Reading Sacred Texts: Charity, Structure, Gospel

Reading Sacred Texts: Charity, Structure, Gospel

Evan Fales

An Imprint of the
Global Center for Religious Research
1312 17th Street • Suite 549
Denver, Colorado 80202

info@gcrr.org • gcrr.org

GCRR Press
An imprint of the Global Center for Religious Research
1312 17th Street Suite 549
Denver, CO 80202
www.gcrr.org

DOI: 10.33929/GCRRPress.EF2021.01

Typesetting: Holly Lipovits
Copyediting: Allison Guy
Cover Design: Darren M. Slade
Cover Image: Fritz Eichenberg, *The Book of Jonah, Ch. I–IV*, 1955. © 2021 The Estate of Fritz Eichenberg / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Reading sacred texts : charity, structure, gospel / Evan Fales
p. cm.
Includes bibliographic references and indexes.
ISBN (Paperback): 978-1-7362739-0-6
ISBN (eBook): 978-1-7362739-1-3
1. Bible—Hermeneutics—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Hermeneutics—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BS 500-534.8 .F354 2021

To Daniel,

who lit the candle.

Contents

Acknowledgments

No living species has a gestation period of forty-five years, but books on occasion do, and this book is one such example. My interest in the subject began quite by accident, and the initial development of my ideas similarly by accident. The pivotal moment, however, occurred in 1973 when a conversation with an old friend, Dan Larkin, made me realize that lessons I learned in the anthropology of religion might be applied to an understanding of the New Testament. A year later, chance threw us together for a year as apartment-mates, and long hours were devoted to teasing apart the structure of the Gospel of Matthew. Section I of Chapter 11, in particular, owes so much to those conversations that it would be impossible to tease apart which of the ideas in play are Daniel's and which are mine. To Daniel, then, I owe thanks beyond measure both for an enduring friendship and for the gift of a set of intellectual challenges worthy of a better scholar than I.

I also have an extended exchange with Lydia McGrew to thank for the tightening of my arguments in the first part of Chapter 11; she unerringly pointed out lacunae and challenged me to fill them in.

The third word of thanks goes to the Center for Philosophy of Religion at Notre Dame University, which granted me a year-long fellowship to pursue this project. Although in the intervening years I had written a few studies that form the basis of some chapters, it was my year at Notre Dame (2013–2014) that afforded me the opportunity finally to engage in a book-length study. It is hard to imagine a more satisfying setting than what was provided by the Center. Here, particular mention must be made of William (Billy) Abraham, whose historical knowledge and philosophical acumen allowed me to gain insight into theological ways of thinking not previously accessible to me; to Sam Lebens, whose knowledge of rabbinical thought and sense of humor were precious resources; to Carl Mosser for his extensive knowledge of Second Temple Judaism and the New Testament; and to Ryan Mullins for his knowledge of patristic literature. Billy, too, pointed me in the direction of some highly suggestive patristic material of which I was able to make good use. These are debts I cannot ever hope to repay, and they made an immense contribution to my quest for understanding the field of ancient Near Eastern studies.

My associate fellows at the Center were not the only contributors to the intellectual climate provided by the Center. A number of extremely able philosophy graduate students not only taught me much but made life at the Center a real pleasure. Particularly worth singling out are Nevin Climenhaga, whose expertise in formal epistemology helped me clarify, in major ways, my treatment of miracles in Chapter 2, as well as Amy Seymour, Dustin Crummett, and David Squire. (I could not, unfortunately, get them to agree to take responsibility for the errors in the book.) A number of Notre Dame philosophy faculty also participated helpfully in our colloquia, especially Robert Audi and Jim Sterba, not to mention the Center's administrators, Mike Rea and Sam Newlands. Further, let me thank the Center's secretary, Joyce Zurawsky, and the two graduate assistants, Katie Finley and Robin Dembroff. Last, but certainly not least, I owe a large debt of gratitude to my editor at GCRR, Darren Slade, for his wealth of suggestions for improving my efforts to communicate. I am eternally grateful to all of you for your patience and assistance with this project.

Preface

I have been thinking about the Bible for more than forty-five years. The thing happened quite accidentally; while pursuing graduate work in philosophy, I was led by quite different philosophical interests to take some graduate courses in anthropology on the side. That project soon receded from view as my attention became riveted by the literature, both ethnographic and theoretical, on tribal religions, which fed an interest I had even as a child: why do people believe as they do?—a question that becomes especially pressing in the face of religious beliefs.

My thinking about tribal religious beliefs was much influenced by Emile Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* and by Claude Lévi-Strauss' work on the structural analysis of myths. At the same time, I found what I consider to be fundamental inadequacies in both their views. Yet, at least Lévi-Strauss was refreshingly free of the tendency, almost universal among early anthropologists of religion, to attribute to tribes-people deep cognitive errors of one kind or another. So matters stood until it dawned on me, thanks to a chance reunion in 1972 with Dan Larkin, who was studying the Gospel of Matthew with Norman Perrin at the University of Chicago, that anthropological methods could illuminate the New Testament. Back then, applying anthropological tools of analysis to the "home religions" was not commonly done. Things have changed somewhat for the better. Anthropological and sociological studies of Judeo-Christian traditions are now quite common.

In 1978, I published a couple of articles defending a principle of interpretive charity and outlining a social ontology that, I argued, could provide a conceptual framework for understanding both "native" and Judeo-Christian religious thought. Those articles, substantially revised and updated, form the backbone of Chapters 1 and 4 of this work. Since that time, I have remained largely silent on these matters, but here I aim to try and see whether I might be able to contribute something to our understanding of the Bible and of sacred writings more generally. This is, to say the least, an ambitious task; some would even say foolhardy. They have good reason: my project divides, roughly, into three parts: a philosophical part, a discussion of anthropological methods, and an examination and interpretation of illustrative biblical texts. My main philosophical tasks are to set forth and

defend a strong principle of interpretive charity and a social ontology that can illuminate certain central theological categories.

Using the history of anthropology of religion as a foil for my philosophical arguments, I will then engage, often critically, further contributions from anthropologists that I take to be highly relevant: those of Lévi-Strauss, of course, but also Marcel Mauss, Arnold Van Gennep, Edmund Leach, Victor and Terry Turner, Mary Douglas, and others. From them, I shall draw and attempt to make as explicit as possible the conceptual tools I will apply to the illustrative texts. Those texts, treated in the third part, will be drawn from both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. I have selected them in the hope that my interpretations will be of sufficient interest to readers who have greater scholarly abilities than I to persuade them to pursue this approach further to see where it might lead.

Because my task spans three academic disciplines, it is, as I noted, inherently ambitious. Academicians stand eager to defend their turf. This is nowhere truer than in the field of Bible scholarship, and with good reason: there is perhaps no other discipline in which more nonsense has been written by zealous amateurs. As an interloper, I can only hope that I will not be summarily rejected. Critical Bible scholarship has been permeated with deep disagreements from the beginning. (Indeed, a number of philosophers—Michael Dummett, Alvin Plantinga, and Peter Van Inwagen come readily to mind—have justified dismissive attitudes toward the field on these grounds.) But differences of opinion, however disconcerting, are commonplace in any discipline. In Bible scholarship, they are in significant measure the result of two factors: too much data, and too little data. That may sound paradoxical, but of course it is not. There exist more data than any single scholar can hope to control; at the same time, there is often a frustrating *lack* of data that would allow us to settle crucial uncertainties in our reconstruction of the past. This fact recommends a steadfast counsel of caution respecting the conclusions that can be drawn. For such as myself who are philosophers, it demands an extra dose of humility.

At the same time, I shall be proposing and defending (at least) two controversial theses. The first, already noted, is a strong principle of charity, which I will spell out in Chapter 1. The second takes very seriously the view, commonplace among anthropologists, that tribal peoples do not characteristically draw conceptual boundaries between the categories of religion and politics. I shall argue for a stronger claim: that in most "primitive" cultural contexts, religious thought and practice *just is* political thought and practice. In this, I can be (and have been) accused of "reductionism" and various other sins. I shall defend the view against those accusations. I shall then apply this *just is* political view to the biblical texts. I do that in the spirit of proposing, and then testing, a hypothesis. To make the issue as clear as possible, I will formulate the hypothesis in the starkest of

terms and then assess whether it can explain our data. If it bears sufficient fruit, then it deserves serious consideration; if not, then it must either be rejected or revised.

