language barrier, missionaries turned to translators for assistance. In fact, as McLoughlin, Starkey, and others point out, the first Cherokee pastors originally began their work as translators.[210] Homer Noley observes:

> In Indian Territory most of the Native clergy of the mainline denominations started their ministry as interpreters or assistants to missionaries…Many outstanding Native leaders kept the church alive during the dark and dangerous days of the Civil War. Native clergy who were assistants found themselves alone in the field as most missionaries fled to states not involved in the war.[211]

But the role of Cherokee translators remains to be fully developed for its significance and long-term impact upon Cherokee communities. Translators are generally referenced only in passing until they come into their own as church leaders, and even then, they are rarely, if ever, afforded the same level of acknowledgment as their white counterparts.

> There are numerous stories of Native Christian leaders carrying the gospel among the original inhabitants of this land. These leaders, although they were the true vehicle through whom the message of Christianity took root among Native people, have very seldom been lifted up and given due recognition for their work. Historically, the church has credited White missionaries with accomplishing the spread of Christianity among this land's Native peoples.[212]

Because of the inability or unwillingness of missionaries to preach in Cherokee, the words heard by a Cherokee congregation necessarily came from the mouth of a fellow Cherokee

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[209] McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839*, 51; *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870*, 28

[210] *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870*, 30-31; Starkey, 88-89

[211] Homer Noley, "The Interpreters," in *Native American Religious Identity: Unforgotten Gods*, ed. Jace Weaver (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 55.

[212] Ibid, 52.

translator, or Cherokee-owned slaves. This situation provided translators with a unique and powerful opportunity to influence the congregations they were addressing, a fact that was not lost on them or the missionaries for which they worked. Missionaries would continually lament over the free-wheeling interpretations and unsolicited commentaries offered by their translators. The Methodist minister Cephas Washburn wrote:

> Mr. Washburn had for some time been suspicious of one of his interpreters, and at length inquired of a person, in whose knowledge and truthfulness he could confide. This person assured him that his interpreter was not faithful, and gave him the following specimen: "Mr. Washburn," said the interpreter, "tells me to say to you, that, in the sight of God, there are but two kinds of people, the good people and the bad people. But I do not believe him. I believe there are three kinds; the good people, the bad, and a middle kind, that are neither good nor bad, just like myself. [213]

Translators such as this were able to insert their distinctive outlooks arising from traditional Cherokee culture into the messages of the white Christian ministers from the outset. An issue that often is not discussed, however, is the identity of Cherokee translators. Because there were few Cherokees conversant in English before the arrival of the missionaries, the greatest pool of potential translators came from either slaves owned by Cherokee slaveowners, or from the students of mission schools who had sufficiently learned the English language. This necessarily meant that Cherokee translators were often slaves, children, or youth.[214] One such student who served as a translator was Sally Ridge. By the age of thirteen Sally had spent several years in the mission schools and knew English well. While studying at Haweis mission school in 1825, Sally was called on by Reverend Frederick Elsworth to translate the sermon for worship

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[213] Cephas Washburn and James Wilson Moore, *Reminiscences of the Indians* (Richmond: Presbyterian committee of publication, 1869), 27-28.

[214] McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839*, 200.

service. A Cherokee elder named Noisy Water objected to her translating and, according to McLoughlin, "came to the front of the room and told Sally to sit down because he would interpret the sermon."[215] What is significant is the reason for the elder's disapproval. The issue was not that Sally was female, but that he "considered it inappropriate that a child should be given the role of instructing her elders."[216] This illustrates that the community saw the role of translators as important, even pivotal, in not only conveying information through translation, but in shaping the message through interpretation as well. It also points to the overlooked role of the influence Cherokee youth and females exerted as conveyors and shapers of the gospel message. The impact of Cherokee slaves on Cherokee identity and society will be taken up in a later chapter. These examples show that Cherokees have not been mere passive recipients of the gospel message preached to them by the missionaries. Rather, Cherokees, both women and men, girls and boys, slave and free, have taken an active role in shaping the content and character of the gospel in a way that strategically appealed to and utilized Cherokee culture and orature.

When Sequoyah invented his Cherokee writing system in 1821, literacy rapidly spread throughout the Cherokee Nation. People who were once unable to read print were now able to communicate in writing within a couple of days. Other efforts had been underway to construct a writing system suitable for translating texts into Cherokee.[217] The most notable example of these efforts is the work of John Pickering and a Cherokee seminary student named David Brown.

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[215] Ibid, 200.

[216] Ibid, 200

[217] H.E. Wyss, *English Letters and Indian Literacies: Reading, Writing, and New England Missionary Schools, 1750-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2012), 194-200.

John Pickering was a linguistics scholar at Harvard whom David Brown worked with to develop a Romanized writing system for transliterating Cherokee.[218] Their work was not yet completed when Sequoyah devised the Cherokee syllabary. Cherokee people resisted other writing systems since they were European based. While this signaled the end of John Pickering's work, it was just the beginning for David Brown. He, along with a translation support team composed of Cherokees, began in earnest to translate the New Testament into Cherokee syllabary. And in 1825, just four years after the creation of the syllabary, the first copy of the New Testament in the Cherokee language was completed.[219] Brown, however, was not the first to translate New Testament scripture. A year earlier John Arch, a Cherokee graduate from Brainerd Mission, completed and circulated a translation of the gospel of John. [220] Since Arch never attended seminary, it seems doubtful that his translation was based on the Greek text. Brown, on the other hand, drew upon his seminary training at Andover and translated the Cherokee New Testament from Greek source texts, not from an English translation.[221] Strikingly, the decision to translate from the Greek came from members of the Cherokee National Council such as Charles Hicks. Whether or not this was done in reaction to John Arch's translation is unclear, but for whatever the reason, the Cherokee National Council stressed the importance of translating sacred scriptures outside the influences of the English language.

While many translations of the New Testament into Cherokee have occurred, the first

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[218] Ibid, 168.

[219] Althea Bass, *Cherokee Messenger*, vol. 12 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996)., 34-37.

[220] Ibid, 34-37.

[221] Ibid, 34-37.

translations notably being accomplished by Cherokees, they were not considered authoritative compared to the translations of their non-Indian missionary counterparts.[222] The ostensible reason missionary societies gave for preferring non-Indian translators is that they were the only ones who underwent sufficiently rigorous academic and theological training. Hence, non-Indians were the only ones "qualified" to "accurately" translate scripture. Even when Cherokees did receive seminary or college instruction, such as Elias Boudinot, Stephen Foreman, David Brown, John Ridge, etc., their roles were relegated to that of "assistants" and their translations were regarded as amateurish and flawed:

> David Brown…translate[d] the New Testament…Hicks insisted that he must translate from the Greek, which he had learned from Andover. Whether David, though a very sensible young man, was able to translate much better from the Greek than from the English *may be doubted*; but the work must go on; and on the 27th of September, 1825, the translation of the New Testament, from the original Greek, into the Cherokee language, by a Cherokee, in an alphabet invented by another Cherokee, was completed…
>
> Such was the state of affairs among the Cherokees when Samuel Worcester arrived. In fact, it was due in part to this state of affairs that he had been sent, for this matter of the Cherokee language needed an *expert*. There was sure to be *bungling* in the translation of the Scriptures; there had been, in fact, in the translation of the Gospel of Matthew. John Arch and David Brown were new in the faith and new to those matters of scholarship involved in biblical translation…In September, 1825, while the Worcesters were on their way to the Cherokee Nation, David Brown had finished his translation of the New Testament, hurried and *full of imperfections*… [italics mine].[223]

As a result, Samuel Worcester was called on to provide a definitive Cherokee translation of the Bible. This was done in spite of the facts that Worcester did not know Cherokee at the time (and was never able to became completely fluent) and that David Brown's "Greek was excellent." But as Starkey observes, the missionaries believed "the word of God was too precious

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[222] Ibid, 37-38

[223] Ibid, 37-38

to be pronounced by an amateur [i.e. a Cherokee]."[224]

Cherokee Translations of Biblical Texts

The denominational struggles for converts had implications for biblical translations. One area that became a particular focus of attention was the translation of the word "baptize." In Cherokee, there are several words used to refer to something becoming wet. One word, *akugia*, is used to describe dipping something in water or liquid. Another word, *adawoa*, is used for things being completely submerged into water. Baptists favored used of *adawoa* since it gave scriptural reinforcement to their practice of baptism by immersion. The congregationalists, however, took exception to this word. They thought *akugia* was sufficient, especially since this better described their manner of baptism. Debates ensued between John Jones, son of Baptist missionary Evan Jones, and Samuel Worcester over which word should be used to translate "baptize" into Cherokee.[225]

The American Bible Society was funding the publication of Cherokee scriptures, but they refused to fund the work of John Jones. The ostensible reason for not funding Jones's translations, according to McLoughlin, was that "[u]nless all the denominational representatives on its board of translation agreed that a translation was accurate, the Society's rules prohibited subsidizing a publication."[226] In other words, the Bible Society did not want to fund a project where there was disagreement as to the accuracy of the translation "for there could not be two

[224] Starkey, 64.

[225] Bass, 12, 265.

[226] McLoughlin, 351

accurate translations of the Bible into Cherokee."[227] However, the controversy did not prevent the Bible Society from continuing to fund Worcester's translations even though Jones was more fluent in Cherokee and, at least in this case, arguably rendered a better formal equivalent to the Greek text. What appeared to be a denominational conflict had other implications. Cherokees had interests in this debate as well, but for other reasons. In Cherokee, the ceremony "going to water" is expressed *amayi adawasdiyi* which "signifies plunging or going entirely into a liquid."[228] The expression is drawn from the word *adawoa*, not *akugia*. *Amayi adawasdiyi* is an important ritual in traditional Cherokee beliefs and practices, and by using *adawoa* to translate an essential Christian practice, i.e. baptism, it also served to reinforce and legitimate traditional Cherokee ceremonies under the auspices of Christian sacred scripture. While Worcester would seem to have won the day in the controversy over translation, ironically the Cherokee New Testament uses *adawoa* for baptism rather than *akugia.*

In Worcester's version of the Cherokee Bible, he frequently relies upon formal equivalent methods for translation. For example, look at the following passage from Matthew:

Ogidoda galvladi hehi
Galvquodiyu gesesdi detsadovi
Tsagvwiyuhi gesv wigananugoi
Ani elohi winigalisda hadanvdisgvi
Nasgiya ganulvdi tsinigalisdiha
Nidadodatlusv ogalisdayvdi sgivsi gohi iga
Digesgivsiquono desgidugvi nasgiya tsidigayotsineho tsotsidugi
Ale tlasdi udagoliyediyi gesv widisgiyatinvstanvgi
Sgiyudalesgesdiquosgini uyo gesvi

Tsatseligayeno tsagvwiyuhi gesvi

[227] Ibid, 351

[228] Mooney, 379

Ale tsalinigidiyi gesvi
Ale etsalvguodiyu gesv nigohilvi
- Matthew 6:9:13[229]

Where formal equivalence strives to translate along a literal, or word-for-word basis, most translators will not overly torture the target language if the result would be incomprehensible. But employing formal equivalent models of translation raises issues of commensurability when source and target languages are very disparate.

In the Cherokee version of the Lord's Prayer, the first line strives to parallel the Greek text of Matthew 6:9:

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν οὐρανοῖς
Our Father (the one in heaven)
Ogidoda galvladi hehi
Our Father (the one who lives in heaven)[230]

The translators apparently strove for a very close relationship between source and target language in this instance. But one difficulty with formal equivalence is the ideological divide between language systems. In this case, the issue arises with "Our Father." In Greek, the subject is *πάτερ* and is modified by the possessive pronoun, *ἡμῶν*. This makes sense in English as well, except that the possessive pronoun would typically precede the subject. In any case, this is a relatively straightforward relationship.

Cherokee language, however, doesn't operate under a similar logic. Rather, names denoting family members (e.g. father, mother, brother, sister, etc.) are relational and cannot stand

[229] American Bible Society, *The Cherokee New Testament* (New York: American Bible Society, 1860).

[230] Ibid.

alone. In other words, one cannot just say "father." One would have to say whose father. To say "father" by itself implies the relational connection is in reference to an individual's own parent, or "my father," and typically is understood as a command.[231]

To say "father" in Cherokee, one has to say "my father," "your father," "our father," "their father," etc. The possessive pronoun cannot be disassociated from the relational term to which it is connected. In the present example, one might think this would not pose a problem since the possessive pronoun prefix for "our" could simply be attached to the relational stem, *edoda*. [232]

But this brings up another peculiarity with Cherokee—there is no word for "our" that directly corresponds with its English counterpart. Western languages tend to have three persons in singular and plural–I, you, she/he/it, we, you, they. Some languages have more formal versions of the second person singular and plural, but basically still adhere to the six-part construction of first, second, or third person in both singular and plural forms.

Cherokee, on the other hand, has a more complex category system. There are ten different forms as opposed to six, and they are grouped in singular, dual, and plural forms. [233] In the case of "our," the question would be who is included or excluded. There are separate pronoun markers to indicate the following:

'Our' meaning - you (sg) and I
'Our' meaning - you (dual) and I

[231] Montgomery-Anderson, 151-159.

[232] Ibid, 151-159.

[233] Ibid, 151-159.

‘Our’ meaning - s/he and I
‘Our’ meaning - you (plural) and I

‘Our’ meaning - you (sg) and I but not you
‘Our’ meaning - you (plural) and I but not you
‘Our’ meaning - s/he and I but not you
‘Our’ meaning - they and I but not you

In the Matthean passage, one would expect the most inclusive Cherokee possessive pronoun to be used for *ἡμῶν*. But in fact, it is not. *Ogidoda* literally means the father of us (plural), but not you (sg). This would seem to be a strange choice for this passage. Indeed, as one Cherokee elder commented to me:

> I think the translators made a mistake there—it just doesn’t make sense. Christians say God is for everybody—not just some or a few.

Translator mistakes are not without precedent, but there may be another explanation. If this was an instance of simple mistaken usage, one would expect it to be an anomaly in the text. But it is not. In the vast majority of cases where “our father” appears in the Greek text, it is translated as *ogidoda*. It could be the translator was simply unfamiliar with the different meanings of possessive pronouns, but that also would seem unlikely since Cherokee translators were fluent speakers. Furthermore, in other instances where a different possessive pronoun is used, like “my,” “father” is translated to reflect that. For example, Matt. 7:21 reads *edoda* for “my father” as one would expect.[234]

If the translators were well-versed in the language and able to use Cherokee possessive pronouns correctly, and if the use of *ogidoda* is not restricted to a single instance, then perhaps

[234] It is also noteworthy that *edoda* is a direct address.

there is another explanation. And for that I turn to Roman Jakobson.

Jakobson identified a class of speech that he termed "shifters."[235] That is, language that couldn't be separated from its context of utterance. A notable example he provided was the pronoun "I." If I say, "I did something," that is a specific reference to an action taken place by my agency. For another to repeat it exactly would be without meaning. Another person could not say, "I did something" and have it refer to me. And if it referred to the speaker, it could no longer be the same statement I uttered since it would then have to be referring to another action taken by another person. The iterability of certain speech markers are context dependent. Jakobson showed this was especially the case with pronouns.

Applying Jakobson's theory to the Cherokee passage, *ogidoda* would have to read in terms of its initial context. In this case, it would have been the mid-1800s when a white biblical translator, Samuel Worcester, employed Cherokee translators to assist with the translation of biblical texts into the Cherokee language. Since Worcester never learned the Cherokee language, he was completely dependent upon Native informants to carry out his translation project.

Typically, in situations where Native informants are used, missionary translators will ask the informant, "How would you say X?" To cut down on mistakes or deception, translators are encouraged to inquire with more than one informant. If Worcester asked, "How would you say 'our father' in Cherokee?", the response "*ogidoda"* would be accurate if the Cherokee translator meant to say "our father" as being the father of us Cherokees (but not you, Samuel Worcester). Thus, the exclusive nature of the Cherokee possessive pronoun used may be something other

[235] Roman Jakobson, *On Language* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 386-394.

than a mistake. Indeed, it may indicate a contested conception of the Christian God that was associated with some people, but not all. And indeed, this contestation is illustrated in various archival accounts of Cherokee conceptualizations of their relationship with God over time, as discussed below.

One of the earliest written accounts of Cherokee creation is found in a 1698 handwritten journal from Alexander Longe. In Longe's rendition, a "grate god" or "grate emperor" creates the world with the assistance of other gods. Dirt was placed on the back of the crawfish and this dirt grew and expanded to the ends of the earth. When humans were created, they were specifically referred to as white people (because they were made from white clay). Women (mentioned first in this version) and men continued to increase and spread throughout the earth. Eventually a flood occurred which wiped out most life, but some humans were saved and they in turn saved two of every creature. A rainbow was sent as a sign of the end of flooding.[236]

Clearly this version bears striking resemblance to the biblical creation story.[237] And it should be noted that this account far predates missionary activity amongst Cherokees.[238] The

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[236] Alexander Longe, "The Nation of Indians Called Charrikees," (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 1689), n.p.

[237] I am not suggesting that the Cherokee creation story is a derivative of Genesis. Rather, I wish to argue that Cherokees retold Genesis in a way that may have attempted to incorporate traditional Cherokee ethics into a Near Eastern patriarchal narrative.

[238]George Foster, who spent much time with the Cherokees as both an historian and missionary during the nineteenth century, records in his book, *Story of the Cherokee Bible,* how Genesis first came to the southeastern Native nations. In 1528, a band of Spanish conquistadors landed in what is now Florida. Most of them died of tropical illness except one young Spaniard named Cabeca (or Cabeza) who spent the next eight years among the southeastern indigenous nations and shared with them the biblical stories George Foster, *Story of the Cherokee Bible* (Ithaca: Democrat Press, 1899), 8. Emmet Starr attributes the similarity between the Cherokee stories and the biblical narrative to an ex-Jesuit named Christian Priber who spent time with the Cherokees seventy-five years before any coordinated mission work began in 1801 (however, Priber came on the scene twenty-seven years after Longe wrote his journal). In his *History of the Cherokee Indians,* Starr describes Priber as learning the indigenous language and teaching Cherokees many biblical stories Starr.. The influence and presence of both Cabeza and Priber

salient point is that this version of creation recorded by Longe is specifically seen as being the creation story of white people. It is not being interpreted as universal to all peoples. Cherokees have their creation story and white people have another. Hence, prior to missionization, it appears the Cherokee understanding of stories recounted in the Bible are that they represent sacred stories for white people, including a white notion of God. While they may be respected as sacred stories, they are not considered authoritative for other peoples.[239]

George Foster recounts some of the writings from another missionary, Daniel Butrick. Butrick spent a great deal of time recording traditional stories and events surrounding the Cherokee Trail of Tears (upon which he also traveled). He recounted these stories and historical events in his memoirs and antiquities. Here are versions of the God and creation Butrick noted from interviews with Cherokee elders dating from 1817 until 1847:

> All were Indians, or red people, before the flood.[240]
>
> The first man and woman were made of red earth, and therefore were red.[241]

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would account for why these stories were present among Native nations long before missionaries entered the field. Starr, 247.

[239]While Longe interprets the story as illustrating Cherokees believed in a Christian account of creation (perhaps signifying their status as the lost tribes of Israel), I believe the Cherokees Longe encountered were simply practicing traditional hospitality. It's common practice for Cherokee hosts to share their knowledge and experiences with their guests. It's a way of finding common ground and establishing good will. In my opinion, I suspect the Cherokees Longe spoke with had remembered the oral tradition of the Christian narrative that had been passed down orally within the tribe since their first encounter with Europeans, and they recounted that story to show their knowledge of Longe's sacred traditions as a show of hospitality.

[240] Cherokee Old Testament.

[241] Ibid, 59

> God made man, red, of red clay.[242]

> At first there was one man and one woman created. The first human pair were red; and the varieties in the colour of the human race he (Takaetuh – a Cherokee elder) accounted for by the influence of climate.[243]

> God made the first man of red clay and he was an Indian, and made woman of one of his ribs. All people were Indians or red people before the flood.[244]

In these later Cherokee accounts, the Christian creation and Christian God is now understood as relating to more than just white people. If the biblical creation story is supposed to represent a universal God, the question arises of how American Indians, particularly Cherokees, fit into the biblical narrative. The answer at one point seems to have been that instead of viewing God and biblical creation as depicting the origins of white people, it instead must be referring to the creation of Native peoples and their relationship with God the Creator. Cherokees apparently began reinterpreting biblical narratives as part of their own tradition. As the early Methodist missionary Cephas Washburn noted:

> On the subject of personal religion, my conversations with Blanket (a Cherokee elder) were never satisfactory to my own mind…If the Scriptures of the Old Testament were read to him, he would, if possible, find some point of resemblance to their own traditions, and then he was sure to point out something which would tend to exalt his own people above the white people. That he would say was borrowed from the Cherokees.[245]

In the context of utterance, it may be that the translation of "our father" into "*ogidoda"* was reflective of a tension between interpretive trends of the time–how inclusive or exclusive is the biblical narrative, and to what extent are the notions of God universal or people specific?

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[242] Ibid, 55

[243] Washburn and Moore, 155.

[244] Starr, 23

[245] Washburn and Moore, 174.

Now, while that tension can be posited in the context of utterance, the situation changes dramatically when the context is altered. At the time Cherokee scriptures were composed, almost all preaching took place by white missionaries. Thus, if a white missionary uttered the phrase "our father," it would have been translated as "*ogidoda"*–thereby necessarily excluding the missionary. This would result in a sharp distinction between the Cherokee congregation and translator, and the person preaching. It would likely have the effect of excluding the missionary preacher from those in relationship with God. And it could signal the God worshipped by Cherokees isn't the same as the God worshipped by white missionaries.