In all this, I intend to put my cards on the table from the outset. That is why half of this book will be devoted to questions of methodology. In testing my hypotheses, I shall, in general, proceed by way of reasoning to the best explanation. Such reasoning is highly fallible—not only because our data may be radically incomplete but because we may have failed to consider one or more hypotheses that are competitors to the ones we do consider. I shall have considered my project a success if I can put on the table a global hypothesis (and several corollaries) that have not heretofore been given adequate attention.

In keeping with my policy of putting my cards on the table, let me add here one final note. When I began thinking about these matters some forty-five years ago, I was an atheist. I remain an atheist to this day, but a defense of atheism was not then, and is not now, part of my agenda in pursuing these matters. My interest, then and now, is to understand what the biblical texts mean. In what follows, when I speak of the "meaning of a text," I speak mostly (making due allowance for hermeneutical complexities) of what the original tradents of that text meant to say to an intended audience. For me, author-meaning is conceptually primary—and, in any case, it is what primarily interests me. (If, as is common for these works, the text emerged from an extended period of shaping by several or many individuals, talk of author-meaning is obviously awkward.[1] I shall use the term as a stand-in for what is better understood as the meaning intended and understood by the community that shaped the ultimate form of a text as we have it.) As for the rest, let the chips fall where they may. Some will see the claim that the biblical messages were ultimately political (at their core) as corrosive to their faith. If so, I shall only plead that this is, in good measure, where the evidence seems to lead me.

[1] Werner H. Kelber, *Apostolic Tradition and the Form of the Gospel* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 11–32.

Language and the Task of Interpretation

I begin with language. My ultimate aim is to illuminate some biblical texts by approaching the task of reading them in a new way. It may seem strange to introduce such a project by offering quite general reflections on the nature of linguistic communication. But I believe this is necessary. Perhaps no text has ever been produced whose interpretation has been—and is—more widely contested than the Bible. Because of this, and the more so because of the particular interpretive tools I employ, it is essential that I put my methodological cards (and their defense) on the table at the outset.

What follows in this chapter are general reflections upon the nature and role of language as a medium of communication, as well as the hermeneutical constraints that follow from these reflections. The trajectory I then follow in pursuing certain puzzles in the biblical texts can be thought of as a spiral. Beginning with these very general reflections upon the nature and social role of language, this essay turns next to questions of social ontology, then to a critical discussion of the various theoretical approaches that have been proposed by anthropologists faced with the task of interpreting sacred texts, and finally to the Bible itself. Along the way, there will be an extended discussion of what to make of miracle stories, a topic that plays an unavoidable role in situating my project in the larger history of Bible interpretation and provides a key motivation for my interpretive strategy.

I. Language as a Means

If we are to start at the beginning to assess the tools required to understand difficult texts bequeathed to us from a distant past or distant culture, it behooves us to reflect with some care on the nature of human communication and language in particular. Language is a tool: we use it to communicate. Language can be used in other ways (as when we talk to ourselves and, as will emerge, for other purposes, as well), but its fundamental purpose is communication. Human beings are, by nature, highly social creatures. We are also (more or less) rational. These two major forces will, over the long haul, shape language into as efficient and effective

a means of communication as possible. The very evolutionary processes that have made us social and rational will, we may assume, have encouraged linguistic invention, largely weeding out practices, conventions, and the like that are less effective.

It is important to remember that communication does not require language. It is present in non-human animals, to varying degrees, and makes use not only of vocalizations but gestures, facial expressions, and the like. Many of these—also in humans—are not conventional but genetically determined. Because such non-linguistic means of conveying intention can supply important clues for the deciphering of spoken language, we may assume that they offer a significant infrastructure upon which the invention of language, or entry into an existing language, can be erected. Together with reasonable inferences about communicative purposes from our knowledge of general biological needs, desires, and activities of fellow humans, such clues regularly serve to disambiguate the speech acts of others. The importance of these clues is sometimes overlooked or undervalued. The native speaker of Tsimshian, whose behavior shows that his principal interest in rabbits lies in hunting them down, is more likely to mean "rabbit" than "temporal part of a rabbit" when he points and says *g āq*.[1]

The grasping of referential intentions is essential to the introduction of conventional signs—e.g., words—to denote items in the world and their properties. More generally, the establishment of linguistic conventions of any kind requires that language learners be able to employ a grasp of the intentions conveyed by individual speech acts. Together with observations of the routine correlation between vocal sounds and sight of the scene, as well as by way of innate reasoning capacities, learners can then glean knowledge of a language's semantic rules.

II. What Makes Language Possible?

The acquisition of a natural, public language is universal among most human beings raised under typical social conditions. As just noted, the learning of a language involves a number of cognitive abilities. It requires, *inter alia*, the perceptual capacities of language teacher and neophyte to put both *en rapport* with a common perceived environment. How much our perceptual systems must have in common to represent a shared perceptual world is open to debate but, minimally, teacher and student should be able to establish common reference to some items and to some properties.[2] This is a

[1] The example is adapted from Willard Van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 1960).

[2] For a discussion of how this happens, given a causal theory of reference, see Evan Fales, *Causation and Universals* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

sophisticated process, requiring that each party have a theory of mind that allows attributing semantic intentions to another on the basis of behavioral cues—a second capacity. Forming general associations between linguistic signs and their denotata further requires memory and innate reasoning capacities good enough to underwrite deductive and inductive inferences.

This has two immediate consequences relevant here. The first is that ascription of knowledge and use of a public language to others entails that people possess, in common with fellow humans, a range of communal empirical inputs and an arsenal of inferential procedures that are non-optional and universal among language users that share, or can share, such a public language. That is to say, people must be minimally rational.

So, in particular, it entails that those who employ rules of inference in acquiring knowledge about the world, about fellow human beings, and about a language—any language—must all minimally grasp the validity of the same basic rules of inference. It has sometimes been suggested that the basic logic and ontological frameworks that govern our conception of the world are themselves bequeathed by our culture and, thus, vary from one culture to another. But that view is flatly incoherent. For how is a culture to communicate its inferential norms and perceptual categories—i.e., those that reflect discrimination of properties and that underlie the individuation of physical objects—without relying upon a learner's pre-existent application of cognitive capacities to the data by means of which that information is conveyed? This does not show that we can know *a priori* that our fellow human beings engage the world with the same innate conceptual equipment that we possess. But it does show that we can know *a priori* that if they are public language users, then they do have that equipment. Let me emphasize here that the argument does not simply invoke conditions necessary for translation from one tongue to another; rather, it shows that those conditions, which inform my principle of charity, are essential to the learnability of any language whatsoever: without them, natives wouldn't *have* a language at all.

What I have suggested in skeleton form amounts to a "rationalistic" reconstruction of language-learning. One might object that this is unrealistic, that it portrays infants as carefully and systematically applying innate canons of reasoning to the welter of empirical data with which they are bombarded. Is this not a wildly idealized picture of what actually happens? Of course, no one thinks that one must be able to formulate abstractly an inferential rule—say *modus ponens*—in order to apply it correctly. But is there even an implicit following of such rules in the infant's mind? Surely there is. There are growing lines of evidence that suggest conceptual sophistication even in

very young infants.[3] But that aside, I see no other way to explain how children learn.

It is true that certain preconscious biological capacities that mimic the functions of later cognitive processes may be in play—even necessary—to initiate learning a language. Consider how a child begins to learn vocabulary. Much of this proceeds haphazardly, but explicit early teaching typically involves demonstration associated with articulation of a word or phrase. Inductive methods of agreement and difference may allow a child to recognize that "ball" refers to objects of a certain shape and not to their color, position, size, or material composition. But in order for this to work, the child must presuppose, implicitly, that fluent informants are able to recognize correctly when balls are salient in the environment and mean to speak truly when they utter "ball." Perhaps this trust in others is not initially itself learned; perhaps such trust is instinctive. (We shall return to this in considering the grounds for trusting testimony.) We might allow, as well, that there are certain innate dispositions to mimic the speech sounds of others. Such features of our make-up may help explain causally how we come to be in a position to engage cognitively with language. We may be thrown into the language game before we really understand what is going on. But that understanding, when it is achieved, will at least require an implicit capacity to reason from data to semantic knowledge.