But again, context is key. Today, the only preachers who preach in Cherokee are Cherokees themselves. It's very rare for Cherokees to translate sermons today preached by non-Cherokee preachers. So now when *ogidoda* is said by a Cherokee preacher or member of the congregation, it's unclear who is meant to be excluded. The different context today means the language doesn't make sense to participants, as witnessed by the Cherokee elder's previous statement. And it rather highlights the argument Jakobson made about linguistic shifters being entirely context dependent. Whatever the intent was, the translation of *ogidoda* as "Our Father" highlights a moment of linguistic disparity that can thwart formal equivalence translation methods.

As a side note, I should mention that while the Cherokee Bible appeared to have followed a formal equivalent model in translating portions of the Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer, that same impetus doesn't seem to be evident in the Lukan version (11:2-4). In fact, the Lukan version repeats exactly the Matthean version in the Cherokee Bible even though the Greek text which formed the basis and source language for the translation is clearly different. I suspect this

may have been a missionary attempt at early gospel harmonization.

While "father" is typically translated in Cherokee scriptures as some form of *edoda,* there is a notable exception. In Matthew 28:19, often referred to as the Great Commission, Jesus instructs his disciples:

> πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος

This verse presents a translation challenge for reasons I alluded to earlier. Here, "father" appears outside any relational structure. It's simply "the Father." There is no way in Cherokee to express "father" outside a relational modifier, so the Cherokee text employs another Cherokee word–*agayvlige.* This is a compound word comprised of *agayvli* and *agehya. Agayvli* literally means very old or ancient. By itself it can also mean "old one" or "ancient one." But when joined with *agehya* to form *agayvlige*, its meaning changes to "old woman" or "ancient woman." *Agehya* is the everyday word for woman/women. Thus, the lack of linguistic commensurability between the Greek and Cherokee languages resulted in God being portrayed in feminine terms. Because there are no gender specific pronouns in Cherokee (e.g. he or she), this feminine portrayal continues through the verse. In addition, there is no word for son or daughter in Cherokee—only child (gender neutral). The gender neutrality of the Cherokee language results in a very different text from the source language in this case. The Cherokee reads:

> *dejawosgesdi agayvlige dudo, ale uweji, ale galvgwodiyu adanvdo*

> [all of you] go immerse [all of them] (in) the old woman's name, and (her) child, and (her) most highly honored heart/spirit.[246]

[246] American Bible Society, Matthew 28:19.

Now, the close paralleling of the Greek and Cherokee texts would seem to indicate formal equivalence was the method employed. And what both these examples attempt to illustrate is one of the premises behind formal equivalence—linguistic commensurability. In order to have formally equivalent translations, it presupposes a close relationship between the linguistic structures of the source and target languages. When languages are widely disparate, formal equivalence has difficulty bridging the gap since word-for-word translations assume a roughly commensurate relationship between words in source and target languages. The differing grammatical structures between source and target languages can strain formal equivalent translations, as can the varied ideological apparatuses connected to the various linguistically derived worldviews. And the problems around linguistic incommensurability have the result of producing widely varying texts.

One example of disparate biblical texts is found in I Peter. In I Peter 3, the text reads:

> Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. (I Peter 3:1-2)

The Greek word used for wives is often used for women generically, *γυναίκες*. The same is true for referring to men interchangeably with husbands. But in Cherokee culture, marriage does not have the same cultural significance as it does for its Western counterparts. Primary affiliation is to one's clan, not a marital partner. Also, marriage was often transitory and thus, not a relationship of high social significance.[247] In fact, traditionally, children were only related by clan to the mother, and the father could own no property nor have much decision-making when it

[247] Perdue, 146-154.

came to the children (this authority rested with the mother and her extended family). Tangentially, this arrangement was a constant source of despair to missionaries. As a result, this cultural situation creates a problem for the above verse. Telling wives to behave a certain way in relation to their husbands would have less cultural salience than it would in more overtly patriarchal societies. Perhaps as a result of this cultural incongruity, Cherokee scriptures read quite differently.

One might think translators would choose the more inclusive meanings of *γυνή* and *ἀνήρ* and translate the passage as "Women, ...accept the authority of your men" so as to make the passage about a general relationship between sexes and not heterosexual spousal relationships specifically. This would avoid cultural disconnect due to differing dynamics related to marriage in Cherokee society, but theoretically affirm patriarchal hierarchy within the text. Yet, this is not how the text reads. Instead, *sginatlai* and *tsigosehe:i* appears. These words mean "sinners" and "elders" respectively. Thus, the relationship being highlighted does not necessarily have anything to do with gender anymore, but with maintaining communal moral stability. If one focuses on the gender relationships contained in the source text, the comparison would be how sinners and elders either subvert or reify conceptualizations of gender in Cherokee scriptures. In that paradigm, either argument could be made. On the one hand, one could view this passage as an instance of subversive echo where the subjugation of women is challenged and undermined through the translation process. On the other hand, one could read the passage as equating women with sinners and men with respected elders. But if one doesn't privilege the source text and rather reads the passage solely in its Cherokee form, the issue of gender simply doesn't arise. Rather, another set of relationships are painted that are more fundamental to communal identity

than male/female—that is, those living in balance versus those who are not. And this relationship is arguably much more foundational and resonant with traditional Cherokee beliefs and traditions than gender contestations.

Conclusion

Indigenous sacred texts can challenge Western literary and philosophical concepts such as textuality, epistemology, dialectics, performance, etc. Indigenous performances can serve as a challenge to previously held assumptions about how textuality was constructed and operated within the ancient world, and the connections between texts and political discourses of power and structures of sovereignty. However, indigenous persistences are also transformed through translation. In the next two chapters, I will focus on the dynamics of collective memory and collective forgetting that ultimately shape and transform identity over time.

Chapter Four: Lineal Memories, Nostalgia and Performance in Hymnody

Memory, remembrance, and nostalgia are all interrelated phenomena in that on some level, the past is both actively involved and evoked—even if only an imagined past. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* Freud sees remembrance as a palliative for the shock of experiences that function by creating protective defenses that allow the psyche to handle shock. In essence, it serves to anesthetize.[248] Walter Benjamin engages Freud's notion of shock, but rather views shock as having positive consequences, in that it can lead to illumination. Indeed, this epiphanic sense of shock is how Benjamin goes on to read shock in Baudelaire.[249] But it seems in both these circumstances, as well as in the works of Baudelaire[250] and Nabokov,[251] that memory is envisioned as tied to individual identity and psyches. Svetlana Boym critiques this tendency towards articulating memory in terms of personal interiority and argues instead that memory cannot be reduced to either pure individuation or collectivity. Rather, memory resides somewhere in between, sharing alternating aspects of both depending on instance and circumstance.[252]

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[248] Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1953-74), 7-64.

[249] Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire.", 163.

[250] Charles Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1970).

[251] Vladmir Nabokov, *Speak, Memory* (New York: Harper, 1951).

[252] Svetlana Boym, *Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 1-57.

If nostalgia is a longing for a home that one had or even never had,[253] how does that fit with Native American relocations? Does one simply long to go home, or is it a mourning over lost connections? Or is it a sort of diasporic nostalgia that has more to do with loss of environmental and sociocultural intimacy than with distance and time? [254] If nostalgia were merely the desire to return home, either temporally or spatially, then it would be a logical conclusion that returning home would ameliorate such a longing. Yet, returning home often did not quell homesickness for many Native peoples since the return could only be made spatially and not temporally.

In this essay, I will use a textual analysis of Cherokee performances to frame a particular concept of nostalgia as the desire to be in balanced connection, even if that reality has not been personally experienced. Nostalgia is not so much a longing for the past, but rather a desire to develop intimacy across time and space in a way that reconstitutes individual and communal identity. And to accomplish this, Native communities rely upon condolence to frame nostalgia such that it results in a "radical remembering of the future."[255] That is, the past becomes an indictment against the supposed inevitability of the colonial present. If society was organized differently before, it can be organized differently in the future (although the future will not look like the past). Native ceremonies can be a place where the present, past, and future become co-present, thereby allowing Native peoples to engage in a racial remembering of the future. In this chapter, I will look at how indigeneity intersects with multiple memories, focusing on both

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[253] Ibid, 1-57.

[254] Ibid, 251.

[255] Andrea Smith, "Unsetting the Privilege of Self-Reflexivity," in *Geographies of Privilege*, ed. F.W. Twine and B. Gardener (Taylor & Francis, 2013), 275.

Native appropriations of Christian texts as well as Native traditional stories and contemporary praxis.

This chapter focuses on a specific type of scriptural witness–oral sacred texts (or oratexts). In particular, I will be examining Cherokee hymns as a type of scriptural witness, no less important to Cherokee scriptures as the later writing/translating of the Cherokee Bible. While written records surrounding sacred songs/hymns and liturgies in antiquity is a frequent area of research in biblical and early Christian studies (e.g. II Samuel 22, II Chronicles 29, Nehemiah 12, Book of Psalms, Acts 16, Revelation 5 and 14, etc.), that is less so the case when the study of scripture extends beyond the early Christian period. I argue that oratexts are an integral part of biblical studies, even when the focus of the texts extends beyond the early Christian era, for two reasons. First, oratexts typically precede their written counterparts, and form the contextual milieu in which later written texts are composed/translated. To understand the context of the written scriptures, one must first understand the content and transmission of preceding oratexts. Together, oratexts create a dialogic relationship with later written scriptures which provide the basis for interpretation and theorizing. Second, oratexts present an entree to religious traditions for marginalized subgroups that often is not available when sacred texts and traditions become codified and canonized. In particular, the composition of hymns is often traced to women, children, and slaves. These voices frequently become excluded as traditions become more institutionalized. But the composition of hymns remains an area where those voices and herstories can be better heard and traced. The exclusion of oratexts from biblical studies' projects results in further gendering the study of biblical texts. While one could argue the historical remnant of ancient hymnody is such that it will necessarily take on a textual character and thus

not be differentiated from that of other biblical texts, such a view ignores the way in which hymnody has often been theorized in gendered terms. Sharon Mattila discusses the gendered language of sense perception prevalent throughout Philo's writings.[256] The senses are typically associated with the feminine for Philo, and thus are portrayed as a passive force that can ensnare and enslave. Yet even in Philo the senses are sometimes differentiated, with lack of sight portrayed as irrationality and feminine. Sight (and hence reading by extension) takes on male imagery while other senses, particularly orality/aurality (and hence singing/listening) takes on female imagery.

This gendering of sound in Christianity is traced by Leigh Eric Schmidt into the modern era.[257] Schmidt examines how Christianity over time increasingly devalued aurality. Further, Schmidt argues the aurality/visual dichotomy was often characterized in gendered language with femininity associated with aurality and thus, a debased form of religious expression. This correlation of aurality with feminine religious expression is also traced in the works of David Chidester and Louise Vinge.[258] What Schmidt demonstrates is that not only is aurality often articulated in feminine language, aural religious expression also often becomes the purview of female religious adherents. While historically Christian religious leadership has been more often than not comprised of men, women have often used oral religious expression as a means of

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[256] Mattila, Sharon L. "Wisdom, Sense Perception, Nature and Philo's Gender Gradient." HTR 89 (1996), pp. 103-29.

[257] Leigh Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 199-245.

[258] Louise Vinge, *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition* (Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1975), 99; David Chidester, *Word and Light: Seeing, Hearing, and Religious Discourse* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 37-38.

exercising religious leadership. While Schmidt examines a variety of ways in which women have demonstrated religious influence through oral/aural expression, I want to focus on the particular instance of hymnody in this chapter.

As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza notes, women's active influence and leadership with the early Church are often omitted within traditional biblical scholarship.[259] Schüssler Fiorenza developed strategies for recovering that history through new conceptual frameworks that deconstructed androcentric readings of biblical texts. In particular, Schüssler Fiorenza articulated the method of rhetorical biblical criticism to help uncover the role and voice of women within the early Church.[260] One of the goals of rhetorical biblical criticism is to better identify through extant textual witnesses the role of those occupying the margins of a religious tradition–in this case Christianity.

Hymnody/sacred songs are clearly attested within biblical texts. But another aspect of hymnody in biblical texts is how they are not infrequently associated with women's voices. The Song of Miriam, Song of Deborah, and Song of Mary are all important biblical archetypes, and yet are associated with women's voices. A scholarly focus on hymnody may require a rethinking of traditional gendering of oral/aural traditions as areas in which women may have had access to public religious expression and leadership. And if hymnody was one socially acceptable way for women to participate in public religious life, excluding hymnody from the biblical studies project becomes a way of excluding women's voices from larger biblical narratives and early Christian traditions. In the Cherokee context, the role and function of hymnody is directly tied to the

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[259] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 68-92.

[260] *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies,* 10-12.

biblical studies project because in part it highlights the role and influence of often marginalized groups—women, children, and slaves—within a larger Cherokee biblical tradition.

Through an examination of Cherokee hymnody, this chapter will examine the manner in which performance occurs through scriptural witnesses via the tracing of lineal memory. In particular, it examines individual and collective memory processes, particularly as they relate to memory of traumatic events, and the impact that can have on scriptural witnesses. I propose that very specific sorts of memory processes can occur, known as flashbulb memories (or "FMs"), which leave indelible imprints on individuals. These flashbulb memories are often connected to traumatic events experienced at both individual and collective levels. When those traumatic events are broadly experienced by a community, certain types of collective remembering can take place which can be formative of communal identities. When scriptural witnesses connect to these types of collective memories, either intentionally or inadvertently, a type of performance takes place through the tracing of lineal memories that create individual and communal identities.

Flashbulb Memory Hypothesis

The field of memory studies is quite extensive, dealing with everything from social dynamics related to memory to the neurobiology of memory storage. This section focuses on a very particular memory dynamic known as the flashbulb memory hypothesis (FMH). FMH was initially developed by Roger Brown and James Kulik in 1977 to explain a very specific type of memory in individuals–vivid memories related to significant historical events which left individuals with memories that were extraordinarily vivid not necessarily of the historical event

itself, but in how they initially learned about the event.[261] These memories were unusual in that individuals were able to recall with great clarity the events surrounding when they first heard about a particular historical event, and that memory was retained throughout their lives.

The archetype Brown and Kulik used for examining flashbulb memories (FM) was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Long after that event, individuals were able to vividly recall the circumstances under which they first learned the President had been shot. Individuals could recall where they were, what they were doing, how they felt, and other extraneous details related to first learning about the news. This clarity of memory persisted for well over a decade when Brown and Kulik began their study. The term flashbulb was used to describe the indiscriminate nature of the memories–rather analogous to a snapshot in time. These memories were highly personalized and retained extraneous detail while omitting other bits of information, much as a photograph might.

Brown and Kulik hypothesized that events which were surprising and of personal consequence to individuals could result in FMs. The greater the perceived personal significance of an event, the more likely a FM would form. The event also had to be unanticipated—a surprise of sorts. Anticipated events were hypothesized to be encoded differently than surprising events. Surprisingly, traumatizing events could result in amnesia rather than FMs. The events most likely to result in FMs were surprising—but not so traumatizing that amnesia would result—and were of deep personal significance for individuals.

In their study, Brown and Kulik asked participants about different historical events and their memories surrounding them. What they found was individuals had greater FMs if the event

[261] Roger Brown and James Kulick, "Flashbulb Memories," *Cognition* 5 (1977), 73-99.

had greater connection to their personal circumstance. For example, no white participants had any FMs of the murder of Medgar Evers, yet about 12% of black participants had FMs of his murder. Approximately 75% of black participants had FMs of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., while only 25% of white participants had FMs of the same event. The one event that had near parity between white and black participants was the assassination of President Kennedy. Nearly 100% of all participants possessed FMs of that event.[262]

Brown and Kulik concluded that events had to be both surprising and personally significant for FM encoding to take place, but the level of clarity achieved in FMs was dependent upon the degree to which an event was personally significant to an individual. A part of their research included asking participants about a personal experience they had which resulted in FMs. In this case, these events were not something broadly experienced, but rather were particular to individual participants. These FMs could involve being informed of a tragedy or having personally experienced a tragedy firsthand. Thus, FMs are associated not just with learning of outside events, but also with events in which one is personally involved. The events that were broadly shared on a societal level were differentiated from those FMs that were unique to a particular individual in that the latter type of FMs were far more likely to be recounted in conversation with other people. In other words, FMs that were specific to a particular participant and not broadly experienced were more likely to be shared in conversation with other people. Brown and Kulik developed a set of categories that most FMs tended to exhibit: place, ongoing event, informant, affect in others, own affect, and aftermath.

[262] Ibid., table 2.

Brown and Kulik were careful to distinguish between FMs themselves, and the larger narratives that grow up around FMs. They argued the encoding for FMs was different than what took place in the larger narrativizing of FMs. In other words, evoking a FM was one thing; explaining the meaning and significance of the FM was a separate phenomenon. This distinction is especially important with FMs dealing with personal experience since other studies have shown those are the FMs most likely to be shared and recounted in personal conversations.[263] FMs arising out of personal experience have the greatest afterlife of all FMs, and thus more likely to be subjected to later narrativizing. David Pillemer discusses the use of FM accounts as authorizing moments for the narrator. The person sharing FMs is able to claim authority by asserting personal connection to a pivotal event, and then use that authority to persuade others to adopt a particular narrative perspective regarding the event.[264] Thus, the narrativizing arising out of FMs confer certain social privileges to the narrator. Martin Conway notes FMs can have widespread resonance in a particular society resulting in collective memories.[265] In this way, FMs are not only a type of individual memory, but through their sharing across a given community, they also constitute larger social memories. But Conway notes there is typically a lag between a FM and its large-scale narrativizing.

> Significant cultural events can give rise to the widespread formation of FMs within a society...and these have been referred to as "collective" memories. . .Events that promote collective memories are often associated with widespread discussion within a society generally at the time of occurrence of a culturally significant event. Later an event may

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[263] I.D. Hyman and J.M. Faries, "The Functions of Autobiographical Memory," in *Theoretical Pespectives on Autobiographical Memory*, ed. M.A. Conway, et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1992), 207-221.

[264] E. Winograd and U. Neisser, "Remembering Personal Circustances," in *Affect and Accuracy in Recall: Stuies of "Flashbulb Memories"*, ed. E. Winograd and U. Neisser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 236-264.

[265] M. Conway, *Flashbulb Memories* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 125.

> be commemorated by monuments, and in books and films. However, the public marking of a significant cultural event does not necessarily take place immediately or even soon after the event. . .Possibly this lag in commemoration reflects a period of restructuring in which the traumatic event is gradually reconceptualised–as in memory for personal trauma.[266]

Building on this work, I contend that certain events resulted in FMs for Cherokee people. During the period of Cherokee hymn composition and Cherokee biblical translation, the stage was set for the removal of Cherokees to Indian Territory (the removal commonly referred to as the Trail of Tears). The trauma experienced during the removal was of an unexpected and personally significant quality such that it resulted in widespread FMs for individual Cherokees. The memories associated with the Trail possessed extraordinary personal significance, and as a result, intensely vivid memories formed that persisted for decades. It could be the case that the nature of the Trail was so shocking, that remembrance may have been suppressed for some time after arriving in Indian Territory. Many accounts discuss a virtual silence over the ordeal after arriving in Indian Territory. But it would seem over time, those FMs, or at least narrative traditions surrounding those FMs, began to surface. In examining Cherokee hymns, allusions to these FMs are present, both in the lyrics of the hymns as well as the oral traditions surrounding their composition and performance. Yet, as vivid and significant as these FMs are regarding the Trail, another level of narrativizing has taken place around these FMs that has been formative in creating a collective Cherokee identity.

[266] Ibid, 125-126.

Collective Memory

The notion of collective memory is typically traced to the work of Maurice Halbwachs who argued that individual memories are dependent upon a larger social context that contours and constrains our individual memories. Halbwachs acknowledges we remember as individuals, but those memories always exist within a prior social context that shapes how and what we remember as individuals. The larger social context is comprised of memories shared by the larger community. These collectivized communal memories shape and constrain the circumstances under which individuals within a particular community engage in remembrance. Halbwachs argued that individuals are not able to remember outside a larger social context, situated in time and place.[267] The collective memories associated with the larger social context are gestured to and contained within social rites and public infrastructure. Thus, wider social power dynamics that occur within sociopolitical institutions are pivotal in shaping individual memories–indeed, individual memories can be thought of as effects of social power. In addition, even physical landmarks such as buildings, memorials, and other forms of public architecture can function as scaffolding for larger collective memories in a society.[268] Such social infrastructure both reflect and relay collective memories for a society.

Collective memories are always particular to a given society. What is collectively remembered will vary from community to community and eschews universalization. Paul

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[267] *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 84-196.

[268] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 69-94.

Connerton expands on Halbwachs to argue not only are institutions and physical structures part of collective memories, but so also are things like clothing, gestures, and music/song.[269]

Collective memory serves a function of not only recalling the past, but also shaping the future. Collective memories not only provide context for individual memories, but shape communal identities. To remember a certain way is to belong to a certain community. Communal identity is performed through selective remembrance. In other words, memory very much constitutes identity. To challenge a collective memory is to challenge a communal identity, and one's relationship to that community. Collective memory thus creates kinship.

Because memory relates to larger place and space, there is a symbiotic relationship to remembrance, identity, and place, and kinship. To remember is to place oneself in specific relationship to a particular place and time. Remembering collectively is to establish relationship to particular locales, environments, and land bases.

> Thus, we understand why spatial images play so important a role in the collective memory. The place a group occupies is not like a blackboard, where one may write and erase figures at will. No image of a blackboard can recall what was once written there. The board could not care less what has been written on it before, and new figures may be freely added. But place and group have each received the imprint of the other. Therefore, every phase of the group can be translated into spatial terms, and its residence is but the juncture of all these terms. Each aspect, each detail, of this place has a meaning intelligent only to members of the group, for each portion of its space corresponds to various and different aspects of the structure and life of their society, at least of what is most stable in it.

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[269] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 41-71. I think Halbwachs acknowledges to a certain extent that things like gestures and music/ritual also create and reflect collective memories. "Rites consist of a body of gestures, words, and liturgical objects established in a material form. From this point of view, sacred texts have a ritual character...The recitation of the Gospels, the Epistles, and prayers have the same value as a genuflection, an oblation, a gesture of benediction." Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*., 116.

> Of course, extraordinary events are also fitted within this spatial framework, because they occasion in the group a more intense awareness of its past and present, the bonds attaching it to physical locale gaining greater clarity in the very moment of their destruction. But a truly major event always results in an alteration of the relationship of the group to place...From then on, neither the group nor the collective memory remains the same, but neither have the physical surroundings . . .Thus, every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework.[270]

Because collective memory is located in time and space, massive disruptions in location would result in similar disruptions to collective memories. New sets of collective memories would likely develop–typically centered around the physical disruption as being a communal formation moment. And the external scaffolding described by Halbwachs and Roach from which collective memories connect and are transmitted would also presumably transform in cases of physical dislocation as the new collective memories formed would give rise to new sociopolitical institutions that attest to those new memories and emerging communal identities. In this way, remembrance is performative because memory ultimately gives rise to communal identities, new religiosities, and communal infrastructure (including sovereignty systems).

The forced relocation of Cherokees through the Trail served not only as a FM, but also as a pivotal collective memory upon which the identity of Cherokee peoples began to center. Part of this communal identity formation around the Trail of Tears was occasioned by the change in place and the shift in collective memories that resulted. The new collective memories that developed not only shaped new communal identities, but also new sociopolitical structures upon which that communal identity was reflected and communicated to new generations. Because collective memories require external support, new governing and sovereignty structures

[270] M. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980)., 130.

developed in the relocated Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory that drew upon traditional beliefs and practices but were inextricably connected to the removal process.

While the Trail served as a pivotal communal identity formation moment, it was not the only such moment. Yet, the oratexts and written scriptures connected to Cherokee Christianity have as their touchpoint the Trail of Tears rather than the tribulations endured during the Civil War and other pivotal moments. I will explore why I think that is the case more fully in the next chapter.

Historical Context of Cherokee Hymns

It is important to consider the historical moment in which Cherokee hymns arose. When missionary activity was first permitted in the Cherokee Nation, the goal was to teach Cherokee students to read and comprehend the scriptures, hopefully ultimately leading to conversion. But the language barrier proved to be formidable, and as yet there was no Western-style writing system for the Cherokee language. While mastery of reading scripture proved generally elusive, the adoption of hymns was far more widely embraced by Cherokee people. And prior to the invention of the Sequoyah writing system in 1821, virtually all translation into Cherokee occurred orally, with hymns being the primary vehicle. As such, the translation of Cherokee hymns predates that of Cherokee scriptures. And because traditional Cherokee culture incorporates the singing of sacred songs as part of regular ceremonial practices, the inclusion of hymns represented far less of a cultural shift than did later introductions of written scriptures. Indeed, as I will show in the following discussion, Cherokee hymns frequently defied traditional parameters of Christian hymnody, both in performance and in lyrical content.

The origin of the first Cherokee hymn did not come from the translation work of a Christian missionary. Instead, the first known Cherokee hymn was written after a young Cherokee woman received a vision beside a stream in 1819. According to George Foster, sixteen-year-old Lydia Lowery was studying at the Mission school:

> And when the lessons of the Sabbath morning were over, the Cherokee maiden bounded away over the cleared lot, and threw herself beside the brook which was rippling in the deep forest…and then she fell asleep…She dreamed of a grove of wonderful beauty, in which had gathered a vast concourse of Cherokee people. They were seated around in a semi-circle, and in their midst stood a wonderful being, giving praise to the Great Spirit, the whole congregation repeating again and again the words after him, in joyful Cherokee song. And when the Cherokee girl awoke, she looked about her in surprise, for she then saw no congregation, and heard no music but the brook's murmur, and the song-words of the singing birds. But the song of her dreams still filled her mind…This was the first Cherokee hymn, and it was the result of this dream of little Lydia Lowery.[271]

Lowery's hymn, entitled *Unehlanvhi oginalii,* or *God is My Friend* (or sometimes translated as *The Lord and I Are Friends*) is the first-known hymn in the Cherokee language. It is not a translation from an English hymn or the product of Christian missionaries. Rather, it is an original composition by a Cherokee teen after supposedly receiving a vision from God.

Because of the importance of water in traditional Cherokee rituals, the numerous references to water in the above account may have reflected a traditional spirituality. As a Cherokee tribal member noted to me, Cherokee Christian churches today are very often built so that people have to pass over a little stream or creek before they enter the church. Running water is a sacred and cleansing force, traditionally.

[271] George E. Foster, *The Story of the Cherokee Bible* (Ithaca: Democrat Press, 1897), 38.

Jack Kilpatrick mentions Lowery's dream took place shortly after she was baptized.[272] The numerous references to water in these accounts may be a reflection of the traditional cultural importance of water in Cherokee life. Additionally, the reference to a concourse of Cherokees gathered in the midst of a grove, seated in a semi-circle evokes the setting of traditional Cherokee ceremonies rather than church gatherings at that time. Lowery's hymn was envisioned as a gift directly from the Great Spirit to the Cherokee people which was meant to be sung in their own language rather than English.

Amory Nelson Chamberlain was the son of Presbyterian missionaries to the Cherokee and was born at Brainerd Mission in 1821.[273] Chamberlain continued the work of his parents, resettling in Indian Territory after the removal. About fifty years after Lowery's hymn had been first composed, Chamberlain composed a new melody for it (which is no longer extant). By this time, Lowery's hymn was sometimes referred to as the Twenty-Third Psalm.

As noted in the introduction, hymnody was one of the ways in which those occupying the margins could participate in public Christian religious life. This is evident in the first Cherokee hymn being written by a young Cherokee woman. It was through Lydia Lowery that the tradition of Cherokee hymn-singing that continues to this day began, and it was her vision of continued Cherokee cultural expression that is echoed in later hymns.

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[272] Jack Kilpatrick, "The Wahnenauhi Manuscript," ed. Bureu of American Ethnology (Washington, DC: US Government Priting Office, 1966), 180.

[273] Lon H Eakes, "Rev. Amory Nelson Chamberlin," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 12, no. March (1934), 97-102.

Analysis of Cherokee Hymns

Cherokee hymns fall into two broad categories–hymns for which there is an English counterpart, and hymns which represent original compositions. I will be looking at both types of hymns.[274]

There Is A Fountain

Ga nu go gv a ni s ga na	There is a spring where sinners
U na da wo s di yi	Can be baptized
Na Hna u na do su le di yi	There to be washed
U ni s ga nv tsv i	Sinners.
Tsi sa ye no ga lo ne dv	Jesus Christ
Gi gv u tse wo tse le i	S/he spilled her/his blood
Na s gi u gi gv na ni v	Her/his blood all
U ni nv ga li s gi	Will clean
Tsa yo hu s ge u s ga nv tsv hi	The sinner dying
A da nv sa hv s gi	A thief
U li he li tse u go hv	Saw rejoicing
Na s gi ga nu go gv	That spring
Na s quo a yv tsi s ga na i	I too am a sinner
Na hna ga nu go gv	There at the spring
Tsi lu gi ga li e li gv	I come rejoicing
Ga do su le i ga	To be cleansed
I gv yi yi a gi go hv	First I saw
Na s gi ga nu go gv	That spring
Nv da gv wa da le nv dv	From the beginning of day
De tsi no gi s go i	I am singing
U gi gv tsu tse wo tse le i	Her/his blood was spilled
Tsi sa ga lo ne dv	Jesus Christ
Tsi yo u sv i gv di s gi	Until I die
De tsi no gi s di ha	I am singing

[274] All Cherokee hymns referenced in this chapter can be found in American Baptist Publication Society, *Cherokee Hymnbook* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1896). Translations of the hymns are mine.

A note about the Cherokee text—I chose to write the Cherokee text in discrete syllables even though this would not correspond to the breakage that separates actual Cherokee words. However, this mode of transliteration is the most common for hymns today. I chose to retain this style because each syllable corresponds to a Cherokee letter in Cherokee syllabary. The traditional Cherokee writing system is not an alphabet, but rather a syllabary in which a single symbol represents an entire syllable in a word. Thus, it is not uncommon to see Cherokee transliterated into Roman font with separations corresponding to the traditional Cherokee syllabary. While "s" is not a syllable in English, it has its own symbol in the Cherokee syllabary, and thus I transliterated it as a separate syllable. I should also note that another reason this mode of transliteration is popular is because Native churches in Oklahoma will often sing the hymns of neighboring Native nations. It is not uncommon for Native hymnals to transliterate hymns in the above manner. This allows other tribes to sing Cherokee hymns without knowing the language. And this practice of shared hymns sung intertribally continues today throughout much of Indian Country. Finally, "ts" is pronounced similar to the English "j" sound, and "v" is pronounced like a short "u" in English (the u in cut).

This first hymn is the Cherokee counterpart to an English hymn. Here are the English lyrics for the hymn:

There is a Fountain (Cherokee)

There is a spring where sinners
baptized
There to be washed
Sinners
Jesus Christ
S/he spilled her/his blood

There is a Fountain (English)

There is a fountain filled with blood Can be
drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains,
lose all their guilty stains,
lose all their guilty stains;

Her/his blood all
Will clean
The sinner dying
A thief
Saw rejoicing
That spring
I too am a sinner
There at the spring
I come rejoicing
To be cleansed
First I saw
That spring
From the beginning of the day
I am singing
His/her blood was spilled
Jesus Christ
Until I die
I am singing

And sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains.
The dying thief rejoiced to see
that fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
wash all my sins away,
wash all my sins away,
wash all my sins away;
And there may I, though vile as he,
wash all my sins away.
Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
be saved, to sin no more.
Be saved, to sin no more,
be saved, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God
be saved, to sin no more.

As is common with most Cherokee translations of English hymns, the lyrics in the Cherokee version do not closely mirror the English counterpart. In the Cherokee version, there is no emphasis on the larger church. The focus is on a personal experience of rejuvenation from Jesus. Looking more closely at the Cherokee lyrics, in the second line of the first stanza, the word for "baptized" is *unadawosdiyi.* As discussed in the previous chapter, the word used here refers to plunging into water–not a light sprinkling of water. It has resonances with traditional Cherokee ceremonies of "going to water," or *amohi atsvsdi*. Furthermore, the English hymn makes repeated use of the word fountain. Typically fountains funnel water to a destination and are distinct from a natural spring of water. In Cherokee, there is comparable word to that (*ama unanugoisdi*), but instead the Cherokee hymn used the word for a natural spring of water. This would further accentuate the traditional ceremonial aspect of *unadawosdiyi* since the "going to water" ceremony is generally associated with natural springs of water–not fountains.

Christian baptism was a practice frequently done in rivers and streams with living water instead of water vessels, so that is not unique to Cherokees. But the resonance of a baptism being practiced in a particular way would hold great resonance to Cherokees because of its similarity to traditional Cherokee ceremonial practices. In other words, the historical image being conveyed in this hymn does not necessarily trace back to baptismal practices of the early church in Palestine, but rather to traditional Cherokee ceremonial practices practiced for millennia. The chain of memory evoked in such imagery can be traditional Cherokee beliefs and practices, and this lineal memory would arguably have greater salience for Cherokee communities. If performance works by tracing of lineal memories, the question arises as to what chain of memories is being evoked in Cherokee oratexts. Arguably, one of the potentially subversive elements of Cherokee hymns is that they can be performed under the auspices of Christian gathering, yet also convey traditional Cherokee beliefs and practices which were otherwise discouraged or penalized.

Another Cherokee hymn which a translation of an English counterpart is *What a Friend.*

What A Friend

S qua ti ni se s di yi ho wa	Guide me Jehovah
E la di ga i sv i	As I walk along
Tsi wa ni ga la hi yu a yv	Weak, I am
Tso tla ni gi di ni hi	Strong, You are
S gi s de li s gi s gi s de li s gi	Help us help us
Di s gi na no wa di do	Watch over us
S gi s de li s gi s gi s de li s gi	Help us help us
Di s gi na no wa di do	Watch over us
Nv wo ti ga nu go gv i	Medicine spring
A nv wo s gi s du i si	Open to us
A tsi la no u lo gi lv	Fire cloud
I gv yi a i se s di	Goes before us.

Ga la si no u wa tla v
Tso da ni u we yv i
S gi yo hi s da ne lv quo no
A que li hi s di s gv yi

S gi s de li s gi s gi s de li s gi
Do hi de s gi so s ta nv
Ni go hi lv ni go hi lv
Do da gv no gi s ta ni

When I step on the banks
Of the Jordan River
Stop my
Worrying

Help us help us
In peace help us cross
Always always
I will sing to You

Here is a comparison with the English version of the hymn:

What a Friend (Cherokee)

Guide me Jehovah
As I walk along
Weak, I am
Strong, You are.

Help us help us
Watch over us
Help us help us
Watch over us.

Medicine spring
Open to us
Fire cloud
Goes before us.

When I step on the banks
Of the Jordan River
Stop my
Worrying.

Help us help us
In peace help us cross
Always always
I will sing to You.

Help us help us
Watch over us
Help us help us
Watch over us

What a Friend (English)

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer

O what peace we often forfeit
O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations
Is there trouble anywhere
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Are we weak and heavy laden
Cumbered with a load of care
Precious Savior still our refuge
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Do they friends despise, forsake thee
Take it to the Lord in prayer
In his arms he'll take and shield thee
Thou wilt find a solace there

The lyrics of this Cherokee hymn have even less correspondence to its English counterpart than the previous example. The reason for that is it is sometimes the words from one Cherokee hymn will be used for another Cherokee hymn, with the only difference being the melody. That is the case here. The words for this hymn are identical to *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* (the English version being composed almost a hundred years prior to *What a Friend*).

Here is a comparison of the Cherokee and English lyrics to *Guide Me*:

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (Cherokee)	*Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah* (English)
Guide me Jehovah	Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
As I walk along	pilgrim through this barren land.
Weak I am	I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Strong You are	hold me with thy powerful hand.
Help us, watch over us	Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Help us	feed me till I want no more;
Watch over us	feed me till I want no more.
Medicine spring	Open now the crystal fountain,
Open to us	whence the healing stream doth flow;
Fire cloud	let the fire and cloudy pillar
Goes before us	lead me all my journey through.
Help us, watch over us	Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Help us	be thou still my strength and shield;
Watch over us	be thou still my strength and shield.
When I step on the banks of	When I tread the verge of Jordan,
The Jordan River	bid my anxious fears subside;
Stop my	death of death and hell's destruction,
Worrying	land me safe on Canaan's side.
Help us, watch over us	Songs of praises, songs of praises,
Help us	I will ever give to thee;
Watch over us	I will ever give to thee.
Help us, help us	Musing on my habitation,
In peace help us cross	Musing on my heav'nly home,
Always, always	Fills my soul with holy longings:
I'll make music to you	Come, my Jesus, quickly come;
Always I'll make music to you	Vanity is all I see;

Help us	Lord, I long to be with Thee!
Watch over us	Lord, I long to be with Thee!

The lyrics between the Cherokee and English now have much more similarity to each other. Not every Cherokee hymn has its lyrics transposed onto later hymns, but this is one that does (as does another hymn we shall see, *Amazing Grace*).

Jehovah is transliterated in Cherokee as *Yihowa. Yihowa* is an interesting term because during the colonial period of the United States up through the nineteenth century, it was a common predilection of Christian missionaries to proclaim Native nations as the lost tribes of Israel.[275] As a result, many missionaries sought to prove linguistic connections between Native peoples and ancient Israelites. *Yihowa* was sometimes cited as an example of a Hebrew word found in the Cherokee Nation that proved a linguistic and lineal connection to ancient Israel. However, by the time this linguistic discovery was made, Christian explorers had already spent considerable time in the Cherokee Nation.[276] It is likely that is where the term arose as it has no

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[275] See accounts recorded in James Adair, *History of the American Indian* (Nashville: Blue and Gray Press, 1971), 15-191. (a reprint of the original work from 1775). Missionaries, evangelists, and travelers such as John Howard Payne, Thomas Thorowgood, John Eliot, Roger Williams, William Penn, cotton Mather, William Bartram, Jonathan Edwards, Israel Worsley, and Lord Viscount Kingsborough all argued for a Hebrew origin of Native peoples, particularly those in the Southeast including Cherokees. They argued Cherokees in particular were the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. This meme became so popular, some Cherokees used it to publicly advocate on behalf of the Cherokee interests with the US Congress (eg. Elias Boudinot).

[276] George Foster, op cit, 8, who spent much time with the Cherokees as both an historian and missionary during the nineteenth century, records in his book, Story of the Cherokee Bible, how Genesis first came to the southeastern Native nations. In 1528, a band of Spanish conquistadors landed in what is now Florida. Most of them died of tropical illness except one young Spaniard named Cabeca (or Cabeza) who spent the next eight years among the southeastern indigenous nations. Emmet Starr attributes the similarity between the Cherokee stories and the biblical narrative to an ex-Jesuit named Christian Priber who spent time with the Cherokees seventy-five years before any coordinated mission work began in 1801 (however, Priber came on the scene twenty-seven years after the first extant account of Cherokee religious beliefs was recorded by Alexander Longe in his journal, The Nation of Indians called Charrikees; bound handwritten manuscript in the Gilcrease Museum archives, Tulsa, 1698). In his *History of the Cherokee Indians*, Starr describes Priber as learning the indigenous language and teaching Cherokees many biblical stories. The influence and presence of both Cabeza and Priber would account for why these stories were present among Native nations long before missionaries entered the field, and shared with them the biblical stories. Op cit, 247. One issue with the Cabeza account is it isn't clear from Cabeza de Vaca's journal that he actually encountered any Cherokee during his travels. Because his account was written after his return to Spain, and because

other reference in traditional Cherokee texts or colloquial usage, nor does it share any linguistic affinity to other Cherokee vocabulary). There is another Cherokee transliteration found in this hymn–in the second line of the fourth stanza. The Jordan River is transliterated as *Tsodani.*

The elements I want to focus on are the sections apparently alluding to the Exodus story in the English version of the hymn. Because Cherokee hymns often do not mirror their English counterparts, I think it is interesting that the Cherokee version attempts to capture much of the Exodus imagery. For example, the third and fourth lines of the third stanza read "Fire cloud goes before us." This presumably would be an image taken from the biblical exodus narrative (Exodus 13:21-22) where God travels with the people as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night during their flight from Egypt. In the biblical narrative, the context is one of hurried, forced travel while being pursued by enemies. Interestingly, the English version talks about crossing the Jordan River in hopes of safely arriving in Canaan. The Cherokee version only mentions the stress of crossing the Jordan with no mention of hopes of arriving in Canaan.

Throughout the Cherokee version of the hymn, there is a troubled sensibility. In the first stanza, the third and fourth lines emphasize the weakness of the singer compared to the strength of God. But the plaintive cries become pressing in the chorus which begins in the second stanza. "Help us, help us—watch over us" is very urgent and emotive. The worrying mentioned in the third stanza as well as the first line of the fourth stanza reiterate this sense of distress and desperation.

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he was unsure exactly where he traveled nor knew for certain the names of the tribes he encountered, there is uncertainty regarding the exact nature of his travel. Foster. Also see J.F.M.F. Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Account: Alvar Nunez Cabeza De Vaca's Relación* (Houston: Arte Publico Press). (translation of 1542 account) .

While we do not know exactly when the Cherokee version of *Guide Me* was written, we do know that the version found in *What a Friend* was after the removal. Not every Cherokee hymn had lyrics used for other hymns, but one possible reason this happened here may be because of the evocative nature of the imagery contained in the lyrics. There are dual images of biblical dislocation occurring alongside the context of forced Cherokee removal. On the one hand there are allusions to the Israelites crossing out of the land while pursued by Egyptians. On the other hand, there is a history in which Cherokees were forced to leave their homelands while being pursued by US military. The allusion to crossing over the River is eerily analogous to Cherokees being forced to cross the Mississippi River during the removal. The Babylonian exile is connected to the Cherokee removal when Cherokees were forced to cross the big river—the Mississippi—into exile in an unknown land. Cherokee oral traditions described to me by elders recount that when many people reached the banks of the Mississippi, their bodies became weak and began to quake. One oral account says when Cherokees came to the banks of the Mississippi river to cross over, the elders instead laid down along the eastern banks of the Mississippi River, and their hearts simply stopped beating. According to this account, Cherokee elders simply could not leave the land without losing their hearts. That is supposedly one reason why very few over the age of 60 made it into Indian Territory—the elders couldn't pass over the banks of the Mississippi River.[277] Within that context, the pleas for help to cross the river take on additional meaning.

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[277] Daniel S Butrick, *Cherokee Removal: The Journal of Rev. Daniel S. Butrick, May 19, 1838-April 1, 1839* (Park Hill: Oklahoma: Trail of Tears Association, Oklahoma Chapter, 1998), 6-32; John Burnett, "Birthday Story of Private John G. Burnett, Captain Abraham Mcclellan's Company, 2nd Regiment, 2nd Brigade, Mounted Infatry, Cherokee Indian Removal, 1838-39," Cherokee Cultural Center of Houston, http://www.powersource.com/cherokee/burnett.html.