We are, then, constrained to conclude that all language users are equipped with certain basic cognitive faculties. It is straightaway to be recognized that they do not apply those faculties flawlessly. Both perceptual acuity and inferential sophistication come in degrees. Mastery of a language is by no means a trivial task, but it is compatible with a good deal of stupidity and other forms of un-reason. A sensible principle of interpretive charity will admit this. In the absence of good evidence to the contrary, we should, in attempting to decipher the communications of others, presume that they are in possession of run-of-the-mill rational faculties. The presumption may fail, in two directions: a language user may be displaying better-than-average intelligence or sub-standard abilities. Our principle should recognize those possibilities in the following way: if an interpretation of a communication attributes to its source either significantly more or less sophistication than the norm, then (in the absence of special evidence that supports this attribution) one ought to favor an interpretation that assigns run-of-the-mill intelligence and knowledge to the source.

This principle is unavoidably vague. It places a lower limit on intelligence: a speaker must be smart enough to have learned the language he or she uses. It does not tell us how much special evidence of brilliance or

---

[3] Evan Fales and Edward A. Wasserman, "Causal Knowledge: What Can Psychology Teach Philosophers," *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* 13, no. 1 (1992): 1–27.

bone-headedness may properly be demanded for out-of-the-ordinary interpretations. But it suffices to raise important questions about the interpretation of religious language, and it will provide a framework from which to assess, in particular, the language of such sacred texts as the Bible. We must therefore reflect upon how such a principle bears upon the interpretation of sacred texts; for texts, after all, are testimony.

III. Trust Me on This

A. The Epistemology of Testimony: Two Options

To an enormous extent, what we know is learned by way of receiving the testimony of others. Often, that is our sole source of information; at other times, it is an essential part of our evidential package. Moreover, and in particular, testimony plays an essential role in religious education, and sacred texts (oral or written) play an essential role in the religious curriculum. This is so even in religious traditions that place heavy emphasis on personal religious experience or participation in ritual. Thus, in spite even of the often-claimed ineffability of mystical experience, mystical traditions typically revere certain texts devoted to the description of such experiences. So, there is no escaping the evidential status of personal testimony, which is central to my project. Indeed, one debate that brings the evidential bona fides of testimony into focus is the question of whether, and when, one is justified in accepting historical claims, especially miracle reports—a matter to which I will devote extended attention in Chapter 2.

Current discussions of testimony as evidence tend to divide into two camps. The first is reductivists, who do not consider testimony a fundamental source of evidence. They hold that sense experience and introspection are the only ground-level sources of empirical knowledge; knowledge gained by way of testimony is almost always inferential knowledge since it relies upon reasoning to ground the reliability of the testimony.[4] Assessing the reliability of that testimony must rely upon inferences from evidence, in the form of sense experiences, as to the reliability of testimony in general and the reliability of the present testimonial source in particular. Anti-reductivists, on the other hand, hold that testimony can properly generate non-inferential or basic warranted belief; it therefore provides an independent source of knowledge.

The anti-reductivist position is a quite natural one if you are an externalist in epistemological matters. For in that case, a testifier can be seen as just one more link in the complex chain of causes and effects by means of

[4] There are unusual exceptions, as when someone says, “I’m talking now.”

which information about the world is able to make its way into your cognitive arena. So long as that link (as well as others in the chain) is reliable or operating in such a way, and under such conditions, so as to provide accurate information, the resulting beliefs will suffer no principled epistemic demerit in comparison to those arrived at by way of other truth-tracking processes of information acquisition.[5]

As we will see, the debate between these two positions has direct relevance to the soundness of Hume's famous argument concerning the reliability of miracle testimony. The epistemological views I hold bear strong affinities to David Hume's; that is to say, I am a full-bore internalist and a full-bore foundationalist. I consider that the only non-inferential empirical knowledge to have epistemic meaning is knowledge of the (subjective) contents of personal sense experience and introspection.[6] This is not a common view, but more mainstream internalists will, or should, also question whether testimony can be a basic source of evidence. Surely our judgments about the truth of testimony rely upon inferences about the trustworthiness of testimony in general, as well as in particular cases.

But matters are not quite so simple; there is an *a priori* element in our evaluation of testimony. Moreover, although the anti-reductivist position may seem attractive to those who wish to credit factual assertions found in sacred texts, our assessment of those claims will in the end not depend very substantially upon whether our epistemic starting point is reductivist or not. To pursue these two points, let me consider first a significant defense of the anti-reductivist position by C. A. J. Coady, who makes his case in three main steps.[7] First, he demonstrates the pervasiveness and the depth/extent of our need to rely upon testimony to secure the knowledge we have of the world. Second, he argues that any attempt to justify our confidence in testimony runs up against the difficulties that (1) our non-testimonial evidence for the reliability of testimony is too thin to secure that conclusion; and (2) that reliance upon (other) testimonial evidence begs the question. Third, Coady provides an *a priori* argument to show that verbal communication presupposes the general truth of testimony.

In reply, I will note important ways in which Coady exaggerates his first point and show that a more accurate view of the evidential importance of testimony undermines his second point. But I will agree that something in the vicinity of Coady's third point is correct and then argue that this

---

[5] C. A. J. Coady, a defender of anti-reductionism, leans repeatedly on arguments that presuppose an externalist theory of justification. For example, see his approving discussion of Thomas Reid in C. A. J. Coady, *Testimony: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 120–130.

[6] See Evan Fales, *A Defense of the Given* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996).

[7] Coady, *Testimony*.

furnishes us with the foundation on which to mount a somewhat different attack on Hume's assessment of testimony. It is the third point (or rather a reformulation of it) that underwrites a general principle of interpretive charity. Let us consider these points in order. First, there is no disputing our heavy reliance upon testimony as a source of knowledge. Take our knowledge that people do not (ordinarily, anyway) rise from the dead. What is the evidence for that belief? Not, surely, long graveyard vigils. It appears, rather, to derive from the fact that we would expect if people were to rise from the dead (even—or perhaps especially—rarely), then this fact would become common testimonial knowledge. Many people would know of those who have died and then returned to life. But this means that it is by way of testimony—or, in this case, by way of the absence of expected testimony—that we judge a bodily resurrection to be something extraordinary. Second, we now have sufficient knowledge of metabolic processes to understand why death is usually irreversible. But that biological understanding, if we have it, was acquired in large measure on the strength of learning from others (the biologists who contributed relevant biochemical knowledge).

There is nothing in this, however, that the reductivist cannot happily accept. For the reductivist will certainly agree that we somehow come to have grounds for accepting testimony, even as the only (or preponderant) direct evidence for many propositions we believe. When Coady points out how naturally, pervasively, and almost unthinkingly we resort to testimonial evidence, even in justifying quite ordinary beliefs, his examples often fail to acknowledge the tiered structure of such justification. Our primary justification for relying upon testimony begins to accrue even as we learn a language—more on this shortly—and gains nuance as we learn to use testimony to establish the bona fides of recognized experts whose testimony we can in turn rely upon. But a bottom-up approach to justification must genuinely begin at the bottom to gain any plausibility.

At issue, then, is whether those grounds must sometimes depend, circularly or question-beggingly, upon acceptance of testimony. No discovery, that most of what we believe can only be justified by some appeal to testimonial evidence, will serve by itself to unseat the reductivist's position. The critical question is whether our grounds for relying on testimony, in general and in particular cases, can be traced back to something more fundamental that is not itself also testimony. Now here is a natural picture of how a reductivist might argue for such a primitive grounding. The reductivist, so this story will go, relies upon a rather straightforward series of inductive inferences in assessing the epistemic bona fides of testimony. At a base level, she is able to compare what others testify about the world with her own experience of the world itself. Her brother tells her that there is some kielbasa in the refrigerator. She goes and looks and there it is. Her mother says that her father will return home from work at

5:30 and so he does. Her teacher explains that she can find such-and-such a book in the library and she does. Enough of this experiential confirmation and our observer has good grounds, absent voluminous countervailing evidence, for trusting personal testimony. Indeed, those grounds may well be strong enough, in particular cases, to override her own sense perception. Nothing in the reductivist position commits her to the silly view that her senses cannot err or that "testimony" cannot be overridden by testimony coming from the lips of others.