Another dual biblical/Cherokee image is found in the first line of the second stanza. The phrase "medicine spring" is similar to what we saw in *There is a Fountain* where "fountain" is translated in Cherokee as "spring." Again, the same allusions hold to traditional Cherokee ceremonial practices, but in this hymn, are more pronounced. The word for "medicine" in "medicine spring" is *nvwodhi.* As recounted to me by elders, in traditional Cherokee ceremonies such as stomp dances and Green Corn, traditional medicines are administered to all adults as part of the ritual practices. That medicine is called *nvwodhi.* It has a ceremonial use and is viewed by some as the central feature of Cherokee ceremonies. The person administering the medicine is sometimes referred to as an Indian doctor in English. In Cherokee, they are called *didanvwisgi.* Another way of translating *didanvwisgi* is medicine person, or one who does medicine. *Nvwodhi* and *didanvwisgi* come from the same root. Without this medicine, Cherokees are not fully participating in Cherokee ceremonial life. Another allusion to Cherokee ceremonial life is the word for fire in "fire cloud" – *astila.* Along the Trail of Tears, the firekeepers brought embers from sacred Cherokee fires with them into Indian Territory. They did that so the sacred ceremonial fires of the Cherokee Nation would never be extinguished—even in the midst of removal. And those firekeepers often served as community leaders who were placed in charge of groups of Cherokee families as they were forced along the Trail. Additionally, part of the stomp dance tradition involves dancing all night around a fire. After taking medicine, or *nvwodhi*, children and adults would gather around the sacred fire for prayer. The men would call the women to dance, and they would begin stomp dancing throughout the night. Thus "Medicine Spring open to us" and "Fire cloud goes before us" are more than referents to biblical stories–

they are also important expressions of Cherokee ceremonial life that provided vision and support for people during a dark period in the Cherokee Nation's history.

These positive images of Cherokee ceremonial life stand in stark contrast to Cherokee written scriptures. Practicing traditional medicine was demonized in the Cherokee Bible and equated with sorcerers and the magic arts (Acts. 13: 6,8; Rev. 21: 8; Rev. 22: 15 all refer to *didanvwisgi*). Yet in this hymn (and *What a Friend* by extension), *nvwodhi*, or "medicine spring," is viewed positively and possibly even entreated by hymn singers. In fact, one elder told me that medicine spring refers to Jesus. The biblical narratives in Exodus and the hymn, *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* (as well as the later hymn, *What a Friend*), would appear to have functioned as a mechanism for tracing lineal memories surrounding traditional Cherokee ceremonial life through accepted Christian practices.

And those tracings of lineal memories would have had special significance in the context of the Trail of Tears. Thus, the performative value of such a hymn could have functioned as a way of preserving a distinct communal identity that maintained lineal memories to traditional Cherokee ways of life in the midst of historical trauma.

Amazing Grace

U ne la nv hi u we tsi	God's Child
I ga gu uv he i	Paid for us
Hna quo tso sv wi yu lo se	Then to heaven s/he went
I ga gu yv ho nv	After paying for us
A se no i u ne tse i	But S/he said
I yu no du le nv	When S/he rose
Ta li ne dv tsi lu tsi li	I'll come again
U dv ne u ne tsv	S/he said when s/he spoke

E lo ni gv da li s qua di
Ga lu tsv na i yu
Ni ga di da ye di go i
A ni e lo ni gv

U na da nv ti a ne hv i
Do dv ya nv hi li
Tso sv hna quo ni go hi lv
Do hi wa ne he s di

All the earth will end
When S/he comes
All will see her/him
All over the earth

All the good people living
S/he will come after
Heaven always
In peace they will live

Here are the English and Cherokee lyrics for *Amazing Grace*:

Amazing Grace (Cherokee)
God's Child
Paid for us
Then to heaven s/he went
After paying for us

But s/he said
When s/he rose
I'll come again
S/he said when s/he spoke

All the earth will end
When S/he comes
All will see her/him
All over the earth

All the good people living
S/he will come after
Heaven always
In peace they will live

Amazing Grace (English)
Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind, but now, I see

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear
And Grace, my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come
T'was Grace that brought us safe thus far
And Grace will lead us home

When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Then when we've first begun

Amazing Grace represents perhaps the most widely known and popular hymn in the Cherokee Nation today. In some Cherokee churches, this song is held with such reverence, everyone rises each time it is sung. I will address the history behind this phenomenon later. Looking at the actual text of the hymn, the first line of the first stanza I chose to translate as "God's Child." While "God's Child" is a strict word-for-word translation, translators have

traditionally translated this as “God’s son” (this phrase is seen in many hymns and Cherokee scriptures). The reason is because translators generally understand this text to be referring to Jesus, and Jesus is understood as God’s son. But in fact, there is no word for “son” in Cherokee. Nor is there a word for “daughter” in Cherokee. There is/are only child/ren—completely gender neutral. Whenever “son” or “daughter” is translated into Cherokee, the Cherokee word will be either *uwetsi* as it is here, or *ayohli* (which is also gender-neutral). *Uwetsi* really means “child,” and neither denotes nor connotes any gender ascription. This gender neutrality continues with Cherokee pronouns. There is no “he” or “she” in Cherokee. Rather, there is only a gender-neutral marker that is understood in relation to the word in which it is connected or the concept it references. In the third line of the first stanza, I represented this by “s/he” rather than choosing either a male or female generic since Cherokee is an inherently ungendered language. While theoretically “it” would be an option, in Cherokee there are numerous words and markers for “it” that have no correspondence with English, and thus “it” would not be the best word choice in almost all instances.

The third stanza stresses repeatedly the whole or entirety of the earth and all inhabitants in the first, third, and fourth lines. The text is rather economical, so I tried to replicate that by use of “all,” but at the same time a repetition of “all” develops in English which is not entirely mirrored in Cherokee. While you could translate *anielonigv* as “The whole earth” or “The entire entire,” I would say there is a connection with the third line which is definitely referring to all humanity. Thus, I retained the all in the first and fourth lines to show not only could it be read as “the entire earth,” but also as “all those on the earth.” The fourth line of the third stanza is difficult to translate because it is made up of really only one word (with a prefix) and carries a

wide semantical range. One way Cherokees can identify themselves to outsiders is by saying, "*Anitsalagi*" or "*Aniyywiya,*" followed by clan identification (eg. *Aniahwi*). The *ani-* prefix can be used to indicate the pronoun "they," or it can refer to a collective identity. Here there is a sense of "they" belonging to and deriving identity from the "earth." In other words, "they" or "all of us" "belong to the earth." So even in choosing to translate that line as "All over the earth," it should be recognized that line has a much wider semantic and connotative realm that by its very utterance, inscribes the speaker into an inextricable connection with the earth.

Finally, "*elonigv*" refers to more than just earth. This is because *elohi* also includes worldview and oral traditions within its semantic range.[278] To speak of the earth, one necessarily speaks also of a particular worldview and a particular set of oral traditions that comprise that worldview. To speak of *elohi* in the context of this hymn, therefore, is to evoke not just a particular land, but also a specific worldview and set of oral traditions. Also, *elohi* is frequently found in traditional Cherokee ceremonial language, and in that context is not just referring to the earth, but a particular land that is in specific connection to a certain people–Cherokee people. Thus, use of *elohi* here can serve to inscribe a particular Christian hymn into a larger set of Cherokee oral traditions and lineal memories that are inherently connected to a specific landbase and worldview. There is a performative aspect of *Amazing Grace* in Cherokee that functions less to inscribe Cherokees within a Christian tradition, but to inscribe Christianity within a Cherokee tradition.

[278] Jace Weaver, *Otherwise Words*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 301.

As previously mentioned, this hymn has a tradition of being sung while standing in Cherokee churches (though that practice is becoming increasingly less common). According to some accounts told me by Cherokee elders, this tradition dates back to the Trail of Tears. In preparation for removing Cherokees to Indian Territory (now present-day Oklahoma), Cherokees were rounded up and held in stockades. According to oral and written accounts of that time, Cherokees were placed in stockades without adequate blankets, food, or medicine.[279] All weapons and sharp instruments were removed from Cherokees as they were now prisoners. While guarding Cherokees in stockades, soldiers grew bored and desirous of entertainment. Traders would visit the stockades at night to sell liquor to the soldiers.

The soldiers would purchase the alcohol, then enter the stockades. According to one of the missionaries present at the time, Daniel Butrick, the soldiers specifically targeted Cherokee women who had attended schools operated by Christian missionaries.[280] Soldiers would offer alcohol to these women and an opportunity to leave the walls of the stockade. Or, soldiers would drag women and children out. Once outside the stockade walls, soldiers would take turns raping the women. The women's screams supposedly could be heard inside the stockade walls, but without any way of intervening, the families of these women had no way of protecting them.

This systematic rape of Cherokee women and children occurred night after night. Without any weapons or means of defense, the men in the stockades came together and lined up, standing along the inside of the stockade walls. When they heard the women cry out, they would

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[279] Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 286-293; Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1881), 257-297; John Ehle, *Trail of Tears: Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 341-392; Thurman Wilkens, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 316-329.

[280] E. Raymond Evans, "Fort Marr Blackhouse," *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 2, no. 2 (1977), 259.

sing hymns–particularly *Amazing Grace.* According to oral accounts conveyed to me, this was done by the men to let the women know that no matter what they endured, they were not forgotten by their families. Cherokee men used this hymn each night as a lifeline to women and children, so they would be able to endure the horrific sexual trauma they were being subjected to by the soldiers.

Amazing Grace was used as a tool of resistance in the face of overwhelming odds, and as a source of condolence for those undergoing extensive trauma. Part of what constitutes Cherokee oratexts are not only the hymns themselves, but also the oral traditions surrounding their composition and use. The lineal memories gestured to in the oral accounts around this hymn suggest that *Amazing Grace* evokes vivid accounts of an historically traumatic event that was widespread across Cherokee communities. These memories could fall into the classification of FMs and as such would have persisted over a lifetime. But the sharing of the narratives around *Amazing Grace* may not have happened for quite some time after the Trail due to the depth of trauma experienced. By then, a level of narrativizing would have developed, though not broadly shared outside Cherokee communities. While the events surrounding the singing of *Amazing Grace* during the Trail may not necessarily be known to singers today, the effect of the hymn in developing a sense of collective identity may persist in excess of the oral traditions around this hymn. In other words, the simple association of this hymn with the Trail may effectively function as a collective identity performative moment. As noted in two separate discussions I had with Cherokee hymn singers:

> One of my best friends ever, involved in his (non-Baptist) church for a long time, said he was resigning from the national office because he remarried and, "my wife is Baptist and she doesn't see any Cherokee singing in my church back home so we're going to the Baptist church."

> When they brought that new pastor in, she said she didn't want any more Indian hymns. She said we had to use the Methodist hymnals now. I told her if I wanted to go to non-Indian church, I'd go to Tulsa Methodist. But this is an Indian church, and we sing Indian hymns. . .She didn't last too long.

The connection between communal identity and hymn singing is significant for some Cherokees. I argue one of the reasons for this connection is the lineal memories traced through the singing of these hymns–particularly ones as evocative as Amazing Grace.

At the Cross

U ne la nv hi u we tsi	God's Child
I ga gu yv he i	Paid for us
Hna quo tso sv wi yu lo se	Then to heaven s/he went
I ga gu yv ho nv	After paying for us.
U tsa ti u wo du	Plenty pretty
Na ni we, na na ni	They are saying
I ga do tsu lv sa da tso sa ye	The sun rays from heaven.
Hna quo tso sv wi yu lo se	Then to heaven s/he went
Tsu wo du hi do di da ne lv	Pretty houses there
A se no i u ne tse i	But S/he said
I yu no du le nv	When S/he rose
Ta li ne dv tsi lu tsi li	"I'll come again"
U dv ne u ne tsv	S/he said when s/he spoke.
E lo ni gv da li s qua di	All the earth will end
Ga lu tsv na i yu	When S/he comes
Ni ga di da ye di go i	All will see her/him
A ni e lo ni gv	All over the earth.
U na da nv ti a ne hv i	All the good people living
Do dv ya nv hi li	S/he will come after
Tso sv hna quo ni go hi lv	Heaven always
Do hi wa ne he s di	In peace they will live.

At the Cross shows a common trait among Cherokee hymns. While English hymns are often denoted by their lyrics, that is not the case in Cherokee. In English, some hymns are titled by the first line, and you may find the same melody sung to many different sets of lyrics, with each set of lyrics constituting a different song. The opposite is true for Cherokee hymns. In Cherokee, you will often have the same set of lyrics used in hymn after hymn. The one distinguishing characteristic between Cherokee hymns then, is the difference in melody—not lyrics. Thus, in the hymn *At the Cross*, the first stanza is exactly the same as the first stanza of *Amazing Grace*. Indeed, all the lyrics for *Amazing Grace* at some point find their way into *At the Cross.* And the lyrics for *Amazing Grace* are perhaps the most repeated of any hymn. In Cherokee hymnody, if you know the words to *Amazing Grace*, you know the words to many other Cherokee hymns.

But the total song lines for *At the Cross* do not match *Amazing Grace*. The extra melody lines are filled with other lyrics. This difference is evident with the start of the chorus (which is the second stanza). After that, the lyrics return to the same ones found in *Amazing Grace.* But in the second stanza, there is an interesting play on words. In the third line of the second stanza, the sun is referenced (or "sun rays"). But the word here is quite different from the opening line of the hymn, *unelanvhi uwetsi.* In the second stanza, the more colloquial word for "sun" in Cherokee is used. But in the first stanza, *unelanvhi* also can mean "sun" in ceremonial contexts. In traditional Cherokee oral tradition, the sun is sometimes depicted as a grandmother and creator. She often speaks to the people, and always is typically depicted in close relationship to human beings. When "grandmother sun" is being evoked, *unelanvhi* is used instead of *agali* or *nvda* (in the hymn, *iga* refers to "sun" in the second stanza). When missionaries came to the Cherokee

Nation, they had a difficult time finding words to convey Christian concepts. When the missionaries referred to God, they used *unelanvhi* as being the closest connection they could make. But there is a very different semantic realm for *unelanvhi* than what one sees for God in Western Christianity. When you compare the first and second stanza, you have the ceremonial word for "grandmother sun" used on the one hand, and the colloquial word for "sun" used on the other. But in both cases, something is emanating from the "sun." In the first stanza, it is the child of grandmother sun. In the second stanza, it is the beams of light coming down from heaven. But both have this imagery of there being a source in the heavens giving light/life to us on earth. And the first stanza is very evocative of that source being a traditional Cherokee figure, a grandmother.

Coupled with the lack of male generics in the Cherokee language, there is significant feminine imaging taking place in these hymns. Another way to understand the first line would be "Grandmother sun's child." While I would not translate this as such since this is not a traditional Cherokee text, it certainly contains that range of meaning. The colloquial usage of "sun" serves on some level to gesture to the ceremonial meaning of "sun" elsewhere, and that necessarily evokes feminine imagery. While the lyrics are a repetition of those found in *Amazing Grace* for the most part, the added second stanza serves to highlight some of the more traditional cultural elements of the lyrics as a whole.

On a separate level, it is also worth noting how unconnected the lyrics are to their English counterparts.[281] In both *Amazing Grace* and *At the Cross*, the Cherokee equivalents are sung

[281] It is also important to note that Cherokee lyrics/translations often cross different melodies in English.

from the same melody. And such hymns make up the bulk of Cherokee hymnody today. Certainly, there are many hymns which are original melodic compositions (one of which I shall discuss later). Yet, translation here does not convey what one typically means because the lyrics of Cherokee hymns do not in any way bear resemblance to their English counterparts, nor do they try to do so. The concepts of either formal or dynamic equivalence really have no place in Cherokee hymn translations. Rather, what is primarily retained is the melody. Western translation theory typically focuses on the written content of a work rather than on modes of utterance–even in the case of hymnody.[282] In the case of Cherokee hymns, however, a very different model of translation is employed.

The implications of this model are that textual content has a very different role and value in Cherokee texts–particularly oratexts. In English hymns the lyrics can basically stand on their own as metered verse–a form of poetica—that relays a specific message or story. But Cherokee hymns cannot stand on their own in the same way and are largely inextricable from their melody. While English hymns can be read, Cherokee hymns really have to be sung to be meaningful. This is evidenced in the lack of a Western cohesive narrative structure found in Cherokee lyrics. Lyrics in Cherokee hymns can be a series of single phrases which have only a loose connection to each other. That is why Cherokee lyrics can be transposed onto any other hymn so long as the meter is comparable. But this practice is very much in keeping with Cherokee traditional songs.

Songs sung in traditional Cherokee ceremonies use the same type of short phrases loosely connected to each other that can be employed across multiple melodies. Cherokee stomp dance songs are more identified by rhythm patterns than lyrics. Often, the lyrics are composed as the

[282] D.L. Gorlée, *Song and Significance: Virtues and Vices of Vocal Translation* (Rodopi, 2005), 17-102.

song is being sung. In fact, some Cherokee songs have no words at all—only vocables. The use of vocables (which are syllables that have no meaning in and of themselves) is very common in powwow singing as well. This de-emphasis on denotative content in traditional Cherokee songs is evidenced in Cherokee hymns and is one reason why the translation of hymns does not lend itself to traditional translation models of formal or dynamic equivalence. Rather, it is in the performance of the hymns that meaning is created, and much of that meaning is found in accompanying oral traditions for those hymns. The chain of memories evoked in each hymn traces back to formative moments within Cherokee history and culture, and singing hymns places the singer within that lineal memory chain. Even if one adopts a very literal approach to translating, the significance of hymns lies more in the implied semantic and contextual realm which is often only obliquely gestured to in the lyrics, as well as in the actual utterance or performance of the hymns.[283] But this latter aspect is one not typically accounted for in translation theory, and the former aspect is difficult to convey when the Cherokee text itself is economical.

One Drop of Blood

Ga do da tsv ya dv ne li tsi sa	What we will do for You Jesus
O ga tse li tsa gv wi yu hi	Our Chief
O ga li ga li na hna quo ye no	(Glad) there
Tso gi lv we s da ne di yi	Our works
O ga tse li ga	Ours
Tsa gv wi yu hi	You are Chief
Tsa tse li ga no	Yours
Tsa gv wi yu hi	You are Chief
O ga tse li ga	Ours

[283] Michael McNally, *Ojibwe Singers: Hymns, Grief and a Native American Culture in Motion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 44-45.

Tsa gv wi yu hi	You are Chief
Tsa tse li ga no	Yours
Tsa gv wi yu hi	You are Chief
O ga tse li ga	Ours
Tsa gv wi yu hi	You are Chief
Tsa tse li ga no	Yours
Tsa gv wi yu hi	You are Chief

This hymn is an example of an original Cherokee composition and not a translation from an English counterpart. This hymn presents quite a few issues with regards to translation. For example, the hymn title is known in English as *One Drop of Blood*, but that is not in reference to the Cherokee title. In fact, it has no title in Cherokee, and is often referred to simply as the hymn sung along the Trail.[284] And yet, this hymn is also widely known by its English title *One Drop of Blood* even though the hymn is never sung in English. It is unclear at this point how and when the English title arose (though some Cherokee elders offered different explanations which will be discussed later), but it should be noted the title has no Cherokee correspondent.

Unlike the previous hymns, there is tremendous repetition of certain phrases in this hymn. The textual content is very economical. This lyric structure is actually more closely in keeping with traditional Cherokee songs. One word used repeatedly is *tsagvwiyuhi.* I translated it as "Chief", but it could also be translated as governor or ruler, or even an elected official. Also, *tsagvwiyuhi* is a rather generic term and not specific to Native rulers.

Following the first stanza, the chorus begins. Though the words are fairly clear, this is one instance where the textual gaps are arguably more meaningful than the actual textual content. Classical translation theories generally approach textual relationships in positivistic

[284] "Guide Me Jehovah" is also called by some the Trail of Tears song.

terms. In other words, the relationship of a text between the source and target language is the primary focus. The disjunctures and ambiguities within a text, and the gaps that occur as a result of these, are often seen as obstacles to understanding the larger meaning of a text rather than producers of meaning in and of themselves. In a performative model of biblical translation, meaning is derived through the tracing of lineal memories that occur in textual performance. The ambiguities within a text can serve as interpretive flashpoints where multiple meanings can flow simultaneously. The multivalent nature of texts that are more suggestive than denotative (what I will refer to as choretic–drawing upon the notion of chora as a place of potentiality meaning from Kristeva)[285]—can result in stronger degrees of performative force because they allow interpreters to become inscribed into different traditions simultaneously.

Textual absence, then, can be moments where oratexts develop their greatest salience, and thus achieve deeper levels of performativity–that is, the ability to create new religio-political traditions, communal identities, and kinship. Textual absence can be indispensable to the text's effective performance. Choretic texts, or texts typified by strong textual absence, should therefore be interpreted for their textual absences as an integral part of a text's performative value.

While all texts have choretic aspects to them, I define a choretic text, either oral or written, as one where textual absence defines a text's performative value. In other words, the text cannot be properly interpreted without primary attention paid to textual gaps. The choretic text is characterized by liquefaction, i.e. the spaces in which textual content disperses into intensifying

[285] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 283-287.

moments without clear delineation, yet also without loss, and where that apparent absence becomes constitutive of a text's performance. This liquefaction simultaneously under and over-determines a text and becomes a primary way in which lineal memories are traced by gesturing beyond what is said to that which is unsaid. The continual play between contrasting determinations (what the text says versus how it is silent) is a central characteristic in many Cherokee hymns and is one way in which individual and communal identities form and create new ways of being in the world. In short, textual absences can be moments where the greatest degrees of textual performance take place. This performative understanding of textual absence can help locate echoes of lineal memories that have been formative of individual and communal identities. Further, a performative approach to textual absence can help us identify the potential creation of new religious traditions and sovereignty structures that emanate from formative collective memories arising out of hymns. This performative model is a better way to both conceptualize and translate Cherokee hymns, particularly where the text lacks markers of conventional narrativity as in the case of *One Drop of Blood.*

With that understanding of translation in mind, I want to pay some attention to the chorus. When the chorus of the hymn repeats "Ours, You are Chief. Yours, You are Chief," it is reiterating a relationship of mutual responsibility between the "Chief" and the people. This would be in keeping with traditional Cherokee governance where there were no absolute rulers. One rose to leadership from acting on behalf of the people. And tribal leaders were never viewed as being above others—they simply had a particular role to play in the life of the community, and they were given that role because they were respected by the people. This is the type of relationality I believe is being both evoked and performed in this hymn. The repetition that the

"Chief" is ours and we are yours stresses the mutual obligations concomitant to this relationship. Furthermore, *tsagvwiyuhi* is a term of tribal leadership, unlike *yihowa*. So again, the sense is that people not only have a responsibility to Jesus, but that Jesus has a responsibility to the people. And this relationship is articulated using Cherokee terminology for tribal leadership. Another note, as mentioned in the previous chapter, "we" and "our" can be either exclusive or inclusive. In this hymn, it is an exclusive "ours" that is used. The relationship of the "Chief" is specifically to the people singing–not to everyone.[286]

When this hymn is sung, it starts off as almost a dirge. It is slow and mournful and exudes melancholy. After the first stanza, the first two stanzas of the chorus are sung in the same funereal fashion. At the end of the second chorus stanza, the voices, sung in unison at this point, trail off as if bringing the song to conclusion. There is a long pause at that point, and then the hymn resumes, changing dramatically. The hymn is sung to an upbeat tempo very similar to stomp dance songs. And the hymn is no longer sung in unison. Rather, the higher voices (often female) start off, and then the lower voices (often male) echo. This is very reminiscent of the call and response singing pattern in stomp dance songs.

Singing hymns played not just an inspirational role, but along the Trail of Tears they arguably also played a survival role. One oral account of this hymn traces the meter of the song to the context in which it was sung along the Trail. According to this account, the beginning of this hymn was sung in such a mournful way so as to give voice to the incredible loss of life suffered. But when that sorrow began to overtake the people, the singing would wind down until

[286] This highlights Halbwachs point that collective memories are always community specific and not transferable outside that context. The grammatical constructions here would support that contention.

it stopped. Written and oral accounts of the Cherokee removal indicated if people fell behind while on the Trail, they were often bayoneted by US military, or in some other way killed.[287] This was particularly the case for pregnant women, infants and elders.

> Half the infants six months or a year and all the aged over sixty had been killed directly.[288]
>
> A Cherokee woman. . .had been driven, with many other from the Valley Towns, and on the way, was delivered of a child. She needed, at least, a little rest, but even this was denied by the officer, and she was thrown into a waggon [sic], and hauled on over a rough road, with the company and lived till she reached the bank of the river, and then expired.[289]
>
> A woman, in the pains of childbirth, stood and walked as long as possible, and then fell on the bank of the river. A soldier coming up, stabbed her with his bayonet, which, together with other pains, soon caused her death.[290]

It was important for people to continue walking. But as the death toll rose, particularly with children, supposedly many Cherokees began to slow down out of grief. When this happened, accounts say other Cherokees would start to sing so that people would begin to walk again. This is where Cherokee stomp dances enter the picture, and why the meter changes and textual gaps of this hymn are significant. In stomp dancing, the men sing while the women make the music. The music is made by the rattling of shells filled with small stones attached to the legs of females. The shaking of shells provides the rhythm for the stomp dancing and is done to mirror the song patterns of the singers. When the men slowly begin singing, women begin

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[287] Butrick, 6-32; Burnett, op cit.

[288] Butrick, 6.

[289] Ibid, 12.

[290] Ibid, 32.

walking in unison, shaking their shells. And together the men and women create the rhythm and music for everyone to dance (which is essentially purposeful, rhythmic walking).

The second portion of *One Drop of Blood* that changes tempo and singing pattern to resemble songs one would hear at a stomp dance is said to come out of the experiences on the Trail. As one elder noted, there was a particular concern over pregnant women slowing down due to pain or grief. The men would start singing in the familiar call and response model because this would propel the women to walk in rhythmic pattern to the singing–just as they were accustomed to doing at stomp dances. In this way, hymn singing was far more than a remembrance–hymn singing was used to keep people alive along the Trail and help those grieving not succumb to the tremendous traumas they were experiencing.

An elder noted that one possible reason for the title *One Drop of Blood* came from the concern over the fate of pregnant women on the Trail. As pregnant women went into labor, drops of blood would pour from their bodies as they tried to keep up walking. The hymn title may be an allusion to that legacy. In this account, pregnant Cherokee women walking the Trail often grew tired and slowed down. And it was these women who often were taken aside by soldiers to be bayonetted in order to not slow down the rest of the party. The rigors of walking would induce labor, and the babies born were discarded or bayonetted by the soldiers. These incredible losses made it difficult for women to continue walking. *One Drop of Blood* was sung specifically by men to keep women moving so they would not be killed.[291] According to this account, the women who were pregnant along the Trail were often those who had been raped by soldiers

[291] This insight was from a conversation with a Cherokee elder who also mentioned the possibility that the hymn title referred to drops of blood spilled by Christ on the cross or was a broader reference to the blood spilled by Cherokees along the Trail.

months before in the stockades. The lineal memories behind *Amazing Grace* may be connected to the lineal memories attached to *One Drop of Blood*.[292]

Condolence and Nostalgia

One function of the tracing of lineal memories in Cherokee oratexts is to provide a structure of condolence that allows Cherokee communities to grieve and heal from the processes of colonization. Denis Foley talks about condolence ceremonies amongst the Iroquois as the mechanism by which the Iroquois have been able to withstand historical trauma over several generations:

> The survival of traditional Iroquois society and its political organization amid proselytizing, land losses, and political intervention by a larger society says much for the staying power of reciprocal ritual privileges and the importance of mourning rites as integrating forces for layered social, political, and religious units.[293]

Vera Palmer's work on condolence in Mohawk communities illustrates a performative function of ostensive Christian ritual—to guide people in healing remembrance via processes of collective mourning and rememorying.[294] Palmer argues the rituals and remembrances surrounding the Mohawk Catholic Saint, Kateri Tekakwitha, functioned not simply as expressions of Christian piety, but also as forms of traditional Iroquois condolence ceremonies that enabled Mohawk Christians to engage in indigenous mourning rituals under the auspices of

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[292]There is another account of this hymn that says the changing meter is due to the mournful first portion recalling the sorrow of the Trail, while the upbeat second portion is from the jubilance of arriving in Indian Territory. I believe this is a later account of the hymn because there is no attestation to the hymn ever being sung without the second portion, and this account would not have that second portion being performed along the actual Trail.

[293] Denis Foley, "Iroquois Mourning and Condolence Installation Rituals" (paper presented at the PRESERVING TRADITION AND UNDERSTANDING THE PAST: Papers from the Conference on Iroquois Research, 2001–2005), 26.

[294] Palmer, 266-296.

Christianity. Cherokee hymns may function in similar fashion. The lineal memories traced in Cherokee hymnody evoke FMs that reference painful historical trauma while simultaneously providing a deep sense of collective identity. Using Cherokee oratexts as occasions for collective mourning and condolence allow individuals a sanctioned way to grieve without destroying the larger social fabric. The concept of rememory is a concept developed by Toni Morrison in her novel *Beloved*.[295] Morrison uses the term to refer to the remembrance of memories that occupy a space not only in the recollector's mind, but in the physical world as well somehow. I use the term to mean the connecting of various memory strands into larger narratives. Narrativizing memory through Cherokee oratexts provides individuals avenues for dealing with traumatic events within a collective, ritualized structure.

One of the ways in which condolence can take place in Cherokee hymn singing is through the formation of a strong collective identity. This collective identity forms through the sharing of unique lineal memories that bind a community together. The more widespread and deeply felt the lineal memories, the stronger the collective identity. But as Halbwachs noted, collective memories such as these are always situated in particular times and places. The issue of place for a community subjected to removal becomes fraught with ambivalence. Where, exactly, is home?

For forcibly relocated communities, significant removals are likely to result in the formation of new sovereignty structures. And those sovereignty structures will be foundationally connected to the context of their forcible removal. The deeper the historical trauma, the more

[295] Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 43.

likely communal identity will be linked with those historical traumas. But collective identities that have at their core a narrative around historical trauma can result in nostalgic rememorying where the narrativzing around significant communal FMs can result in rigid identity markers at both the individual and communal level. The resultant identity politics can take on exclusivist tendencies, supported by new religiopolitical structures. In other words, condolence can bring about both healing and exclusion. And that is facilitated by the very process by which performance occurs with the translation of sacred texts–the tracing of lineal memories by individuals and rememorying by communities.

Lineal Memory and Performance

The tracing of lineal memory through translation is where biblical texts gain their performative force. The greater the salience of the lineal memories traced via translation, the deeper the performative force. And these lineal memories can be traced not only in textual content of scriptures–oral or written–but through textual absence as well. Indeed, the lack of textual delimitation in biblical texts can function performatively insofar as individuals and communities are able to effectively create and inscribe themselves into larger collective memories through processes of translation. By creating genealogical chains of memory related to traditional land bases, beliefs, practices, and sovereignty structures through biblical translation, individual and communal identities are able to be created. When biblical translations trace lineal memories back to FMs, the performative force surrounding those lineal memories becomes intensified, and the formation of communal identity more distinct. In addition, the stronger the FMs evoked in biblical translation, the more likely it is for accompanying social scaffolding in the form of religious and political institutions to form that connect in some way to those FMs.

Thus, we see FMs being traced in biblical translation either through textual allusion or textual absence, and in that lineal tracing of memory, communal identities form around the FMs as do surrounding religious traditions and sovereignty structures. FMs in this way function as authorizing agents not just for those engaging in later narrativizing around FMs, but also of the institutions, communal identities, and social power dynamics that arise out of these performative tracings of lineal memories. Elizabeth Castelli makes parallel arguments regarding the formation of early Christian identity around martyrdom traditions, and how that identity persisted over time despite the shift out of a martyrdom context.[296] Thus, the performative nature of biblical translation can effectively create not only new religiosities (in this case, new Christianities), but also new sovereignty structures and collective identities for communities. And performative biblical translation accomplishes that through the tracing of lineal memories that have as their source salient FMs.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza calls for a stronger engagement between biblical scholars and memory studies scholars. In particular, she contends that it is important to interrogate the politics of memory, particularly through a feminist lens. She notes that it is not just that memory and traditions are negotiated through power, but the biblical text acts as a "monument," a "congealed memorial rather than a site of remembrance."[297] Karen L. King further notes that re-memorying or retelling is not a pure act either. "How is it possible to appropriate this heritage for a common, inclusive, and mature spirituality without unknowingly reaffirming traditions used to

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[296] See Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 25.

[297] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Scripture as Monument and Memor: It's Abuses and Uses," in *Monument and Memory: 4th Nordic Conference in Philosophy of Religion*, ed. J. Bornemark, M. Martinson, and J. Svenungsson (Zurich: Lit, 2015), 150

support violence and oppression?"[298] In order to get at this question, it is necessary to examine how the creation of lineal memories also intersects with collective forgetting.

[298] King, "The Book of Norea, Daughter of Eve," 66.

Chapter Five: Abjection and the Power of Memory–Translation and the Collective Forgetting of the Margins

"This is why the relentless search for the purity of origins is a voyage not of discovery but of erasure."[299]

"What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity."[300]

Memories, like spaces, are defined as much by negative presence as positive. Every act of remembering is simultaneously an act of forgetting. The previous chapter on collective memories focused on that which was remembered by connecting those memories to pivotal historical traumatic events. The shaping of memory through trauma served as a point of both salience and resistance–as a moment of performance where new religiosities were created and sociopolitical power dynamics were constructed and (re)negotiated.

Yet, such conceptualizations of collective memory are incomplete without discussions of collective forgetting. If memory can serve as a moment of identity-formation and social resistance, can forgetting do the same? If memory necessarily entails selective forgetting, any discussion of collective memory must also include associated collective forgetting. This chapter argues that while the lineal memories created in performative translation can give rise to subversive Christian traditions, collective forgetting can also result. This chapter argues that the

[299] Roach, 2.

[300] Michel Foucault, "Nietzche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 142

systematic nature in which classes of people become excluded in collective remembering can result in the marginalization of those classes of people. I frame the scholarship on collective forgetting and use that framework to discuss another key aspect of performative translation–abjection. I demonstrate that through collective forgetting, certain subgroups of people may be subjected to abjection by a larger majority. I further argue that collective forgetting is necessarily a part of performative translation and can sometimes result in abjection given that the targets of this forgetting that can culminate in abjection often coincide with the biases of translators and reception communities.

Through a case study of Cherokee scriptures and translation, I argue that Cherokee Freedmen became the target of systematic collective forgetting and were consequently made to inhabit an abjected space within Cherokee society which continues to this day. While the experiences of Cherokee Freedmen may seem tangential to a performative method of biblical translation, because performative translation relies upon the tracing of lineal memories, collective forgetting and abjection can result as a by-product of those traced lineal genealogies. Abjection, then, is not a side issue to biblical translation but must be critically engaged in biblical translation studies.

Cherokee Freedmen

"The first step in liquidating a people...is to erase its memory.
Destroy its books, its culture, its history.
Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history.
Before long the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was.
The world around it will forget even faster."[301]

[301] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting: A Novel* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1980), 159

In looking at the history of translation of Cherokee sacred texts, one area not often highlighted is the role of those that have come to occupy the margins of Native history–women, children, and slaves. As noted previously, the role of women and children in Cherokee translation history is one in which the declining status of women in Cherokee society can be traced. This chapter examines the role of African slaves in Cherokee biblical translation as well as within the larger Cherokee Nation. In particular, it examines how the history of slaves as Cherokee translators has been removed from memory–intentionally or unintentionally–to such an extent that African Cherokee slaves came to be viewed as a threat and menace to Cherokee identity and national survival through the present day. This collective forgetting of Cherokee Freedmen can be traced through performative biblical translation.

Long before the introduction of Christianity into Cherokee territories, Cherokees had engaged in African slave-trading and even slaveholding. It is important to recognize what one might broadly term slavery in Native nations was a complicated affair that took on many different forms, many of which had little to no resemblance to chattel slavery. In particular, enslavement of other Native peoples by members of rival Native nations was generally of a very different ilk than enslavement of African peoples. For the purposes of this section, I will focus on only African enslavement, with the understanding that there is a larger history of slavery within which that is situated.

While Christianity did not gain a formal foothold within the Cherokee Nation prior to 1800, African slavery had been existence within the Cherokee Nation for well over a hundred years prior. At first, African slaves (captured or stolen) were used as a form of barter for supplies and weapons. But eventually Cherokees began using African slave labor for agricultural

purposes as much of the South did. While this phenomenon was not widespread, it was certainly visible and recognized by missionaries and traders traveling through Cherokee lands.[302]

By the time Christianity was introduced through formal mission stations in the Cherokee Nation in 1800, African chattel slavery already was a well-established (though not necessarily widespread nor accepted) practice. Because the chief purpose of retaining African slaves was to do agricultural work on large plantations, this necessarily meant only those Cherokees with large landholdings were likely to own slaves. But in the early missionization period, it was exactly these large landowners that missionaries first contacted and drafted for the cause of spreading the gospel.[303] A very practical reason for missionaries gravitating towards large plantation owners was that these were places with enough land to hold church services. While a mission station was given use of land for the purpose of educating young Cherokees in the English language, it was common practice for missionaries to preach at different circuits within the Cherokee Nation in order to reach as many people as possible. Missionaries would make agreements with plantation owners to hold services on their property for not only the family of the plantation owner and his/her slaves, but also neighboring families and their slaves. As a result of this close relationship, "Slaveholders were among the earliest converts, staunchest supporters, and closest friends of the missionaries and the churches. This relationship continued throughout the era of black slavery."[304]

One unique facet of certain African slaves was their exposure to both English (prior to

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[302] Ray Halliburton, *Red over Black: Black Slavery among the Cherokee Indians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 28.

[303] Ibid, 28.

[304] Ibid, 28.

being purchased by Cherokees) and Cherokee languages. This linguistic competency did not go unnoticed by missionaries or Cherokees, and as a result, some Cherokee translators were actually African slaves.

> Beyond the opportunity to study at the mission schools, slaves of Cherokees took on the role of translators and instructors in these schools. In a reversal that would have been an anathema in the white slaveholding South, black slaves instructed their masters, who were grateful for the assistance. For unlike slaves in many white households, slaves in Cherokee homes possessed a crucial skill that heir masters often lacked–fluency in English. Most slaves of Cherokees had had a headstart over their masters in English language and literacy because they had lived with whites before arriving in Indian country, and many were bilingual–proficient in both English and Cherokee. With this talent, black slaves became indispensable in the education and religious instruction of their masters.[305]

Unfortunately, this history has been largely erased from the historical record, and only traces of it remain in later documents and oral history. As one elder told me, slaves and ex-slaves were the first interpreters in our churches, but we have forgotten that. As Tiya Miles noted:

> The specter of slaveowning Indians stirred up emotional, intellectual, and political trouble for contemporary African Americans and Native Americans alike who remember and imagine this past in differing ways...Some Native people felt regretful and even ashamed of this history; others denied it outright...some Native people saw any engagement with African American history as detracting attention and stealing energy from American Indian justice struggles. It seemed that black slavery within Native American nations was an aspect of history that both black and Native people had willed themselves to forget. [306]

Nonetheless, there are numerous instances where African Cherokee slaves functioned as translators, particularly in relation to mission and church work:

> A Cherokee woman who had learned to read parts of the Bible claimed a black person as her teacher when explaining her improvement to her husband. A young Cherokee man applying to the mission school who "was found able to spell correctly in words of four to five syllables" reported that "he had been taught solely by black people." A slave couple

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[305] Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)., 94.

[306] Ibid., xiv.

> who were members of the mission church in 1818 taught their mistress to read, and their efforts were recorded in the Mission Journal: "This man and his wife, who also is serious, have been pretty constant attendants at the Sunday School, and have begun to read in the Bible. We are told their mistress (who is one of the late Cherokee converts) is herself leaning to read by their assistance." Slaves translated sermons in mission churches, and in one example, a slave occupied the position of "lay officer" while his master was merely an attending church member.[307]

Theda Perdue writes:

> In the households of Cherokee traditionalists the only English-speaking person was frequently a bondsman. American Board missionaries reported in 1818 that all blacks in bondage to Cherokees spoke English. The missionaries, who had tremendous difficulty mastering the Cherokee language, occasionally relied on bilingual slaves to translate their sermons.[308]

The question arises, if persistences of indigeneity are preserved through performative translation, whose indigenous traditions are persisting via translation in the case of African slaves translating in the Cherokee language? While it goes beyond the scope of this project, it should be noted that many scholars have traced the persistence of various African tribal beliefs and traditions in US-African slave traditions.[309] So the question of multiple and potentially competing indigeneities is an open one for a performative biblical translation model.

Perdue goes on to discuss ways in which African slaves served as translators in trade and political settings within the Cherokee Nation. [310] The role and influence of African Cherokee

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[307] Ibid., xiv. See also Cherokee Mission, "Brainerd Journal," (Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, 1818).

[308] Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), 106.

[309] See especially Will Coleman, *Tribal Talk* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 31-53.

[310] Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866,* 106-107.

translators extended beyond the church and scriptures to statecraft and treaty-making. [311] Just as Cherokee translators took up posts of political leadership within tribal government after the Civil War (as noted previously), so also did African Cherokee slaves continue to function as official translators for the Cherokee Nation after the Civil War.

Given this history of African Cherokees serving as translators for mission societies, churches, and Cherokee tribal governments, it is at first glance inexplicable that African Cherokees have largely been erased from this portion of Cherokee histories.[312] While arguably women and children have been largely ignored in the history of translation of Cherokee sacred texts as well, the experience of Cherokee Freedmen is unique in that they have not only been erased from the history of translation, they have also been the subjects of erasure from the very rolls of the Cherokee Nation. The Freedmen are unique in that their very existence within the Cherokee Nation has been the subject of continued erasure and collective forgetting, not only of their presence within the nation, but also their continual roles in shaping/creating Cherokee sacred texts and Cherokee tribal government. As one Cherokee elder observed to me: "You know, back in the old days they had former slaves preach and translate to us in church. You don't hear about that anymore nowadays."

Attempts to exclude Cherokee Freedmen from public life stretches back to well before the Civil War. In one instance, a Cherokee man named Shoe Boots who married his slave requested Cherokee citizenship for his half Cherokee children. While he was alive, his children

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[311] Celia Naylor, *African Cherokees in Indian Country: From Chattel to Citizens* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 97.

[312] Cf. Willliam McLoughlin, *After the Trail of Tears* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Starkey; Wilkens; Bass, 12; Ehle.

were granted Cherokee citizenship. But after his death, his children were refused recognition by the Cherokee Nation.[313] The experiences of Shoe Boots and his children were not isolated– Cherokee descendants of African slaves were systematically targeted for exclusion on the tribal rolls. This came to a head after the Civil War when the US federal government ordered all previous treaties with Cherokees null and void due to Oklahoma Cherokees siding with the Confederacy. As a condition of further federal recognition, all Cherokee slaves had to be freed and incorporated onto the citizenship rolls of the Cherokee Nation.

> All freedmen who have been liberated by voluntary act of their former owners or by law, as well as all free colored persons who were in the country at the commencement of the rebellion, and are non-residents therein, or who may return within six months, and their descendants, shall have all the rights of native Cherokees.[314]

But this provision was vehemently protested by Cherokee negotiating parties. "Cherokees were willing to make some provisions for their freedmen but were opposed to adoption."[315] Because Cherokees had sided with the Confederacy, the US federal government compelled the Cherokee Nation to accept into its membership Cherokee Freedmen.

Long after the Civil War ended, however, the controversy over having African Cherokees on the rolls continued. While the rhetoric often took the form of wanting to keep non-blooded members off of tribal rolls, the fact that many African Cherokees seeking membership were indeed blooded members but were still precluded from tribal membership indicates this issue had more to do with preventing those with African blood from obtaining tribal membership than

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[313] Miles, 192.

[314] Charles J. Kappler, "Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties," ed. Government Printing Office (Washington, DC1994), 943.