Over time, she discovers, in noting various instances of false testimony, that the class of testimonies can be divided into several relevance-classes along lines that have both to do with the content of the testimony and with the character of the testifier. She notices that sometimes testimony is false or dubious because of the difficulty of its subject matter; and she understands how this may lead to error. In a related fashion, she comes to factor in the competence of a testifier, if she can make such assessments, in judging the reliability of his testimony. She considers—again, if this is known or can be discovered—the integrity of the testifier: his honesty, judiciousness, possible motives for prevarication, and possible beliefs about the chances of escaping detection in a lie. All of these, so far as they can be known to her, cause her to update her posterior probability assignment for truth; singly or collectively, they may defeat her reliance upon the word of a particular testifier on a particular occasion without defeating her general reliance upon testimony.

Coady sometimes offers a caricature of this kind of reasoning as his target. He cites, for example, a study by Robert Buckhout demonstrating the low reliability of eyewitness testimony, only cheerily to note that Buckhout "reports to us on experiments not all of which he has done himself.…All this would be laughable if it were not so common."[8] In somewhat more cautious remarks later, Coady acknowledges that many of Buckhout's conclusions about the unreliability of testimony must be taken seriously but condemns him for his "sweeping" condemnation of testimony.[9] But Coady's remarks ignore the context in which Buckhout was presenting his results: he was investigating the reliability of testimony about typical crime scenes and accidents for the purposes of establishing legal culpability. He was certainly not questioning, nor do any of his findings give us any reason to question, the processes by which scientific knowledge is established and transmitted in the scientific community. A reductivist will certainly protest that those techniques of transmission have been designed to be reliable, and if we have reason, testimonial or otherwise, to believe that this is so, then we (as well as Buckhout) have every right to such an inductively supported trust.

---

[8] Quoted in Coady, *Testimony*. 126–127.

[9] Ibid., 265–71.

The considerations just given in support of our principle of charity show, however, that this story is, at the very least, too simple. It is too simple, as earlier noted, in reconstructing language uptake as entirely dependent on conscious inductive inferences and, more crucially for the obvious reason, in suggesting that language-learning itself presupposes a context in which testimony is highly reliable. Absent that, no language-learner would discover the word-world regularities that she must depend upon to acquire semantic knowledge. Such massive truth-telling need not, nonetheless, permeate all of discourse. Achieving entry into a linguistic community requires regular truth-telling about a range of matters but leaves open the possibility of systematic error in more specialized domains, especially domains whose subject-matter lies at some distance from observational confirmation—that is, more theoretical claims.

What this means is that the very inductions that underwrite successful language acquisition also underwrite confidence in the pervasive veracity of testimony, at least about humdrum matters. Hence, Coady is right to observe that one could not both understand what one's interlocutors are saying and entertain, as a live possibility, that everything being said might be false and that, therefore, some further induction is required to establish the general trustworthiness of testimony.[10]

But Coady is surely being uncharitable when he takes Hume to be denying this in saying, "The reason why we place any credit in witnesses and historians, is not derived from any connexion, which we perceive a priori, between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find conformity between them."[11] Clearly Hume was not considering in this context—as one might wish he had—the necessary conditions of language acquisition. Nonetheless, it is possible to construe him as making here a quite unexceptionable point: that there is no guarantee—no necessary connection—between a statement being made and that statement being true. Even if we must allow, as a condition for public discourse, the general reliability of testimonial content for a wide range of contexts and content, we cannot know *a priori*—and especially in more specialized contexts—how reliable testimony is. Experience would be our only guide.

Thus, no theory of testimony deserves to be taken seriously if it is not in accord with Hume's general common-sense observations about when testimony is to be trusted and when it is not. And this point, which for our purposes is the most essential one, holds whether a theory is reductivist or not. No one who ignores the character, reputation, and competence of a testifier (if known), as well as the nature of his access to the information

---

[10] C. A. J. Coady, *Testimony: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 177–230).

[11] David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (1748; repr., Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 113.

purveyed, the presence or absence of motives for dissimulation, the likely chances of escaping fraud detection, and other such factors, could make a wise judge of the credibility of testimony.

It follows that as an objection to Hume's argument in "Of Miracles," anti-reductivism is nearly toothless. At most, it permits us to say only that a claim's being presented by way of testimony confers *prima facie* warrant for its truth. That leaves scope for overriders; and Hume's arsenal of overriders amply suffices to disarm this sort of defense of miracles. This point comes clearly into focus when we consider that a sensible man who witnesses the levitation of an Indian fakir judges reasonably that he is the intended victim of a clever deceit. Let him be as assured as Thomas Reid himself was that his eyes are God-given portals through which the world reliably reveals itself to him, let him understand that no cavil against their testimony can secure greater warrant than can be afforded by appeal to some other employment of his senses: yet that sensible man will rightly judge that the fakir has worked a trick upon his eyes. So much the more, upon merely hearing the testimony of others to the levitation, will he exercise suspicion. Moreover, it is precisely because his eyes and ears have taught him to be cautious that he is justified, by way of induction, in exercising it here. We shall have opportunity in Chapter 2 to examine much more extensively Hume's assessment of miracle reports. But there is nothing in the nature of testimony itself that undermines his argument in "Of Miracles."[12]

IV. Religious Thought and Reason

These quite general observations have implications for the study of religious language. The many complex and sophisticated uses of language have simple origins. They rely, in the first instance, upon the untutored observation of others and of the world, as well as the untutored employment of our ability to reason well, both inductively and deductively—well enough, at least, to discern and learn the conventional rules of a natural language, first by way of relying on non-conventional clues to discern the semantic intentions of the linguistically competent. That means that all the multi-layered levels of meaning that we encounter in theoretical and figurative uses of language must ultimately be explicable in a communicator's ability to make effective use of such simple cues to establish first-order conventions, and then to "play" upon those conventions

[12] Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 117–41). For a further defense of this point that is neutral on the question of reductivism, see Jennifer Lackey "Religious Belief and the Epistemology of Testimony," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology*. William J. Abraham and Frederick D. Aquino, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2017), 203–20.

in ways intelligible to others. It further means that authorial intent is primary to meaning, no matter the deviations in interpretation or application with the passage of time and changes in milieu.[13] And it means that language users must be able to exercise certain minimal capacities for rational thought, memory, and accurate observation of the world.

Religious language challenges these constraints in a variety of ways; indeed, so much so that the anthropology of religion is steeped in attempts to explain religious belief and practice that, at one point or another, impute to "primitive" people one or another species of systematic theoretical or practical irrationality. Especially during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, such imputations of irrationality (even sheer imbecility) abounded. Savage peoples were, allegedly, prone to confuse dreams with reality,[14] or speech with the events described,[15] or to be simply incapable of reasoning as we moderns can.[16] In one way or another, these thinkers proposed explanations for one central aspect or another of religious belief that were predicated upon cognitive incapacities.

I will be arguing that the imputation of such deep kinds of cognitive failure is not congruent with what we have a right to expect of successful societies and cultures. I will also be arguing that it is not necessary to resort to such extreme measures to explain religious discourse and belief. Rather, I will argue that in many cases, we must on the contrary operate under the presumption that sacred texts display a very high degree of both rationality and general intelligence. Those arguments will, in turn, inform the methodology with which I will seek to understand sacred texts.

---

[13] See H. P. Grice, "Meaning," *The Philosophical Review* 66, no. 3 (1957): 377–88, http://doi.org/10.2307/2182440. Once linguistic conventions are in place, we can distinguish what a sentence uttered by a speaker means (its conventional meaning) from what the speaker meant to say by uttering it. Though these are ordinarily congruent, divorce from authorial intent is still possible and, sometimes, even intended—as when one jokingly makes use of a malapropism. But this merely serves to reinforce the observation that speaker intentions are primary: they are, after all, required to fix conventions in the first place, to say nothing of being fundamental to the whole point of language, which is to communicate thought.