[315] Halliburton., 134.

anything. It should be noted that Cherokees with very small blood quantum who had inter-married for generations with whites faced no such difficulties enrolling.[316]

When Cherokees were forced to sign onto the Dawes Act and be listed on the accompanying Dawes Rolls in 1919, this became an opportunity to officially recategorize African Cherokees from the rest of the tribal membership. Cherokees with African descent were forced to enroll as "Freedmen" rather than as blooded tribal members despite having Cherokee blood.[317] At first Freedmen were promised all the rights and privileges afforded to Cherokee blooded members. But after the reconstitution of the Cherokee tribal government, Principal Chief Ross Swimmer began efforts to disenfranchise the Freedmen in 1983. (The Cherokee government had been disbanded by the US federal government under the Curtis Act in 1898. The federal government would periodically appoint a chief for the day to sign any agreements it needed until the Cherokee Nation reconstituted itself in 1971.) Swimmer issued an executive order requiring a Certificate Degree of Indian Blood to be produced in order to vote in Cherokee elections. Because Cherokee Freedmen did not possess such certificates, they were effectively disenfranchised. This was taken to court, and in 2006 the Cherokee Supreme Court ruled Cherokee Freedmen had to be allowed to vote. The Principal Chief at the time, Chad Smith, denounced the ruling and commissioned a new Cherokee Constitution be written that specifically prohibited Cherokee Freedmen from membership and voting privileges. The new tribal constitution was written and passed, and Cherokee Freedmen were officially disenfranchised

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[316] Cedric Sunray, "Blood Policing," in *Native Studies Keywords*, ed. Stephanie Nohelani Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle Raheja (Tempe: University Of Arizona Press, 2015), 209-220.

[317] Miles, 194-195.

from the Cherokee Nation.

After a series of legal challenges, at US District Judge ruled that the Freedmen were entitled to citizenship in the Cherokee nation. The Cherokee nation announced that it would not appeal the decision.[318] But during this battle those who have spoken out against the actions of the tribal government in this matter have been subjected to intense backlash. One tribal member informed me that his child was forcibly removed from the tribal school as a result of voicing his opposition and found a packet on his doorstep one morning purportedly documenting his "mulatto" status. Another tribal member was threatened with loss of her job and non-recognition of her tribal membership for voicing concerns. Another tribal elder and language instructor has been barred from employment with the tribe due to his not supporting the new constitution.

The question remains, what can explain the level of vitriol and continued focus over disenfranchising Cherokee Freedmen? In terms of total numbers, the Freedmen constitute a minuscule portion of the tribal population (approximately 1500 out of over 300,000). So why has there been such a strong backlash over sustained periods of time targeting Cherokee Freedmen?

The Cherokee Freedmen occupy a unique status insofar as their presence largely influenced the translation of Cherokee sacred texts and was pivotal in the dissemination of an indigenized Cherokee Christianity. Furthermore, after the Civil War the status of Cherokee Freedmen was enshrined in the very treaty that also recognized the sovereignty of the Cherokee Nation. The two issues are inextricably connected because to disenfranchise the Freedmen is to challenge the very treaty recognizing the status of the Cherokee Nation. But the offshoot of this

[318] Kat Chow, "Judge Rules That Cherokee Freedmen Have Right to Tribal Citizenship," *NPR* (2017), https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/31/547705829/judge-rules-that-cherokee-freedmen-have-right-to-tribal-citizenship.

is that Cherokee sovereignty is now forever connected to a period of national history that many would otherwise like to forget–slaveholding. In order to erase that history for both Cherokee Christianity and Cherokee national sovereignty, the Freedmen have to be removed from the tribal rolls. The lineal memories traced in performative biblical translation find their origins in a Cherokee tribal history that is silent on slavery and the presence of African-descended slaves. This ostensive purity of origins is complicated by events like Cherokee slaveholding. As indigenous identity persists throughout translation processes, systematically excluded are those challenging that purity of origins narrative. In order for the Cherokee Nation to collectively forget its history in chattel slavery, it has to remove the living reminders of that legacy. In the next section, I will examine how collective forgetting works, and how that may apply to the Cherokee Freedmen.

Collective Forgetting

Despite the close relationship of forgetting to memory, the scholarship on collective forgetting is far less expansive. This section will trace some of the studies done in the field, and then in the next section tie that specific experience of Cherokee translation and sacred texts.

Many theorists point out that while people often assume remembering is preferable to forgetting, in fact memory is impossible without forgetting.

> We arrive, then, at this paradoxical conclusion: that one condition of memory is forgetfulness. Without the total obliteration of an immense number of states of consciousness, and the momentary repression of many more, recollection would be impossible. Forgetfulness, except in certain cases, is not a disease of memory, but a condition of health and life.[319]

[319] Teodule Ribot, *Diseases of Memory, an Essay in the Positive Psychology* (Forgotten Books, 1882), 61.

> If we remembered everything, we should on most occasions be as ill off as if we remembered nothing.[320]

> Memories are understood as relations of power through which we, as individuals and groups, actively negotiate and decide what can be recollected and what can be forgotten. And without being able to decide what we can remember and forget, we are effectively left without hope of becoming different people or creating different worlds.[321]

Forgetting in and of itself should not be pathologized. Rather, forgetting is a necessary feature of memory. In order to recall or remember something, a person must necessarily exclude other things from recollection at that time.

But as with remembrance, when forgetting is collectivized, it takes on a different character and function than isolated instances of individual forgetting. Forgetting by itself is a normal, everyday occurrence. But the question is, to what extent does forgetting take on different contours when done on a collective level? How is forgetting shaped/transformed by collective dynamics and settings? That is the scholarship to which I now turn.

Forgetting on a broad scale is often done without intention or goal. The simple evocation of a particular memory necessarily excludes other things from remembrance, but there is not an inherent sense of motivation in excluding those things from recollection. But there are times when forgetting may be more purposeful. First, I will examine instances of forgetting where there is not an explicit agenda to forget. And from there I will turn to forgetting on a collective scale where there are motivations behind the forgetting.

There are three general paradigms associated with forgetting. The first is called retrieval-

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[320] William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), 680.

[321] Anne Galloway, "Collective Remembering and the Importance of Forgetting: A Critical Design Challenge" (paper presented at the Designing for Collective Remembering Workshop, CHI, 2006). . Retrieved September, 2011. http://www.purselipsquarejaw.org/papers/galloway_chi2006.pdf

induced forgetting, or RIF. RIF functions when we unconsciously exclude from recollection memories that interfere with what we wish to remember.[322] For example, if we have a list of grocery items we wish to remember when we go shopping, we will push out other memories that may get in the way of that grocery list. Here, there is no hidden agenda behind forgetting certain things–rather it is simple necessity in order to recall certain desired memories. "RIF is considered an automatic, inevitable consequence of practising one piece of information at the expense of another."[323] What is interesting, though, is that RIF can be influenced by the relationship of that which is remembered/forgotten to those remembering. Studies have shown people are more apt to remember items/events/details when they feel personal connection to those things.[324] In other words, vested interests via personal connection can shape what we relegate to be remembered, and conversely, what is forgotten, without our ever realizing it. In looking at the role of vested interests in shaping what we choose to remember and forget, the emotional impact of certain memories have been examined to see how they influenced what things were remembered or forgotten. [325] Two studies indicated that emotional memories are more likely to be forgotten, particularly when those memories are negative or undesirable.[326]

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[322] C.B. Harris, J. Sutton, and A.J. Barnier, "Autobiographical Forgetting, Social Forgetting, and Situated Forgetting," in *Forgetting*, ed. Sergio Sala (New York: Psychology Press, 2010), 253-284.

[323] Ibid, 258.

[324] C. Macrae and T. Roseveare, "I Was Always on My Mind: The Self and Temporary Forgetting," *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 9, no. September (2002), 611-614.

[325] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 259-260.

[326] A.J. Barnier, L. Hung, and M.A. Conway, "Retrieval-Induced Forgetting of Autobiographical Episodes," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 136 (2004), 301-322. See also I. Wessel and B. Hauer, "Retrieval-Induced Forgetting of Autobiogrpahical Memory Details," *Cognition and Emotion* 20, no. April (2006), 430-447.

With RIF, memories that have greater personal salience are more likely to be recalled, while memories that are unpleasant or undesirable from a personal perspective are more likely to be forgotten. In performative biblical translation, this means one would be more apt to see translations tracing back to events/traditions that affirm a particular desired identity, while memories that trace back to uncomfortable histories would be more likely to be excluded.

The second paradigm related to forgetting is called directed forgetting, or DF.[327] In DF, people are directed in some way to discount certain memories in favor of others. For example, a professor may instruct students to disregard instructions from a previous syllabus in favor of new instructions in an updated syllabus. Studies have shown DF results in less ability to recall certain memories, though that can be overcome if appropriate cues are provided.[328] But that dynamic is altered when the memories directed to be forgotten are emotional and unpleasant, and the people being directed to forget have undergone trauma.[329] There appears to be a two-pronged response to emotionally charged DF. On the one hand, people directed to forget emotionally charged memories show resistance to forgetting–particularly if the topic is abuse and they were the recipients of it.[330] On the other hand, other research indicates those populations that have undergone trauma and experienced some form of repression as a coping technique for dealing with that trauma are more likely to be susceptible to DF, especially if what is asked to be

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[327] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 260-262.

[328] Robert A Bjork, "Positive Forgetting: The Noninterference of Items Intentionally Forgotten," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 9, no. 3 (1970), 255-268.

[329] B Keith Payne and Elizabeth Corrigan, "Emotional Constraints on Intentional Forgetting," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 43, no. 5 (2007), 780-786.

[330] Elke Geraerts et al., "Retrieval Inhibition of Trauma-Related Words in Women Reporting Repressed or Recovered Memories of Childhood Sexual Abuse," *Behaviour research and therapy* 44, no. 8 (2006), 1129-1136.

forgotten is emotional and unpleasant.[331] "Researchers have reported that certain populations show more forgetting (greater DF effects) of negative material."[332] Now, at first glance those two responses would seem to be contradictory. And the main point of differentiation between the two is the coping mechanism of the people subjected to DF. Those more prone to repression appear to be more susceptible to DF. I would posit that an additional variable may be when people remember being the victim rather than the victimizer, they are more likely to remember emotionally charged things whereas negative emotional memories that may be interpreted as reflecting poorly on oneself are more susceptible to DF. As Mary Ann Tolbert once noted, "We do not protest our privileges; we protest our pain."[333]

In the case of performative biblical translation, one would expect instances related to intense personal trauma (such as happened during and after the Trail of Tears) to be a line of lineal memories which persist, while memories associated with slavery would be more likely to be forgotten. Indeed, the very remembrance of the Trail may function to crowd out memories of Cherokee slavery. In essence, by Cherokee hymns and scriptures explicitly or implicitly gesturing to events like the removal period, performative translations function not only by tracing lineal memories, but in silencing other memories that prove uncomfortable to personal and collective indigenous identity.

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[331] Michelle L Moulds and Richard A Bryant, "Directed Forgetting in Acute Stress Disorder," *Journal of abnormal psychology* 111, no. 1 (2002), 175; Lynn B Myers, Chris R Brewin, and Mick J Power, "Repressive Coping and the Directed Forgetting of Emotional Material," ibid.107 (1998).

[332] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 261.

[333] Mary Ann Tolbert, "Reading for Liberation," in *Reading from This Place*, ed. Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 265.

The third paradigm related to forgetting is called Think/No-think (TNT).[334] This model describes when people purposely choose on their own to avoid remembering something–generally due to the painful nature of the memory. For example, if someone was persistently bullied in school as a child, that person may avoid reminiscing about her school experiences in order to forget those painful memories. Whenever the subject of school comes up, the person will purposefully try to forget experiences related to that. In essence, she trains herself to not think about that which was painful or traumatic. Perhaps not surprisingly, studies indicate when TNT occurs over time, people forget the memories they are trying to suppress.[335] But unlike DF, TNT appears to result in loss of memory even when those memories are later cued.[336] "TNT has been argued to impair both memory accessibility and availability. This is supported by evidence that participants show poorer recall for suppressed items even when recall is cued with a novel cue." [337] This forgetting effect appears to be amplified when the memories being purposefully forgotten are emotionally-charged.[338] The import of this is individuals are able to control and shape memories in such a way as to create desired effects. Because performative biblical translations function primarily by tracing of memories with unique salience, that puts translators

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[334] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 262-265.

[335] Michael C Anderson and Benjamin Levy, "Repression Can (and Should) Be Studied Empirically," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 6, no. 12 (2002), 502-503. See also: Matthew Hugh Erdelyi, "The Unified Theory of Repression," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 29, no. 5 (2006), 499-511; John F Kihlstrom, "Repression: A Unified Theory of a Will-O'-the-Wisp," ibid, 523.

[336] Michael C Anderson and Collin Green, "Suppressing Unwanted Memories by Executive Control," *Nature* 410, no. 6826 (2001), 366-369.

[337] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 263.

[338] Brendan E Depue, Marie T Banich, and Tim Curran, "Suppression of Emotional and Nonemotional Content in Memory: Effects of Repetition on Cognitive Control," *Psychological science* 17, no. 5 (2006), 441-447.

in the position of being able to export their refashioned memories in ways that can systematically exclude groups of people and events from recollection, and therefore relevance.

These three paradigms on forgetting lay the outline for how individuals, both with and without motivation, may experience selective forgetting over time. But all these paradigms focus on forgetting in individuals. The question remains, to what extent does forgetting in collectivized environments shape the retention/erasure of memory in people?

In collectivized forgetting, the scholarship is less expansive, but nonetheless instructive in how forgetting can be augmented in social settings. In an expansion of RIF, one study showed how speakers addressing audiences had an effect on speakers such that speakers were able to target certain information for remembrance, while other information was more likely to be forgotten by the audience simply because it was not included in the speech delivered.[339] This phenomenon happened by the framing of speeches–that which was highlighted crowded out other competing information. But the impact on individual audience members listening to speeches/addresses resulted in their individual memories being affected. This is very significant with regards to political rhetoric and religion. In church, sermons are regular occasions when speakers have the ability to frame information in such a way that it not only allows an audience to reinvision ideas and relate them in novel ways to certain traditions, it also allows speakers the ability to promote communal forgetting for ideas/events the speaker does not agree with or finds objectionable in some way. The above study showed that this type of rhetorical exclusion results in individuals being able to remember less information they once knew. Similarly, in political

[339] Alexandru Cuc, Jonathan Koppel, and William Hirst, "Silence Is Not Golden: A Case for Socially Shared Retrieval-Induced Forgetting," *Psychological Science* 18, no. 8 (2007), 727-733.

addresses, political leaders are able to frame issues in certain ways that not only favor select agendas, but also cause listeners to forget inconvenient competing narratives. It is no accident that the Trail of Tears is regularly evoked in annual Cherokee State of the Nation addresses, whereas Cherokee slaveholding is never mentioned–ever. When political agendas are augmented within church settings through sermons, lectionary readings, and hymn-singing, one could expect this collectivized forgetting dynamic to be further accentuated–particularly over time.

Another paradigm involving collective forgetting is collaborative recall and inhibition.[340] Several studies have indicated that when groups of people engage in recalling past events, the dynamic of being in a group results in suppression of individual memories.[341] In other words, people actually remember *less* than they did as individuals when they participate in group recollection. One hypothesis for this is that being in a group creates an inhibitory effect such that inconvenient, undesired, or unpleasant recollections become discouraged by the group, either implicitly or explicitly. This inhibiting of memory results in individuals forgetting those things deemed undesirable. Whereas one might think an antidote to collective forgetting that comes as a result of audiences listening to sermons/speeches would be for people to engage in group discussions to recall forgotten information, these studies show such group recollections only increase individual and collective forgetting. "We might assume that recalling with others should

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[340] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 268-271.

[341] Barbara H Basden et al., "A Comparison of Group and Individual Remembering: Does Collaboration Disrupt Retrieval Strategies?," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 23, no. 5 (1997), 1176. See also: Helena M Blumen and Suparna Rajaram, "Influence of Re-Exposure and Retrieval Disruption During Group Collaboration on Later Individual Recall," *Memory* 16, no. 3 (2008), 231-244; Fleur Finlay, Graham J Hitch, and Peter R Meudell, "Mutual Inhibition in Collaborative Recall: Evidence for a Retrieval-Based Account," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 26, no. 6 (2000), 1157; Mary Susan Weldon and Krystal D Bellinger, "Collective Memory: Collaborative and Individual Processes in Remembering," *Journal of experimental psychology: Learning, memory, and cognition* 23, no. 5 (1997), 1160.

help our individual [recollection] performance, but the opposite is true. Research on collaborative recall has consistently demonstrated that collaborative groups recall less than nominal groups; this effect is termed 'collaborative inhibition'."[342] This fact impacts not just group memory, but individual memory as well: "Collaboration [in recall] shapes subsequent individual recall, both in terms of remembering (mentioned items) and forgetting (unmentioned items)."[343] As a result:

> Recalling selectively in a social context can shape subsequent individual memory...In terms of forgetting, the selective nature of social remembering suggests that information that conflicts not just with individual goals, but also with social goals, is unlikely to be recalled during conversation. Fivush (2004) described "silencing", the self- or other-censorship that can occur when recalling the past with others. She argued that this silencing during social interaction can cause subsequent forgetting of material that was not mentioned during the conversation. Thus, social influence may cause forgetting, particularly of memories that conflict with the group's goals.[344]

In social settings, the pressure exerted, explicitly or implicitly, by individuals within the group to remember things/events in certain ways does not just have a silencing effect on others, it can actually cause individuals to forget their own accounts of events independent of the group version. And this targeting of collective memory is most seen with information that defies or challenges group norms.

> While the collaborative recall paradigm suggests that remember with others results in forgetting, our research suggests that this forgetting is targeted–that collaboration may result in forgetting of specific aspects of an event depending on the group norms that emerge during discussion (Harris et al., 2010). That is, social motivations, such as fitting into a group of peers or agreeing with others, can drive what is remembered and

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[342] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 268.

[343] Ibid, 269.

[344] Ibid, 266. See also Robyn Fiyush, "Voice and Silence: A Feminist Model of Autobiographical Memory," in *The Development of the Mediated Mind: Sociocultural Context and Cognitive Development*, ed. J. Jucariello, et al. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004).

forgotten, even for emotional events that are well remembered.[345]

Now I want to turn to how collective forgetting takes place in particular contexts. One case study looked at how collective forgetting takes place in contemporary Germany with regards to racial/ethnic and religious minorities, particularly immigrant groups within its borders.[346] Here the author argues that in order to articulate an anti-immigrant politic, a national discourse of homogeneous origins must be professed. In order to do this, however, the historical diversity of German populations has to be elided.

> Strategic collective forgetting is also critical to the preservation of the myth of German homogeneity. Social homogeneity on a national scale is absurd to those who consider class, linguistic, or regional variation, and notions of racial homogeneity and of distinct human races have been refuted on scientific grounds periodically by anthropologists. But the ideology of German racial homogeneity persists nevertheless, institutionalized and operationalized through the workings of the German constitution and citizenship law. Those to whom this ideology is important or central would find it further shaken by the recognition that large numbers of foreigners have always comprised a substantial portion of the German population, some staying on and even "mixing in" with the rest of Germany . . ..Faced with a history that contradicts sharply the ideal self-image, the history is ignored, erased, and forgotten, and the self-image is maintained . . . Such a large-scale collective amnesia may be especially possible in this nation where public officials and citizens alike must present–and to a certain extent, believe in–a self-image disconnected from the former Reich. Due to their special past, modern Germans may be especially vulnerable to forgetting. [347]

The point the author is making is in the contemporary context of particular political agendas, certain rhetorical frameworks are created such that targeted populations are subject to erasure insofar as their presence complicates/contradicts a preferred national narrative of identity. This

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[345] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 271. See also Celia B Harris et al., "How Did You Feel When "the Crocodile Hunter" Died? Voicing and Silencing in Conversation Influences Memory for an Autobiographical Event," *Memory* 18, no. 2 (2010), 185-197.

[346] Andrea L Smith, "Social Memory and Germany's Anti-Foreigner Crisis: A Case of Collective Forgetting," in *The Labyrinth of Memory*, ed. Marea Teski and Jacob J. Climo (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 89.

[347] Ibid., 89.

collective forgetting is further accentuated when there are prior historical epochs/contexts that are painful to individual and collective consciousness. Thus, forgetting occurs first in attempting to distance both individuals and groups from a historical event that is unpleasant (in particular where guilt is involved), and second, in wanting to create a national identity predicated on the erasure of certain populations from inclusion within it.

As we saw in the previous studies, the axis of forgetting is operating multi-dimensionally and simultaneously. Individuals are capable of intentionally inducing forgetting of past traumatic events through TNT processes, but are also able of inducing forgetting by simple omission without an agenda attached. Thus, forgetting can happen as a purposeful act, but can also continue unintentionally by simple failure to cue and recall things/events targeted for erasure. When those individuals function in group settings, that forgetting can be amplified both intentionally and via collective inhibition. The result is that not only are the memory patterns of groups altered, the ability to recall past events is obstructed for individuals as well. This has tremendous implications for events and populations subjected to erasure for whatever reason. To reassert information that has been rhetorically erased challenges not only a larger group history and identity, it challenges individual psyches as well. Thus, the precarious position of those subjected to erasure become increasingly fragile over time. And those challenging that erasure would predictably be subjected to increasingly intense opposition by both groups and individuals.

So far, we have looked at collective forgetting as happening via rhetoric. But memory is triggered by more than just rhetoric–it is conveyed through a totality of cultural phenomena that function as a skeletal framework from which selected memories can be constructed in desired

formats. “Applying this framework to memory, philosophers argue that humans augment their relatively unstable individual memories, which are not typically stored as discrete, fully formed units but as distributed representations, with more stable external ‘scaffolding’.”[348] In previous chapters I have argued that the Cherokee Bible and hymns are both products of and mechanisms by which performance takes place via biblical translation. And the result of these performative biblical translations is the creation of alternative religiosities, in this case, alternative Christianities, that trace their lineal memories back to indigenous sociocultural events/places/identities rather than to a first century Palestine Greco-Roman/Jewish context. I have also argued that not only does performative biblical translation result in the creation of new religiosities, it also results in the creation of new sovereignty/political structures as well. Those directly involved in Cherokee biblical translation were also the early Chiefs of the newly constituted Cherokee Nation that modeled itself not only on traditional beliefs and practices, but also on dominant forms of US governance. Thus, just as the Cherokee Bible and hymnody functioned as a type of scaffolding for indigenous lineal memories to be traced and recalled, that scaffolding extended into the very sovereignty structure of the Cherokee Nation. In a very real sense, biblical translation can not only create new religiosities, but it can also create larger sovereignty structures related to those new religiosities. As Maurice Halbwachs noted: “Above all, when a society transforms its religion, it advances somewhat into unknown territory. At the beginning it does not foresee the consequences of the new principles that it asserts. Social forces, among others, prevail and displace the group’s center of gravity. But in order for this center to

[348] Harris, Sutton, and Barnier, 272. See also Robert A Wilson, "Collective Memory, Group Minds, and the Extended Mind Thesis," *Cognitive processing* 6, no. 4 (2005), 227-236; John Sutton, "Remembering," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*, ed. Philip Robbins and Murat Ayded (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 217-235.

remain in equilibrium, readaptation is required so that the various tendencies of *all* the institutions constituting the common way of life are adjusted to each other [emphasis mine]."[349]

In the context of memory, then, we must look at how the scaffolding of memory functions to place under erasure certain events and peoples problematic to a larger national identity. In the case study on German national identity previously discussed, the author asserts:

> In their study of English state formation, Phillip Corrigan and Derek Sayer stress that state formation simultaneously involves project of totalization as well as individualization. . .The classification of individuals and groups is of fundamental importance to nation-states. In the process of state formation and in the everyday operation of state institutions, social identities are defined and controlled. State institutions also "totalize," or attempt to create a unified whole out of a diverse fraction of the human population, p resenting as homogeneous what are really diverse experiences of different groups. . .Capitalist society, fundamentally unequal, is structured along class, gender, ethnic, and other distinctions, but the state-idea often does not allow for the expression of these differences. One powerful means of suppressing difference is the omission or deletion of conflicting or marginal memories from national histories.[350]

The point here is that collective forgetting is intrinsically connected to statecraft. Sovereignty structures are necessarily, if not foremost and primarily, concerned with creating national identity. But the terms of that national identity are selectively chosen such that inconvenient populations or painful events are excised from the collective national memory.

> The invention of national traditions or official histories is a highly selective, politically charged, and ongoing process, involving the construction of a unitary national history from multiple, conflicting, and competing group memories...While it is partly through special reconstructions of the past that group identities are established, challenged, or transformed, the process of choosing which events to erase or forget is as crucial and as strategic a process for individuals and state historians as selecting which ones to remember, and those processes must occur simultaneously–while selecting memories, those not chosen are relegated to erasure...The politics of constructing and reproducing

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[349] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 86.

[350] Smith, 63. See also Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution : [with Peface, Postscript and Bibliographical Supplement]* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985).

national and social memories are intrinsically related to the politics of forgetting. [351]

If performative biblical translation works to create new religiosities, and if those religiosities necessarily give rise and are connected to accompanying sovereignty structures, then it follows that performative biblical translation functions not only by the tracing of collective lineal memories, but in engaging in collective forgetting of targeted events and populations. The extent to which this collective forgetting occurs in performative biblical translation on a broad scale is something that extends outside the scope of what I can reasonably argue here. But what I do wish to argue is that there is a fundamental connection between performative biblical translation and collective forgetting in the instance of Cherokee scriptures and sovereignty structures, and Cherokee Freedmen. The ability to trace indigenous lineal memories in Cherokee sacred texts is what allowed for the Cherokee Bible and hymns to function as a mode of resistance to assimilation and destruction of tribal sovereignty. Performative biblical translation in Cherokee contexts did not just inspire a new national identity–it actually helped create it. But that national identity became predicated on the removal of problematic narratives from a desired purity of origins framework. Narratives that spoke to slaveholding, abuse of persons, and Cherokee dependence on African-descended slaves were collectively forgotten. Thus, the collective forgetting that is inherent in any translation project provided a foundation for the abjection of the Cherokee freedmen.

Abjection

Finally, the question remains, to what extent is this collective forgetting intrinsic to any performative account of biblical translation?

[351] Smith, 67-68.

As previously discussed, performative biblical translation functions in large part by the evocation and tracing of lineal memories–memories that relate individuals and communities to places, beliefs, and particular traditions. The cultural uniqueness of those memories along with the level of deep salience they evoke result in translation processes not just communicating new ideas, but constructing new religiopolitical structures that affirm particular ontopraxies, or ways of being in the world that are fundamental to communal identity. The more memories are connected to particular ontopraxies, the deeper the performative value in translated sacred texts.

But the depth of memory required to result in translated sacred texts being performative necessarily entails a certain amount of exclusion. In other words, to remember in such powerful ways requires not remembering other things that could interfere or challenge those narratives. So performative biblical translation will always result in some level of collective forgetting. But as mentioned previously, forgetting in and of itself is intrinsic to memory, and should not be understood as *a priori* negative. Yet, the level of collective forgetting in certain circumstances is more than just failure to recall–rather it is the wholesale rejection and erasure of entire populations and events. The fact that performative biblical translation will have as a necessary consequence some levels of collective forgetting is not really informative. The better question is, to what extent does performative biblical translation result in collective forgetting to the extent that populations are subjugated, and undesirable histories are erased from public memory?

The concept of abjection helps to address some of these questions (if only provisionally). Julia Kristeva first coined the term abjection in her work, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection.* For Kristeva, that which is abject is not something wholly other, but rather that which is connected to us in anterior fashion, both repelling and fascinating, and which occupies the

boundaries that both define and threaten our identity.

> What is abject...is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses...It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master...A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A "something" that I do not recognize as a thing...The primers of my culture.[352]

Kristeva describes abjection in terms of horror. The diseased body, the decaying corpse, are all realities which remain forever possible and even unavoidable to us yet are instinctually repulsive. Such phenomena evoke feelings of horror and repulsion, but not because they are simply distasteful. Rather, disease and decay represent the reality underlying our own existence with which we can never escape. That which inspires horror is something we push to the margins and position ourselves in opposing fashion, but which constitute our very identity and reality. The abject is the visible sign that always surrounds ourselves with an unwanted reality we continually refuse and deny. That which is abject occupies a position of anteriority–it is the possible state with which we are constantly confronted, yet continually disavowing. It is not wholly other–it is both other and ourselves. "Refuse and corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live...There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border."[353] Abjection, then, is unique in that it is not simply that which is marginalized, but those whose marginalization constitute our own identity.

Homi Bhabha draws heavily upon this understanding of abjection in his work. In *The Other Question*, Bhabha doesn't use the term abjection specifically, but employs the framework

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[352] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 2.

[353] Ibid, 3

of abjection to describe the racial stereotype and its necessity in colonized contexts. The colonized "other" for Bhabha exists as both a mirror and a menace to the colonizer. Bhabha describes the colonized as occupying and performing a sort of Lacanian reflective/refractive moment where the colonizer sees in the colonized an image of herself, but at the same time recognizes differences which can never be fully assimilated.

> Colonial discourse...is an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences...colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible.[354]

> The Imaginary is the transformation that takes place in the subject at the formative mirror phase when it assumes a discrete image which allows it to postulate a series of equivalences, samenesses, identities, between the objects of the surrounding world. However, this positioning is itself problematic, for the subject finds or recognizes itself through an image which is simultaneously alienating and hence potentially confrontational. [355]

Here the influence of Kristeva is marked–the colonized function as both mirror and menace. The colonized reflect back to the colonizer qualities contained within the colonizer and recognized as similar to the colonizer. Yet simultaneously, the colonized projects back a difference upon which the colonized/colonizer relationship is based. This difference challenges the recognition, resulting in continual ambivalence on the part of the colonizer. In other words, contained within the body and life history of the colonized is the basis for the imbalanced relationship to the colonized. Thus, the colonizer must disavow the colonized in order to retain privileged status, but that disavowal is also provisional because the colonizer derives his identity from the colonized. Bhabha essentially applies Kristeva's abjection into racialized contexts.

Anne McClintock and Joseph Roach use abjection to frame relations between

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[354] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 70-71.

[355] Ibid, 77.

communities in contest. McClintock begins with Kristeva, and then applies her notion of abjection to particular peoples and communities:

> "Kristeva argues that a social being is constituted through the force of expulsion. In order to become social, the self has to expunge certain elements that society deems impure...For Kristeva, however, the expelled elements can never be fully obliterated; they haunt the edges of the subject's identity with the threat of disruption or even dissolution. She calls this process abjection.
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> The abject is everything that the subject seeks to expunge in order to become social; it is also a symptom of the failure of this ambition...abjection marks the borders of the self; at the same time, it threatens the self with perpetual danger...the expelled abject haunts the subject as its inner constitutive boundary; that which is repudiated forms the self's internal limit. The abject is "something rejected from which one does not part."
>
> Under Imperialism, I argue, certain groups are expelled and obliged to inhabit the impossible edges of modernity...Abject peoples are those whom industrial imperialism rejects but cannot do without: slaves, prostitutes, the colonized, domestic workers, the insane, the unemployed, and so on...the abject returns to haunt modernity as its constitutive, inner repudiation: the rejected from which one does not part."[356]

For McClintock, abjection is a necessary consequence of specific politico-economic structures that place groups into ambivalent and contested relationships with one another. The structures are evidenced by the presence of abjected groups.

Roach expands abjection to collective forgetting and performance–particularly between Native peoples and African slaves:

> While a great deal of the unspeakable violence instrumental to this creation may have been officially forgotten, circum-Atlantic memory retains its consequence, one of which is that the unspeakable cannot be rendered forever inexpressible: the most persistent mode of forgetting is memory imperfectly deferred.[357]

Roach touches on a pivotal aspect for my work–how performances between dominated communities are necessarily oppositional while also constitutive for identity formation:

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[356] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 71-72.

[357] Roach, 4.

> The key to understanding how performances worked within a culture, recognizing that a fixed and unified culture exists only as a convenient but dangerous fiction, is to illuminate the process of surrogation as it operated between the participating cultures. The key, in other words, is to understand how circum-Atlantic societies, confronted with revolutionary circumstances for which few precedents existed, have invented themselves by performing their pasts in the presence of others. They could not perform themselves, however, unless they also performed what and who they thought they were not. By defining themselves in opposition to others, they produced mutual representations from encomiums to caricatures, sometimes in each other's presence, at other times behind each other's backs. [358]

Performance, according to Roach, always functions oppositionally on some levels. That is, by performing identities via memory, it must necessarily exclude others as not belonging to that identity. This insight gets to the heart of performative translation–for it to be truly performative, it must function as exclusionary. If performative biblical translation work by creating and promoting distinctive lifeways for a people, a necessary aspect of performative translation would be to distinguish a particular way of being in the world that is unique and differentiable from others. But in the process of differentiating, hierarchic relationships between communities can form, resulting in abjection. The greater the degree of performance in translation, the more likely abjection is to result. Thus, abjection is not something peripheral to biblical translation projects–rather abjection is a likely consequence depending on the performative value of the translation.

This presents a double-edged sword for biblical translators. On the one hand, performative biblical translation can give rise to new community identities, linguistic structures, indigenized religiosities, and political sovereignty frameworks. And these new entities can result in both the preservation of indigenous identity as well as modes of resistance to hegemonic

[358] Ibid, 5.

forces. On the other hand, those very mechanisms for resistance can also function regressively to define, repress, and reject vulnerable populations and subgroups whose existence challenges the imagined narrative of the dominant community birthed via performative biblical translations.

In the case of Cherokee Freedmen, an unanticipated consequence of performative biblical translation was the increasing abjectification of African-descended Cherokee slaves. Performative biblical translation is most identifiable in instances where the linguistic systems being translated are highly disparate. And performative biblical translation is most effective when the translation into the target language relies upon lexical and grammatical choices that draw upon and reflect to a strong degree the cultural beliefs and practices of the target-language community. Cherokee biblical translation reflected both these phenomena. But even more, when historical traumas affect a community such that the trauma becomes definitional of communal identity, the lineal memories traced through processes of biblical translation function as acts of condolence, creating a shared communal memory around the historical trauma that allows a community to move from being overpowered to empowered. But the cost of this rememorying is the increasing exclusivity of communal identity created through the process of performative biblical translation. Thus, it may very well be that performative biblical translation has an unintended, but unavoidable inverse consequence–to the degree that performative translations better capture the unique traditional beliefs and practices of a target-language community, the more likely that translation is take hold and be embraced. But the more such translations have performative effects for target-language communities, meaning the more translations function by affirming/recreating lifeways for a people, the more likely that dynamics of exclusion are to arise. In other words, the extent to which biblical translations can function as tool for resistance

and community identity would also be the extent to which those same translations function to position target-language communities in hierarchic relationship to others. The very use of performance as a method explains the power embedded within biblical translation processes, and illustrates the simultaneous multi-directional performative force contained within translated sacred texts.

Removal

> My name is Eliza Whitmire...I do not remember the exact date of my birth, although my mother told me I was about five years old when President Andrew Jackson ordered General Scott to proceed to the Cherokee country, in Georgia, with two thousand troops and remove the Cherokees by force to the Indian Territory...The Cherokees, after being driven from their homes, were divided into detachments of nearly equal size and late in October, 1838, the first detachment started, the others following one by one. The aged, sick and the young children rode in the wagons, which carried the provisions and bedding, while others went on foot. The trip was made in the dead of winter and many died from exposure from sleet and snow, and all who lived to make this trip, or had parents who made it, will long remember it, as a bitter memory.[359]

This account of the Trail of Tears comes through the eyes of a five-year old survivor of that atrocity. She was forced to walk alongside her parents over 800 miles to Indian Territory– not because she was Cherokee, but because she was owned by one. Over 1,000 black slaves are estimated to have traveled along the Trail of Tears.[360] But in most treatments of the removal, the plight of Cherokees is highlighted, sometimes to the complete exclusion of the death and misery faced by their African-descended slaves.

This section will not be providing another exhaustive account of the removal, slavery, or

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[359] George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series 1, Vol. 12* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 380-82.

[360] Pierre-Rene Noth, "4000 Never Made It West; Other Tribes Suffered Too," *Past Times: Our Cherokee Heritage*, August (1997), 59-63.

any other epoch in Southeastern Indian history. Those topics are amply covered elsewhere as footnoted in this chapter. It will also not address the question of who were the more benevolent slave owners, whites or Indians. While this question serves to frame much of the literature regarding Indian slaveholding, particularly the works of Theda Perdue, Annie Abel, and Ray Halliburton, I contend that to even entertain such a question is itself an act of violence. For example, Perdue asserts that, "Although Cherokee planters required hard work from their bondsmen, they probably treated their slaves much better on the average than did their white counterparts."[361] She goes on to state that the "relative leniency on the part of [Cherokee] masters seems to have been characteristic of Cherokee slavery both before and after removal."[362] But as ex-slave Lizzie Jackson notes: "I'm glad that slave days is gone. Even if the master was good the slaves were bad off."[363]

Analyzing slavery on basis of who brutalized who more is inherently to view the issue of slavery from the vantage point of the oppressor, to determine the parameters of the discussion on apologetic grounds. I seek instead to give voice to those most silenced in such accounts, the slaves themselves. Rather than investigating Indian treatment of black slaves, I wish to explore how slaves were able to use Native traditions to protect not only their physical well-being, but their African cultures as well. This section is an attempt to illumine what is at other times ignored, the agency of the black slaves. Towards that end, I focus on the WPA narratives of former Indian-owned black slaves in order to show what Michel de Certeau describes as "the

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[361] Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866*, 98

[362] Ibid, 98

[363] Rawick, 187.

ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong."[364]

Religion

Irena Blocker, a former slave among the Choctaws, tells the story of her aunt, Penny Brashiers, who was an herb doctor for the community:

> Her famous herb remedies brought ailing people of all races to the door of Aunt Penny, many to die after their arrival and many more through the ministrations of the good old doctor were cured of their ills and enabled to return to their homes to sing the praises of this colored medicine woman.[365]

Victoria Taylor Thompson relates a similar account about her father. Victoria and her father "Doc" were former slaves of Cherokees. She says:

> For sickness daddy give us tea and herbs. He was a herb doctor, that's how come he heave the name "Doc." He made us wear charms. Made out of shiny buttons and Indians rock beads. They cured lots of things and the misery too. [366]

Among most Southeastern tribes, a person who used herbal remedies to heal people was referred to as an Indian doctor. They held a special position within their Nations but were distinct from conjurers. Among several non-Indian scholars, little distinction is made between the two, both often being referred to as "medicine people." Traditionally though, they were sharply differentiated.[367] Among Cherokees there were at least three distinctions made of Indian doctors. The first, *adonisgi,* healed with herbs. The second was called *adawehi*–they were able to perform certain ceremonies using both good and bad medicine as well as administer medicinal remedies. The third was an *adonese*, or a "conjurer," the most powerful (and generally most feared) of

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[364] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 68

[365] Rawick, 68.

[366] Ibid, 322.

[367] Alan Kilpatrick, *The Night Has a Naked Soul* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 47-53.

them all. Interestingly, in the sections of the Cherokee Bible where sorcery is condemned, the word used is the second type of Indian doctor, *adawehi*. I believe this is because the *adonisgi*, or herbal doctors, were so integral to Cherokee society that Cherokee translators would be loath to condemn them in the scriptures. And because the *adonese* were so greatly feared because of their abilities, they escaped condemnation as well. Thus, the *adawehi* are denounced, perhaps because this was the not the most powerful class of Indians doctors, yet a class who mixed both healing and conjuring, (though not every form of conjuring was looked upon as negative). In the ex-slave narratives, only the first and third types of Indian doctors are mentioned. It may be that black slaves made use of Indian acceptance of these types of doctors, both culturally and scripturally, in order to retain the practice of African forms of healing.

While these are a few examples of the important role many slaves had as community healers and Indian doctors, there are literally scores of accounts of herbal remedies, charms, conjuring, and other traditional spiritual practices being used amongst black slaves. But in comparing these accounts with ex-slave narratives from outside Indian Territory, it becomes clear that such practices took place across slave society. Thus, I believe what are being recounted are persistences of African traditional religion and healing practices. The mention of coins, charms, and specific herbs cuts across all geographical delineations. But in most accounts, the person interviewed notes that such practices were not accepted by white slave owners. The forthrightness evidenced in the narratives with Indian slave owners may indicate that slaves were able to utilize the acceptance of Native healing practices to preserve and maintain their own African traditions. Albert Raboteau mentions in his book, *Slave Religion*, that one reason for the presence of greater Africanisms in slave communities outside the US is because those

communities tended to be comprised of hundreds of slaves, mitigating the contact with non-Africans and establishing de facto transplanted African communities. But in the US, most plantations were of a smaller scale, so that African-descended slaves had greater exposure to non-African beliefs and practices.[368] In the case of Indian slave holders, however, most plantations were extremely small, often comprised of a single slave family. One would expect in this case to see a larger degree of enculturation. But just the opposite appears with traditional healing practices. Both Native and African healers seem to have flourished in Indian Territory because black slaves were able to continue their traditional practices under the accepted guise of Indian doctoring. Thus, rather than being assimilated into another culture, slaves were able to preserve and maintain some particular forms of traditional African religions. Jack Campbell, a former slave of Choctaws, went on to become a highly respected Indian doctor within the Choctaw Nation. His account illustrates the level of acceptance black healers were able to achieve in Indian society:

> I was an Indian doctor when I was grown and when an Indian would get sick he would send for me. I would always go and see the sick Indian, if this sick Indian was a real sick fellow. The Choctaw tribe in those days called their sick spells after some of the animals that roamed the woods and some of the fowls. I would never tell the names of the roots and herbs that I dug up and cooked down for the sick. [369]

Jack Campbell's interviewer goes on to note:

> (He also refused to tell me yesterday when I was talking to him. He said it was against his belief.) Jack Campbell, is some instances as late as today, is called to see a sick Indian. He says that he always gathered his herbs and medicine in the Spring and in the Fall, and he is able to make many kinds of medicine. [370]

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[368] A.J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43-94.

[369] Rawick, 92.

[370] Ibid, 92-93.

An analysis that I believe should be avoided, however, is the rush to establish whose traditions were dominant over whom. We see these arguments made several times in scholarship dealing with Black-Indian relations. On the one hand James Mooney argues that Black folktales are loans from Cherokee mythology, and on the other hand Alan Dundes argues that Native stories are mere derivations of African folklore.[371] Much of the scholarship dealing with Black and Indian peoples details history in a European dualistic model. Underlying this analysis is the concern about "authentic" versus "inauthentic" indigenous spirituality, or what Mary Churchill terms a concern for "purity versus pollution."[372] In an attempt to distinguish the "authentic" from the "inauthentic," lines of distinction are continually being drawn between "genuine" Native and African traditions and those that have been corrupted by "outside" influences. Drawing these lines of distinction has resulted in rather sharp, arbitrary divisions between traditional Native spirituality and African traditional religions.

This dualistic model fails to take into account the complex dynamics between Native and African traditional beliefs and practices and instead essentializes indigenous identity. It does so by viewing either religious tradition as incapable of evolving and incorporating into its belief systems outside practices that enhance its ability to ensure the survival of its people. Such a portrayal results in a monolithic and static understanding of indigenous identity.

A better analysis affirms the integrity of Native and African traditions and highlights

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[371] Alan Dundes, "African Tales among the North American Indians," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 29, no. September (1965), 207-219.