[14] Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 6th ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), 1:417–502; for a quick summary, see esp. pp. 499–502.

[15] James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, Abridged ed. (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1922).

[16] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think*, trans. Lilian A. Clare (1910; repr., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

V. The Roles of Rules in Language

A. How Rules (Semantic and Syntactic) Help Us

But before turning to those matters, I must first say a bit more about language in general. Linguistic communication is, in its essence, governed by rules. Some of these rules are rigid, others are optional or flexible. But the rules (if we set aside features deriving from a universal "depth" grammar) are creatures of convention. Beyond the rule structures, we have pragmatics. The rules themselves provide a pragmatic solution to a practical need to gain substantial independence from pragmatic constraints. By this, I mean that conventional rules permit the use of language to "float free" of many of the contingent circumstances upon which one must rely if someone wishes to communicate in the absence of such mutually understood conventions. Absent the existence of linguistic signs whose conventional meanings one can rely upon to be understood, people are quite limited in conveying their thoughts to others. There exists no real help for this dilemma but to rely upon intimations in the environment and other non-verbal cues (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, miming of actions, and the like). Conventions—word meanings, grammatical rules, etc.—effect a radical gain in efficiency. They do so, in the first instance, by removing dependence upon context. One can communicate the danger from prowling tigers without having to be in close and visible proximity to one. Writing multiplies this efficiency since we no longer need to be next to the speaker.

These efficiencies do not defeat all pitfalls: occasional ambiguities, for example. But they also provide a platform on which second-order meanings can be erected, as with figurative uses of language. I say "second-order" because the communication of meaning here depends upon a shared understanding of literal meaning conventions, together with the presence of contextual cues that signal non-literal intentions. We need no longer be in the presence of the first-order (or literal) referents, but we do need to be "in the presence of" the first-order meaning conventions and other cues that point us both to the figure and to its intended meaning.[17] Figures, too, can become conventionalized; and third-order wordplay can help itself to this fact. And so on. Because rules can always be "played" with, there is no

[17] One could, with some charity, consider this to be the grain of truth that is reflected in the fundamentalist commitment to the literal truth of whatever is not obviously figurative in the Bible. But obviously, the fact that comprehension of literal meaning is essential to the comprehension of intended meaning goes little distance toward showing that the intended meaning is *merely* (and confined to) the literal meaning. It can be the exact contrary—as when an ironic tone tips us off that a speaker means to be denying what she is literally affirming. Of course, we will not know *what* she is denying unless we grasp what her sentence literally asserts.

reason to expect that a theory of language will ever be able to formalize either syntax or semantics fully. Nevertheless, intelligibility is preserved—so long as use and usage have lineages that can ultimately be traced back to the establishment of first-order meanings.

Word meaning and grammar are not the only convention-permeated aspects of language. Style and genre are two others. We shall have to pay some attention to genre, as the assignment of genre to texts such as the Gospel of Matthew will prove to be a contested, but exegetically important, matter. However, we may usefully observe here, first, that there is no *a priori* reason to think that genre distinctions will be sharp and definitive and, second, that genre conventions cannot fluctuate, change, or even be up-ended entirely if and when such revisions serve a creative author's purposes.

What the characteristics are that distinguish genres—and, for that matter, what genres there are—is up to a linguistic community to determine (though not necessarily by anything like deliberate choice). Genres are not natural kinds; as creatures of convention, they are artifacts whose utility in interpretation cannot but be a matter of what the relevant conventions are, how assiduously they are observed, and to what degree a linguistic community employs them to further certain communicative ends. Such a community may or may not impose sharp distinctions. One just has to see.

But even if custom imposes a clean taxonomy of genres in a given historical setting, there is no insurance that the mold would not be broken. Successfully breaking such molds—besides requiring perhaps considerable creativity and sometimes also courage—is dependent, as with the figurative use of words, upon prior shared understanding of the accepted genre-defining rules and upon the presence of contextual cues that tip an audience off that something new is afoot. An interpretation of a text as being of a mold-breaking kind should, ideally at least, specify what these cues are, how they would have pointed an intended audience to the interpretation being offered, and why the author might have wished to convey his or her meaning in this unorthodox way. But we can no more assume hide-bound adherence to genre (or other linguistic) conventions in an ancient text than we can assume with confidence that our own literary conventions will not be broken by creative contemporaries. That is most especially a possibility that should not be ruled out *a priori* when a text offers interpretive difficulties.

B. Performing Performatives

Finally, and somewhat in the same vein, we must bear in mind the uses of language for purposes other than fact-stating. It was J. L. Austin's theory of performatives that gave prominence to this point. I bring it up here because, in at least two ways, the complexities of performative force will require our attention. First, we may think of fictional discourse as having a different

performative force than a fact-stating (or "constative") use of declarative sentences. But fiction, as is well known, can be used to convey truths. In some sense, then, these truths comprise part of the content of what fiction expresses, even though they may never be explicitly stated.

Indeed, the logic of fiction is complex and contested. Is the statement "Pegasus had wings" true or false? Both options are tempting. It is also tempting to judge the statement to lack a truth value—in which case it is arguably not a constative. Here, failure to have a truth value might be alleged on the grounds that "Pegasus" fails to refer to anything actual, but that would not reflect what is distinctive about fictional discourse. After all, reference-failure can occur also in non-fictional discourse. Consider, then, a fantasy in which "President George W. Bush grew wings" as a plot element. No reference failure here; yet we might still maintain that "true-in-the-fantasy" is not a truth value. "True-in-fiction" is, more nearly, a kind of performative operator since, as for performatives more generally, the saying (in the fiction) makes it true. More interesting for our purposes, however, is the consideration that the point of the fantasy might be to suggest that Mr. Bush is a saint. And that is a claim that (suitably disambiguated) is either true or false.

Second, there are performative uses of language that "overlap," in a sometimes logically uneasy but pragmatically important and powerful way, with the constative use of language. For instance, certain performative utterances, often taking the form of declarative sentences, provide institutionalized ways of inaugurating or effecting social facts—facts that the declaration also describes as obtaining. A standard example is promise-making. Another is "I pronounce you man and wife," when uttered on a suitable occasion by a suitable official to a suitable couple. The saying makes it so. Austin points out that performative uses of language are hedged about with conventions. These conventions invoke context, speaker, and hearer(s). Not just any utterance of "I promise" counts as a promise made. Like all conventions, these can be gamed in various ways to generate new performative uses of language; but ordinarily, the rules must be followed in order for the performative act to be accomplished.

But we must bear in mind a correlative fact about performative speech acts, which is that what they can achieve, in the relevant way, is only the creation of social facts—facts, like obligation or marriage—that are themselves dependent upon social conventions or norms. A saying cannot just make anything so. My saying that you have heart failure cannot make it the case that you die of a heart attack. Or at least, it cannot do so in the relevant way. And this brings out a point of some significance. The use of language can bring about all sorts of events—in particular, it can cause all sorts of effects upon those who receive the message (what Austin calls perlocutionary effects). But only some of these results will count as the sorts

of things that are "done" in uttering a performative. Roughly, when something is performatively brought about, the utterance of the performative (under standard conditions) thereby (logically or conventionally) makes it the case that a certain conventionally defined result is achieved—e.g., a promise made, a bargain sealed—by *constituting* that achievement.

My saying that your heart is failing might, under special (but not conventionally defined) circumstances, give you such a fright as to induce a heart attack. Indeed, something like that is known to happen, in socially determined ways, in some cultures. For example, in some Australian Aborigine cultures, a suitable authority will place a curse on someone who has committed a terrible crime, a curse that declares the miscreant to be a "non-person" who should be absolutely shunned by fellow tribe members. The psychological effects of being cursed are so profound that recipients typically go into shock and die in a matter of days.[18]

But even though the shaman's *You are hereby accursed* (or whatever they say) is a performative utterance, in that the utterance (with ritual trappings) anathematizes the criminal, it is not a performance of the criminal's death, which is the result of a chain of causes set in motion by the anathematization. These causal connections are not defined by convention—even though it is conventional responses to the curse that cause fellow tribe members to behave in such a way that the criminal is unable to sustain himself in existence. In general, we may say that the utterance of a performative (e.g., "I promise") does not cause the performed act (e.g., a promise) to occur. It is (under convention-specified conditions) the doing of that act. Not every sort of thing that we do can be done—that is constituted—by the making of an utterance.

Nevertheless, attention to performative uses of language is of major importance to our study of religious communication. Religion, like language itself, is a deeply social phenomenon, and religious invocation, especially in ritual contexts, is surrounded by rules that determine when a performance is effective. But secondly, we must be alert to performative uses of religious language because the evaluation of performatives—their criteria for "rightness"—differ from those for constatives, which are either true or false. Constatives are the objects of belief, and properly believing a constative is a matter of having the right sort of evidence.

But performatives are neither true nor false.[19] Performative uses of language can be evaluated as being successful or unsuccessful, and they can be judged according to whether they satisfy the criteria that make them

---

[18] For documentation of this amazing phenomenon, see Walter Bradford Cannon, "'Voodoo' Death," *American Journal of Public Health* 92, no. 10 (2002): 1593–96, http://dx.doi.org/10.2105/ajph.92.10.1593.

[19] Except for certain cases, as briefly noted in Chapter 4, that occupy an uneasy middle-ground.

appropriate or misplaced. When I make you a promise, you may believe that I will (or will not) keep my word, and you may believe that I have made a promise to you. But, as Austin points out, believing either of these things is not a matter of believing what I said when I uttered "I promise." Therefore, if some religious utterances function as performatives, it would be misplaced to evaluate them along the dimensions of truth or falsehood and to evaluate acceptance of them as rational or irrational in terms of evidence. If we discover religious doctrines whose acceptance does not appear subject to the usual norms of evidential scrutiny, it will be amiss to ignore the possibility that language is here being used in a performative, not a constative, way. At the same time, not just anything can be done by means of performative uses of language. Standards of rationality still apply, but in a different way.

A primary concern, then, is with two different ways in which such evidence can be relevant to the assessment of truth-value. It will emerge that failure to consider this distinction may account for the extent to which anthropologists and philosophers have found themselves driven onto one horn or the other of the persistent dilemma which offers the choice that either the natives are irrational, or else the standards for rationality must be relativized.[20] I hope here to chart part of the course that will steer us between the Scylla of ethnocentrism and the Charybdis of unintelligibility.

This puts the matter quite abstractly. I will turn to specific cases in due course. I shall do so in the course of considering how our general observations concerning the prerequisites for linguistic communication constrain interpretation. Communication, we know, is effective because we can trust that others have a shared understanding of the rules and conventions governing our common language, as well as because we can, with good reason, expect that they are committed to the same use (and sometimes the intelligible bending) of those conventions in such a way as to make themselves understood and because we are prepared to give them the benefit of the doubt if difficulties arise. Hence, the gift of language requires of us faith, hope, and charity.

VI. The Greatest of These is Charity

The greatest rule to apply is charity because it reflects the expectation that other language users possess some level of rationality and, therefore, will deploy the rules that make linguistic communication both possible and efficient. Charity has at least three dimensions. First, a common language presupposes common perceptual access to a world of public objects, events,

[20] The term "native" sometimes has derogatory connotations. I do not intend those connotations here. By "native," I simply mean those who are at home in a given culture or members of a given society.

qualities, and states of affairs: a shared world of items that can be identified, re-identified, and become (presumably) identifiable by others. Otherwise, there will be no attaching linguistic signs to common referents. We need, then, to take our interlocutors to have epistemic access to our world. Second, mastery of at least simple forms of deductive reasoning is a necessary condition of learning a language.[21] Third, language learning requires a rather sophisticated ability to reason inductively. Everyone who speaks a language must, therefore, be capable of reasoning in these ways. Our principle of charity, therefore, will accomplish two things. First, it will serve to block any radical form of cultural relativism with respect to the norms of rationality and perception. And second, it will place a quite non-trivial constraint upon the task of judging the credentials of alternative interpretations of a text.

A. Rationality and Truth

All three of these abilities are essential to the ways in which we form true beliefs about the world. That many of a person's beliefs are true is, indeed, a significant test of his or her rationality.[22] It might be objected that this standard does not provide us with an objective criterion of rationality. After all, when I judge another person's beliefs, I do so by my lights; a madman will, presumably, judge that everyone is mad but him. Nevertheless, within our own culture at least, we do not have too much difficulty distinguishing those whose beliefs are for the most part true from those whose beliefs are largely false or outlandish. The mad are, among other handicaps, usually unable to fend for themselves.

The criterion of true belief becomes rather more acute when we are faced with the beliefs of people from another culture. Many such cultures systematically endorse beliefs that seem to us clearly false. However, making the claim that they are transparently false, and that their bearers are commensurately irrational, opens one to the charge of ethnocentrism. It has, therefore, been urged in some quarters that the standards for assessing rationality—among them, the means for judging whether beliefs are true or false—are context-relative, with no culture being privileged over others.[23]

---

[21] Deductive reasoning is essential to establish logical consistency (a minimal condition on coherence). And this consistency—in effect, the recognition of the opposition between truth and falsity—is a necessary condition for assertions to be used in such a way that their meaning can be discerned.

[22] Not that all beliefs count equally; some will be more significant than others. This fact is, in part, a function of the kind of evidence someone has, or ought to have, for a given belief.

[23] As by Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (New York: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1958); "Understanding a Primitive

But such relativism threatens to break down the notion of rationality altogether and with it the intelligibility of the proposition that public discourse must be grounded, however tenuously, in the possibility of objective criticism. The reason for this becomes apparent when we consider the conditions necessary for the learning of a language in the first place. As we just saw, language learning—indeed, learning any of the mores, conventions, and usages of a culture—requires reliable empirical access to a shared world, accurate memory, and mastery of various inference patterns. These could not themselves be learned, as any learning process presupposes them; *a fortiori*, they could not be culture-dependent contingencies. For if they were, only by learning could they be acquired. This places our thinking about other cultures under the following constraint: if we take them—as of course we do—to be language users (more generally, users of any mode of communication that depends on convention and not merely biologically-determined instincts), then it must be possible for us to learn their language. For, no matter what our cultural baggage may be, we share with them the general prerequisites for language; if it were otherwise, they could not teach their own children to communicate.

Now, shared access to a common world implies (at least) the acquisition of a large body of true beliefs about that world. That is a precondition of language learning for, unless you can discover that there are (say) pangolins in the vicinity when I point at one, you will not be in a position to discover what I mean (absent descriptors whose meanings you have previously mastered). Another prerequisite is, of course, that I (and others) are for the most part consistent in our use of the term "pangolin": we use that particular word, not others, when we refer to pangolins, and we do not blithely use "pangolin" to refer, capriciously, to pottos and potatoes.

It is indeed not sufficient that we should judge a person rational by the extent to which his or her beliefs accord with what we judge to be true. A further conceptual requirement, embedded in the very notion of rational procedure, is that both the person's beliefs and ours be subjected to the canons of control by empirical evidence.[24] As complex and as resistant to easy formulation as the rules for assessing evidential strength are, my concern here will not be with these rules. Rather, I want to point to another way in which evidence can be relevant to the assessment of utterances because I believe failure to consider this alternative has played a significant

---

Society," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964): 307–24; and a host of postmodernists since.

[24] The exception is that those truths which can be known *a priori* and which must, at least, be subject to control by rational intuition. For more on these matters, see Martin Hollis, "Reason and Ritual," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 214–20 and "The Limits of Irrationality," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 221–39.

role in driving anthropologists and philosophers either to conclude certain alien cultures are irrational or that the standards of rationality must be relativized. This false dilemma becomes especially poignant when the alien culture is what gave us our own religious heritage. We need an alternative to ethnocentrism on the one hand and unintelligibility on the other.

Since it is possible for a false belief to be rationally held, it is logically possible for many (or perhaps even all empirical) beliefs that a rational person might hold to be false. However, it would not be possible for such a person to speak a public language. Clearly, the extent to which beliefs are true, used as a test of rationality, must be decidedly informal in character; similarly, ability to master a public language requires only a rather minimal, and not formally specifiable, level of rational competence. (But someone's ability to use a language well, and with sophistication, is a pretty good measure of intellectual competence and one we regularly rely upon.)