[372] Mary C Churchill, "The Oppositional Paradigm of Purity Versus Pollution in Charles Hudson's:" The Southeastern Indians"," *American Indian Quarterly* 20, no. 3/4 (1996), 563-593.

their complex interactions instead of asserting primacy of one tradition over another. This is not to say that the oppressed and the oppressor hold the same social power relative to one another. Rather, I am attempting to counter the one-dimensionality of Black-Indian relationships that pervades academic scholarship. As Foucault notes, power is never enacted unilaterally. Rather, the oppressor and the oppressed interact with each other, not just one upon the other, for "where there is power, there is resistance."[373]

Christianity also plays a dominant role in the ex-slave narratives. While Christianity is often viewed by historians as a tool of assimilation, I believe it played a very different role for black slaves. Black liberation theologians, such as James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore, have vigorously argued that the black church was not complicit in black oppression, but rather served as a means of resistance and liberation for the black community. Dwight Hopkins and Will Coleman go even further by arguing that the black church and slave religion were able to preserve traditional African religious practices, such as vodun. The obvious extension of these arguments is in their application to Indian slaveholders. If black slaves utilized Christianity as a means of social resistance against white supremacy, would that not also apply to dealings with Native slaveholders? Take, for example, the case of James Vann. He was a wealthy Cherokee plantation owner who first offered his property as a site for the Moravian missionaries (later known as Springplace). But he himself was not Christian. According to Moravian missionary documents, the first converts at that site were Vann's slaves. It should be noted that Vann was a heavy drinker and became violently abusive while intoxicated. Vann's persistent drinking became problematic for the missionaries who eventually decided to search for another mission

[373] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 1, 95.

site. But Vann's slaves encouraged the missionaries to remain and continue evangelizing their slave owner. While Vann did not immediately convert, out of respect for the mission site he refrained from drinking on the Sabbath. The Moravians noted that Christianity had become very important to Vann's slaves because for them, it meant that at least one day out of the week their slave owner would be sober and hence, less violent.

Eventually Vann did convert to Christianity and became an ardent supporter of the church. After his conversion, one of Vann's slaves, Lucinda Vann, remembers:

> Christmas lasted whole month. After we got our presents we go way anywhere and visit colored folks on other plantations. In one month you have to get back ... Christmas morning marster [sic] and missus come out on the porch and all the colored folks gather around. Someone call our names and everybody get a present. They get something they need too. Everybody laugh and was happy.[374]

Christianity meant not only relief from physical abuse, but also a better quality of life. There is no other account of slaves being able to leave their plantation for such an extended period of time as Lucinda describes. In contrast to Lucinda Vann's experience, Sarah Wilson reflects on her non-Christian Cherokee slave owners:

> Before freedom we didn't have no church ... They didn't tell us anything about Christmas or New Year ... and all we done was work.[375]

Thus, Christianity was another tool black slaves utilized to subvert the oppressive structures in which they found themselves in order to achieve a higher quality of life.

Language and liminality

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[374] T.L. Baker, J.P. Baker, and USW.P. Administration, *The Wpa Oklahoma Slave Narratives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 438-439

[375] N.R. Yetman, *Voices from Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2012), 329

Chaney McNair, a former Cherokee slave, was raised in a community almost exclusively Cherokee. She relates this anecdote about her life outside the Cherokee Nation immediately following the Civil War:

> I'll have to tell you a joke on myself, just to show you how ignorant I was. I didn't know nothin' cept what I'd learned on Marster William's plantation. First place I went the woman say, "You make a fire in the stove". I'd never seen a stove. I walked round and round that stove, didn't even know what it was. There wasn't no wood to make a fire with. All I could see was a pile of black rocks in a pail like. That woman say, "you no good, you can't even make a fire." I twisted my handkerchief up and came home cryin' to my sister. She say, "What you all come home for", and I says, "I can't make no white folks fire, I can't make no fire with rocks". She sent me back and the woman taught me how to make a fire in the stove with coal.
> Next day she say, "You put water in the reservoir, so it won't get dry." Lord, I'd never seen no reservoir. I looked around, but I couldn't see nuthin' goin' dry. Then she tell me to go put somethin' in the frigerator so it keep cold. I didn't know what a frigerator was. One day she give me some eggs and milk and stuff and say, "Now you malgamate this here." She mean mix it up, beat it, like this. How I know what malgamate mean? I didn't know white folks language. [376]

Chaney's story illustrates the liminal position former black slaves of Indians often found themselves in following Emancipation. Many slaves were so enculturated into Native communal life that they were unprepared for interaction with non-Indians, particularly whites. According to ex-slave Patsy Perryman: "I was a full grown up girl before I ever saw a white man."[377]

But some ex-slaves had an even more difficult time because they could not speak nor understand English. This was particularly true for black slaves of Creeks. Lucinda Davis recalled the following:

> I belong to a full-blood Creek Indian and I didn't know nothing but Creek talk long after de Civil War. My mistress was part white and knowed English talk, but she never did talk it because none of de people talked it. I heard it sometime, but it sound like whole lot of

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[376] Rawick, 217.

[377] *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol. 7* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 53

wild shoat in de cedar brake scared at something when I do hear it. [378]

Mary Grayson, a slave in the Creek Nation, observed: "The Chickasaw seemed...they talked more in Indian among themselves and to their slaves." [379] The resulting linguistic and cultural barriers made it extremely difficult for black slaves of Indians to function easily outside of Native communities, even if it only meant crossing the Kansas border.

But there were difficulties for black slaves within their Indian communities as well. Chaney Richardson remembers the difficulties slaves encountered at the hands of other Indians, in his case Cherokees. The Cherokee Nation split into northern and southern factions during the Civil War. The northern faction was comprised of Pin Indians, and they relentlessly attacked Cherokee slave owners and vice versa. But the Pins did not distinguish slaves from their slave owners. Chaney recalls:

> When I was about 10 years old that feud got so bad the Indians was always talking about getting their horses and cattle killed and their slaves harmed. I was too little to know how bad it was until one morning my own mammy went off somewhere down the road to git some stuff to dye cloth and she didn't come back...They find her in some bushes where she'd been getting bark to set the dyes, and she had been dead all the time. Somebody done hit her in the head with a club and shot her through and through with a bullet too. She was so swole up they couldn't lift her up and jest had to make a deep hole right along side of her and roll her init she was so bad mortified. [380]

The liminality of Indian-owned former slaves was further exacerbated by the tensions they experienced from other ex-slaves. Moses Lonian recalls: "The Kansas negroes did not like the idea of slaves keeping the names of the Indian Masters." [381]

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[378] Ibid, 53.

[379] Ibid., 121.

[380] Ibid, 259.

[381] *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement Series 1, Vol. 12*., 211.

Under such pressure, Moses' father changed his last name to that of an old white slave owner. But in doing so, Moses laments: "This cost his children their rights in the [Indian] Territory, as we were classed as doubtful when we came back, because we bore the name of a white master."[382] Moses goes on to say that his father became so disliked by the other black peoples in Kansas that one day:

> Three of them slipped upon him while he was sitting down and two grappled with him and held him while the other cut his throat. [383]

This animosity between former slaves of white and Indians is attested to by a non-Indian owned ex-slave named Henry Clay. He states:

> I never did get along good with these Creek slaves out here and I always stayed around with the white folks. In fact I was afraid of these Creeks and always got off the road when I seen Creek negroes coming along. They would have red strings tied on their hats or something wild looking. [384]

Black slaves of Indians were thus forced to negotiate between various liminal places afforded them because of their unique sociocultural positioning. In the end, most came back to the Native nations that had once enslaved them. Cornelius Nave remembers that when his father left the army:

> Pappa took all the family and moved to Fort Scott, Kansas, but I guess he feel more at home with the Indians for pretty soon we all move back, this time to a farm near Fort Gibson. [385]

But returning to Indian Territory should not be interpreted as the assimilation of blacks into

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[382] Ibid, 211.

[383] Ibid, 211.

[384] Ibid, 115.

[385] Ibid, 236.

Native culture. Rather, I see it as a way in which black peoples chose to embrace a particular system of relationality that was formative for many ex-slaves. As Chaney Richardson notes, the woman whose mother was killed by the Pins:

> I still understand and talk the Cherokee language and love to hear songs and parts of the Bible in it because it make me thing about the time I was a little girl before my mammy and pappy leave me. [386]

Cherokee language and culture served not to assimilate Chaney out of her identity, but to solidify her relationships to her family and heritage. Thus, the power of Native culture lay not in supplanting black peoples from an African identity, but rather in providing a mechanism by which black slaves could preserve their unique culture, beliefs, and religious practices as an affirmation of their identity as African peoples and families. Yet, despite the strong connections freedmen have had to their respective tribal communities, tribes have consistently backed away from affirming their full membership. Choctaws initially and Chickasaws for several decades refused to incorporate their freedman onto their rolls. Cherokees, until very recently, have disenfranchised their freedmen, and the Seminole similarly refused membership to Seminole freemen. As Marcus Briggs-Cloud notes, with the advent of colonialism, anti-Blackness has become indigenized and Cherokee blackness has been collectively forgotten.[387]

Conclusion

Cherokee Freedmen existed in a state of abjection with respect to the Cherokee nation– they are forever connected to the Cherokee Nation, but they also occupy a status seen as

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[386] *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Vol. 7*, 262.

[387] Marcus Briggs-Cloud, "Maskoke People and Our Pervasive Anti-Freedmen Society," in *Otherwise Words: Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, In Press), n.p.

threatening to the Nation or represent a class of people that should rightly be outside and separate from the Cherokee Nation. As Robert Warrior asserted, there can be no exodus story without the subsequent narrative of conquest. When performative translations result in liberatory beliefs, practices, or narratives, one has to ask at whose expense? Which class has been selected for absence in that performative narrative? Who has been relegated to the forgotten bin? Who now exists in a state of abjection as a result of those particular tracings of lineal memories?

The contested status of Cherokee Freedmen is not a new phenomenon. Halliburton discusses the history of Cherokee Freedmen, and how after the Civil War, the Cherokee Nation was divided in how Cherokee Freedmen should be treated or compensated. Certain Cherokee factions wanted Cherokee Freedmen to receive compensation, but directly from the US and not from Cherokee funds.[388] Further, those same factions wanted Cherokee Freedmen to be relocated outside the Cherokee Nation, or to be restricted to a particular area within the Nation–a reservation within a reservation as it were. It was the federal government that made a condition of any treaty recognizing the Cherokee Nation that Cherokee Freedmen be freed, compensated, and fully incorporated within the Cherokee Nation. Because the US declared all previous treaties with the Cherokee Nation null and void as a result of the Cherokee Nation siding with the Confederacy, in a very real way, the status of Cherokee Freedmen became the foundation for the modern-day sovereignty and recognition of the Cherokee Nation. The very existence of the Cherokee Nation today hinges on the status of Cherokee Freedmen.

So how does collective forgetting work with relation to Cherokee Freedmen? First, there is the erasure of contemporary Cherokee Nation sovereignty being recognized only if Cherokee

[388] Halliburton, 128.

Freedmen were forever recognized and incorporated into the Cherokee Nation. Second, there is the erasure of the extent to which Cherokee Freedmen participated in traditional Cherokee religious practices like stomp dances, spoke the language, and were fully incorporated into traditional Cherokee ways of life. Third, there is the systematic forgetting of how Cherokee Freedmen served as official translators to the Cherokee Nation to help negotiate treaties and other binding agreements. And finally, forgotten is the blooded status of many Cherokee Freedmen who sometimes had higher Cherokee blood quantum than others who were permitted to enroll on the Cherokee citizen rolls. Despite this higher blood quantum, Cherokee Freedmen were prohibited from enrolling as blooded members because of their former slave status, and thus forced onto the Freedmen rolls. This overt racialization of the enrollment process in the Dawes rolls is forgotten, and Cherokee Freedmen are continually discussed as non-blooded members whose status can be altered by the popular vote of blooded members. This systematic collective forgetting allows the Cherokee Nation to portray itself as colonial victim that deserves compensation and continued federal assistance. The presence of the Cherokee Freedmen challenges that narrative and places the Cherokee Nation in a position of giving redress rather than demanding it from others. It places the Cherokee Nation in a position of being accountable to others rather than demanding it as a right of victimhood. In short, Cherokee Freedmen challenge the very identity of the modern Cherokee Nation.

As Qwo-Li Driskill argues, "It was never imagined by the 'civilization project' that Cherokees would use the features of 'civilization' it hoped would assimilate Indigenous people to fight for sovereignty. But perhaps, as well, before slavery and missionization Cherokees would never have imagined that the Cherokee Nation would . . .consider human beings property

and normalize violence and abuse."[389]

Native studies scholar Eva Garroutte once noted, we study Native nations not for what they tell us about Native nations, but because of what they tell us about the world.[390] So ultimately the arguments around performative translation resulting in abjection extend beyond the Cherokee Freedmen to larger colonial contexts, and even the formation of the early Christian church. In analyzing the process of abjection in this particular context, this theoretical framework can then be broadly applied to other communities and historical events. For example, to what extent do colonized communities call for liberation while simultaneously engaging in selective "forgetting" that rewrites history to exclude those with alternative sexual orientations in order to posit a pure community that was historically devoid of plural sexual expressions? How have women, slaves, and the pervasive practice of sexual violence been written out of the history of the early Church in order to obfuscate the degree to which the early Church was comprised of and dependent upon these very classes of people? While collective forgetting may be a necessary part of any translation project, are there processes and frameworks that can reduce the possibility of this forgetting resulting in abjection, even when this abjection is unintentional? These questions are critical for biblical studies as a whole. As Driskill states, attending to those who have been collectively forgotten requires a "process of reviving and revising cultural memories…through a practice of resistance that draws on our past not as nostalgic, but as a collection of complicated stories."[391]

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[389] Qwo-Li Driskill, *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit Memory* (University of Arizona Press, 2016), 134

[390] Eva Garroutte, *Real Indians* (Berkeley: University of California, 2003), 140-152.

[391] Driskill, 135

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Translators work with source and target languages. Incommensurability creates a linguistic crisis as well as a meaning crisis, and this is where translator innovation is most evident. Neologisms, innovative imagery, grammatical changes, and source text alteration are often most pronounced in instances of incommensurability. In examining texts using performative translation theory, one looks for moments of linguistic incommensurability between source and target language. Then one compares the text translated into the target language to the larger sociocultural and linguistic context of the community circumscribed by the target language to see what possible lineal memories are being invoked in that flashpoint. Understanding translation as performative can serve as an opportunity to analysis how subversive language and concepts become injected in the process, and I would argue when source and target languages are very different from each other, that potential for this subversion becomes far greater.

If translation is the process whereby lineal memories are traced and evoked, then in so doing, symbolic orders of meaning and intersubjective communities are created, and modes of indigeneity persist. In other words, not only are new religiosities created through performative translation, but also new sovereignty structures. And those sovereignty structures are necessarily created because the lineal memories evoked in performative translation result in the creation of larger systems of coherence to regulate, interpret, and authorize those lineal memories. Those systems of coherence, or symbolic orders of meaning, become the sovereignty structures uniting and regulating the communities for whom those lineal memories are both targeted and have

salience.

Because lineal memories connect peoples to a particular communal context, communal structures of relationship are necessarily part of those lineal memories. That is why not only are new religiosities created in performative translation, but also new sovereignty structures. Homi Bhabha speaks of this in terms of hybridity–that each apparent adaptation of a dominant culture by a subjected community will resemble, but not exactly replicate, the dominant structure being copied/mimicked. The result of hybridity is mimicry–where the product of adaptation is camouflaged in similarity, but not quite the same. And the difference between the original and copy is the moment/location where subversion and resistance as well as persistence of indigeneity can occur. While hybridity necessarily involves unequal power relationships, performative translation does not. Rather, performative translation is most evident between very disparate linguistic systems. This disparity results in the formation of more and deeper flashpoints via the translation process, and this is where persistences of indigeneity and acts of resistance can be located in performative translation.

Now, the key feature in performative translation is the tracing of lineal memories. But memory complicated. Because memory functions via evocation or recall, it is necessarily exclusive. To evoke a memory is to select certain memories for recall while excluding others. To remember always involves a simultaneous forgetting. One could even characterize memory as selective forgetting–that memory functions by selectively choosing what should be relegated to absence, and that category of absence occupies a subordinate position to that which is deemed not forgettable. Communities become defined by the types of lineal memories they trace as a group/whole. Radically different lineal memories result in functionally different communities

with different values, loyalties, and governing structures/sovereignty systems.

I want to emphasize here the hierarchic positioning of memory to absence. When systems privilege that which is remembered and subordinate that which is not remembered, this can result in the loss of status to that which is chosen to be forgotten. In the present/absent dichotomy, presence is typically positioned in superior fashion. For example, Schüssler Fiorenza argues that the collective forgetting of women from biblical narratives has led to the subordination of women in Christian religious traditions.[392]

This is where the moment of abjection enters. And this is the key to explaining how subjugated and/or colonized communities can push for and articulate their own liberation while simultaneously subjugating others either within or outside their communities. In performance, and in my work on performative translation, that which is systematically excluded from communal lineal memories can result in abjection. Now, what is abjection? Here I am using it in the more formal sense of Julia Kristeva's work. But where Kristeva describes abjection as a sort of anterior space or condition to symbolic orders, I instead view abjection as a by-product of certain symbolic orders, or particular sovereignty and religious structures. Hence, liberatory movements within subjugated communities often result in the marginalization of selected classes of people.

Abjection is not necessarily inherent to religion or sovereignty structures per se, but I do think abjection is a necessary product of memory. Because biblical translation necessarily traces lineal memories within target languages as a function of the translation mechanism, abjection inherently results. As unique lineal memories evolve into particular new

[392] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her,* xiii-xxiv.

Christianties/religiosities, those religiosities have as part of their contour, elements of abjection. The sovereignty structures connected to those religiosities will therefore necessarily also contain moments of abjection.

Does this mean there is an intent on the part of translators to create abjected classes of people? Not necessarily. Translation can function as a Lacanian "*objet petit a*" or object of desire. Translation can serve as the space/instrument where the translator can coordinate desires, both conscious and sub-conscious, to create a new symbolic order. But translation flashpoints do not necessarily follow the intent of the translator. Because lineal memories are performative and not static, they always exceed the manipulability of the translator. And while lineal memories can function in potentially subversive ways, they can also function regressively. The fluidity of memory evocation is dynamic, and therefore not predictive.

Acts of translation can result in new symbolic orders, and these new symbolic orders are shaped by the lineal memories they trace. Lineal memories provide contours for communities–contours that are permeable and indefinite, but which still retain form. That which is chosen to not be remembered, to not occupy community contours, exists in a state of abjection–that state which is inherently connected to, but seen as both threatening to and forever apart from that which is "remembered." While collective memory can create new religiosities and sovereignty structures, collective forgetting can result in abjection–the widespread marginalization of selected classes of people for whom the dominant society is dependent upon in some way. When memory and forgetting take place at the communal level, they can construct symbolic orders that become normative and liberatory for some while oppressive to others. But the unique feature of abjection is that the subordinated class functions as a fetish by which the dominant class/society

derives its identity. Hence translation also requires an ethic of accountability as to the effects of its exclusions.

This dissertation put biblical translation into conversation with feminist/postcolonial trends in scriptural interpretation as well as translation studies, performance studies, and memory studies by resituating the field of biblical translation in a different context, that of Native North America. In doing so, this project exposed the extent to which the assumptions that undergird the field of biblical translation, that come from the dominant culture that is dependent on the erasure of indigeneity in the US context, simultaneously erases indigeneity in the biblical context. In future work, I will focus more specifically on the retention of indigenous practices within the biblical field. However, before this work can be done, this project was necessary in order to provide a framework that can enable future inquiry.

I proposed a performative theory of scriptural translation. While I developed this theory from a Cherokee context, it has broad applicability. In this dissertation, I took up the charge by Wimbush to not simply tell a story about Native peoples through dominant academic models, but to situate Native communities as places by which models of scriptural translation for everyone can be developed. As a result, my dissertation is principally concerned with developing a theory of performativity that can be used as part of a hermeneutical project and in historical (re)narrativizing. I use the historical context of Cherokee encounters with Christian sacred texts as a means for developing a larger theory on performance that attempts to weave together contributions from performance theorists across a number of fields. In doing so, I seek to demonstrate the biblical translation must be an interdisciplinary endeavor if it is to take into account the multiple worlds and contexts that engage each other through translation. I attempted

to craft a theory of performance that will have broad implications and applications for the field of Bible as well as other academic disciplines.

While much work in minoritized and postcolonial biblical studies often focuses on the manner in which colonized peoples are oppressed through Christian systems, I challenged the colonizer/colonized binary by examining how processes of translation not only enable colonialism but create new identities that defy categorization. I further highlighted the very influential and political role of biblical translators, many of whom are indigenous, and examine the religious and political implications of translating sacred texts. The implications of my work vastly expand traditional understandings of the work of biblical translators, and the scope of biblical translation studies.

For instance, by understanding that biblical translation creates lineal memories, not just to the early church, but indigenous traditions, it becomes clear why we must expand the scope of what is considered biblical studies. While no one would doubt that the fields of archaeology, history, and literature are important for the field of biblical studies as it relates to gaining a greater understanding of context in which biblical scriptures were written, as Vincent Wimbush notes, these areas are presumed to be irrelevant when they relate to more contemporary communities, particularly those that are colonized. However, without an engagement with these fields cross-temporarily, it is impossible to assess the intertwining lineal memories and what they are tracing. This understanding would that impact how we understand biblical translation generally speaking, including translation into extra-canonical scriptures. In addition, by understanding translation as a performance, it becomes clear that biblical translation cannot be limited simply to written scriptures. Oral traditions, hymnody, architecture, art, and much more

all are part of the larger textual performance in which lineal memories and collective identities are created, and thus are all a necessary part of the field of biblical translation.

The overarching framework for my scholarship centers around the question: what happens if we look at biblical translations into indigenous languages as more than just technical enterprises? By using a performative analysis of biblical translation and expanding the notion of sacred texts to include oral texts, we can then understand biblical translation as a process whereby new religiosities are created and competing political/sovereignty systems are constructed.

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