However, all this is a matter of degrees. Not only is truth by no means the only test of rationality, but we cannot say *a priori* how permeated a person's beliefs must be with falsehood before we are justified in judging him or her (more or less) irrational. However, it is indicative of the fact that truth is a relevant test. Where a person's belief is false and we wish, nevertheless, to claim that this in no way reflects adversely upon his or her rationality, we must assume the burden of explaining how he or she (reasonably) came to hold that belief. That requires consideration of the evidence a person has and so immediately forces us to consider the care with which he or she assesses the truth-value of other propositions.[25]

Because evidential support and belief both admit of degrees, we also expect rational persons to adjust their firmness of conviction to the strength of their evidence. So, evaluation of rationality places stronger emphasis on correctness concerning beliefs whose truth or falsity is easy to ascertain and as well expects people's reservations to track their difficulty of confirmation. It is just here that anthropologists have faced a dilemma. For

[25] There is a third facet of language that charitable interpretation must be sensitive to, one that is often under-recognized. We must attend to the various ways in which language will evolve so as to maximize, when possible, efficiency of communication. This can produce shortcuts that, taken naïvely, can appear to short-change truth. Color vocabularies (to take a trivial example) vary substantially from one language to another. That a Melanesian islander might describe both an apple and an orange as "red" in her language does not mean that she is incapable of detecting color differences—any more than our own lack of nuances in the English language. No sensible language would have a term for every discriminable shade of color. However, every natural language, so far as I know, has indexical terms, using context-sensitive rules to achieve efficiencies in reference-fixing that descriptions and proper names cannot match.

among the beliefs that natives[26] seem to accord the greatest conviction are those that seem to Westerners as the most bizarre and the least susceptible to positive confirmation. Finding themselves in this situation (and given the infirmities of relativized standards of rationality), are anthropologists to take their results as evidence for the irrationality of the natives, as suggesting the inadequacy of their analyses, or as reason to doubt their own rationality?

B. The Rationality of Religious Beliefs

As will become evident, I consider it salutary to consider the rationality of religious beliefs by beginning with beliefs that seem most alien to our own heritage. This encourages a kind of distancing that can sensitize us to puzzles and issues that might otherwise be much less visible. For this, there is no better source than the ethnographic literature and efforts of anthropologists to come to grips with the problems of interpreting native sacred stories and rituals. A large body of ethnographic data has also encouraged comparative studies and a search for cultural universals.

If all that seems removed from an understanding of Judeo-Christian traditions, then that is, in part, because of the failure of most scholars of Western religion—Bible scholars in particular—sufficiently to think about the insights that the anthropology of religion might have to offer.[27] At the very least, we should take note of the fact that Second Temple Judaism, both before and during the early formation of Christianity, was a tribal society with a largely tribal culture. It was, moreover, a culture whose distance from our own is to some extent masked by continuity of traditions—a continuity that foreshortens the lapse of time and awareness of the gradual processes that have altered that tradition's self-understanding. Let us, therefore, first think about the problems of interpretation in relation to cultures that are incontestably alien from our own.

People of (so-called) primitive cultures clearly display no lack of rationality when it comes to conducting the everyday business of their lives. What makes the anthropologist's puzzle so acute is the incongruity between this evident rationality and a startling lack of rationality with respect to those other beliefs that we call religious and magical (and that are commingled

[26] I will use the term "natives," without prejudice, to denote those who participate in a culture, especially in those tribal cultures that anthropologists have traditionally studied. More and more, anthropologists are directing their inquiries to more "modern" societies, if only because tribal cultures have become so badly destroyed, corrupted, or infiltrated by external influences.

[27] There are, increasingly, scholars who are attempting to correct this deficiency. I will be appealing to some of their work throughout this book. It must be said that anthropologists have, in the main, avoided examination of biblical texts.

and sometimes quite continuous with thought about the mundane.[28] Moreover, the internal evidence strongly suggests that these puzzling beliefs are construed by natives as propositions bearing (often empirically accessible) truth-values. The problems this generates are, indeed, the very same as those that, in various guises, have for two centuries formed a central dilemma for the hermeneutical tradition within our own culture.[29]

In the face of this dilemma, one extreme strategy has been to deny the idea that native thought is rational; a second has been to preserve the label "rational" at the price of relativizing the notion beyond the bounds of intelligibility. Steven Lukes and Martin Hollis have effectively disqualified both these strategies, arguing from the perspective of the possibility of radical translation.[30] The point applies with equal force when one considers, as I did above, the necessary conditions for the learning of a first language. A third maneuver has been to assign religious and magical beliefs a special logical status. They are not taken to be either true or false, but to be metaphorical or "expressive." But this strategy only postpones the day of reckoning, the time when the question must be faced: what is the metaphor a metaphor for? What is thereby being expressed? In the end, the strategy runs afoul of the fact that the natives give clear evidence of affirming or denying such propositions.

The difficulty of the problem is underscored by the fact that Lukes and Hollis themselves try to defend compromising positions, holding views that give religious beliefs a "free pass" while imposing rationality constraints upon the more mundane discourse that can serve as a "bridgehead" to understanding the native language and conceptual system. Thus, Lukes makes a distinction between context-free criteria for rationality and context-dependent ones:

> Then there are contextually-provided criteria of truth....Such criteria may apply to beliefs … which do not satisfy rational (1) criteria in so far

---

[28] See Hollis, "The Limits of Irrationality," 238. For a typical example of the integration of religious belief with mundane affairs, see Godfrey Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1961).

[29] A useful history of post-Reformation developments in hermeneutics can be found in Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).

[30] Steven Lukes, "Some Problems about Rationality," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 194–213; Hollis, "Reason and Ritual," 214–20; "The Limits of Irrationality," 221–39. Hollis insists upon the *a priori* nature of these arguments. Given that the natives are language users—something that must, of course, be discovered empirically—these arguments follow inescapably from the conditions on the possibility of language learning that apply even to native speakers. Discovery that the vocalizations in alien cultures are linguistic is no different in principle than the parallel discovery made by someone learning a first language.

> as they do not and could not correspond with 'reality': that is, in so far as they are in principle neither directly verifiable nor directly falsifiable by empirical means. (They may, of course, be said to relate to 'reality' in another sense; alternatively, they may be analyzed in terms of the coherence or pragmatist theories of truth.) This is to disagree with Leach and Beattie who seek to discount the fact that beliefs are accepted as true and argue that they must be interpreted metaphorically. But it is also to disagree with the Frazer-Tylor approach, which would simply count them false because they are 'non-objective.'[31]

In a similar vein, Hollis states,

> Ritual beliefs, by contrast, do not have objectively specifiable truth-conditions. To be sure, a Yoruba, who believed a box covered with cowrie shells to be his head or soul, might take that belief to be true. But this is not to say that any fact referred to is objectively specifiable. Consequently the anthropologist cannot use the facts to get at the beliefs: he can, at best, use the beliefs to get at the facts. Here, then, is a first difference between ritual and everyday beliefs.[32]

It is not clear what facts Hollis intends the anthropologist to acquire. With respect to ritual beliefs, he considers the correspondence theory of truth to be "beside the point"[33] and suggests that the appropriate standards of assessment are those deriving from a coherence theory.

But, unsurprisingly, these strategies are unhelpful. Lukes does not offer any wisdom on how context-dependent criteria are to be discovered nor on how context is even to be specified in a neutral way. And to appeal, as Hollis does, to a coherence theory of truth makes unintelligible our access to the content of ritual beliefs. Coherence itself must be judged by content-independent criteria, so coherence does not tell us—or the natives themselves—what ritual beliefs are about. What is worse, ritual beliefs, so understood, are typically not consistent with ordinary, mundane beliefs. The Australian Aborigine who calls an emu his father knows, we may be sure, the ordinary facts of emu (and human) procreation.[34]

---

[31] Lukes, "Some Problems about Rationality," 211. Elsewhere, Lukes suggests that the latter criteria may be "parasitic" upon the former, but does not say how this occurs (Steven Lukes, "Relativism: Cognitive and Moral," *Aristotelian Society: Supplementary Volume* 48 [1974]: 165–89). Below, I offer a way of partly cashing this biological metaphor.

[32] Hollis, "The Limits of Irrationality," 223.

[33] Ibid., 235. See also, Kai Nielsen, "Rationality and Relativism," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 4 (1974): 324.

[34] Hollis provides no justification for the claim that ritual beliefs are not empirically accessible *except* for the claim that they are not otherwise intelligible. But

Coherence may be a more complex matter than mere consistency, though it requires at least this. Perhaps religious systems function as explanatory theories and, just as we are often able to explain away counterevidence to our own theories as "bad data," so too perhaps native theologians can rescue their religious commitments from counterevidence by means of parallel strategies. And this is how it sometimes seems, in fact, to go. In Zandeland, witches are identified by means of a ritual in which chickens are fed a poison, *benge*, made from the bark of a vine. The *benge* is instructed to kill the chicken if so-and-so is a witch; otherwise let the chicken live. The experiment is controlled: a second chicken is fed a similar dose of *benge*, which is instructed to let the chicken live if so-and-so is a witch. Only if the *benge* delivers a "guilty" verdict in both trials is the verdict (provisionally) secured. But the test is fallible; two poison oracles may give contradictory verdicts. What then? The Azande, a Sudanese tribe, will tell you that one oracle may have misfired because, for example, the poison had been improperly prepared or improperly invoked; thus, the oracle delivered bad data. The king's oracle, however, is deemed infallible.[35]

So, it appears that Azande oracle beliefs might offer something like a way of understanding how and why *benge* functions to expose witches—and why it might occasionally fail. On that sort of reading, a religious theory may indeed serve to explain experience, whatever else it does. Azande, presumably, theorize that *benge* is able—under the right conditions—to uncover witches. But an explanatory theory of this sort must at least have empirical content; even if it is the "theory as a whole" that stands before the court of empirical evidence, confirmation and disconfirmation must still be possible. Yet, Azande do not seem to countenance disconfirmation.[36]

Not only that, but Azande appear to be curiously uninterested in discovering, or even speculating about, how *benge* can identify witches (and all manner of other things). It might be that they think the poison is some kind of spirit or person. Edward Evans-Pritchard observes,

> Old men say that fully grown birds ought not to be used in oracle consultations because they are too susceptible to the poison and have a

---

why are we to take their apparent freedom from empirical control as an indication that different standards must be applied to them rather than as a sign that anthropological analysis has as yet been insufficiently penetrating? To refuse to concede relativization of rationality with respect to the rules of logic, and yet allow it with respect to the canons of evidence, surely requires some additional justification. Indeed, Hollis does *not* permit the latter kinds of relativization to infect the translation of "bridgehead" statements.

[35] See Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 258–351.

[36] For example, Azande believe that the children of a witch are also witches. Given that belief and the interrelatedness of Azande, it should follow that all of them are witches. But they draw no such inference.

> habit of dying straight away before the poison has had time to consider the matter placed before it or even to hear the full statement of the problem. On the other hand, a [young] chicken remains for a long time under the influence of the poison before it recovers or expires, so that the oracle has time to hear all the relevant details concerning the problem placed before it and to give a well-considered judgment.[37]

But Evans-Prichard goes on to deny that the Azande think of *benge* in personal terms, saying that they simply think of it as having what amounts to efficacy.[38] Now it would, to put it mildly, be a miracle if an inanimate substance—powdered bark from a vine—understood spoken questions, knew their answers, and could regulate its toxicity accordingly. But to Azande, these powers seem quite ordinary.

It is not easy, then, to imagine what, rationally speaking, the Azande could be thinking. All of the explanatory options considered thus far reflect a strained attempt to make the natives, in their religious (or magical) moments, out to be hardnosed empiricists or even to be guided by ordinary common sense. Among those who wish to rescue the natives from charges of irrationality and gullibility, we find those who would bend the notion of reason to suit the occasion (i.e., Peter Winch), and those who (rightfully) reject such freedom with the conditions of rationality but still argue that religious beliefs are rational in some special or partly defective way.

It seems, then, that we are driven to say that native religious beliefs are false—and more or less loony, to boot. But have we not given up too soon? Have we utilized all the conceptual resources that a rational society makes intelligible and available to us? There may be other possibilities not yet canvassed. Certainly, we shall have to allow people in other cultures as wide a scope for irrationality as we find (alas) in our own. But an inanimate substance that understands a foreign language (the vine does not grow in Zandeland) and discerns witches at a distance? Perhaps anthropologists have just misunderstood magical and religious beliefs (at least the ones that seem to float free of the criteria for rationality). Perhaps they have, if you will, been misinterpreting or mistranslating what the natives are saying when they express those beliefs.

It is, after all, commonplace, for example, that figurative uses of language, taken literally, do not yield truths or even plausibilities. The desert sun is, after all, not (literally) an unblinking eye. If an Australian Aborigine observes that the sun is a white cockatoo, perhaps he is indulging in

---

[37] Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic*, 282. It might be objected that the example appeals to magical beliefs, not religious ones. But the point is quite general (I could have picked an example involving religious beliefs), and it is in any case not so easy to distinguish magic from religion as some anthropologists have done.

[38] Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic*, 318–22.

metaphor—to which he has just as much right as we. The Azande, however, regulate their lives by the verdicts of their poison oracles. So, it is not enough to imagine that religious claims are only flights of poetic fancy. Their "cash value" —whatever it is—is a matter of great importance and real consequence to them.

It is of course not logically perverse to ascribe irrationality to particular people on particular occasions. That people make mistakes is commonplace; hence, no plausible principle of charity can forbid such ascriptions. But when our interpretation of native beliefs entails the ascription of systematic irrationality and ignoring all evidence to the contrary, then there is serious pressure to question the astuteness of the attribution itself. That pressure becomes particularly acute in light of the general admission that natives are quite capable of thoroughly rational behavior in other contexts.

Now there is admittedly nothing logically impossible about even systematic falsity of belief, within certain constraints. A brief reflection upon one's attitude toward one's favorite case of a misguided philosophical or political position should be sufficient to convince one of this fact. That the falsity of a set of beliefs is systematic may even enhance their appeal or, at any rate, help protect them against criticism. Nevertheless, when a native theory is understood in terms of an interpretation under which it has no evidence going for it or is subject to obvious disconfirmation, we will at least need to account for the irrationality we purport to have discovered. And this has, in live cases, not been at all easy to do without appealing to certain highly questionable assumptions about native mentality, whose only supporting evidence is often the very interpretations in question. We may conclude, then, that to the extent an interpretation enables us to avoid adding such *ad hoc* explanatory hypotheses, to that extent it should have, *prima facie*, an *a priori* claim upon our credulity.

Having said this much, let it at once be admitted that there are belief systems whose adherents exhibit varying degrees of intelligence and rationality or of stubbornness in the face of contrary evidence. Our own intellectual history is not particularly innocent on that score. And, as with "native" beliefs, it is appropriate to demand that an explanation for the tenure of such views be forthcoming. But even if we admit that there are severe dislocations between, for example, certain modern Christian ideologies and other beliefs that a scientific or even a common-sense approach to the empirical evidence would sustain, it must still be admitted that there is a sense in which, for a member of a practicing Christian society, the requisite ideology is in some ways rational—that is, "makes sense." For within the terms upon which social practice in such a society is founded, it is the relevant ideological tenets that provide the appropriate justification and guidance for action—and action so guided typically produces the desired

social results within that context. For an individual to criticize these tenets themselves, on the other hand, may well have the rather drastic result of removing him or her from the arena of social effectiveness altogether.

Nevertheless, the skeptic will of course insist that the reasons the Christian uses to explain the success of her social system are not the reasons that in fact explain that success.[39] Let us say that belief in a social ideology that fails to accommodate the preponderant evidence concerning the nature of the world (social and/or natural), but that nevertheless "works" in the sense that belief in it mobilizes the appropriate and effective socialized behavior, is itself a weakly rational belief. Belief in such a theory satisfies certain pragmatic needs quite successfully for the believer, in the proper social context, even though the theory may not account for certain independent evidence that the believer would be hard-put to deny. Let us, on the other hand, call strongly rational a social ideology that reasonably justifies in terms of available evidence the social interactions that govern and make viable the social system in which that ideology functions.[40] Now of course, any believer in a social ideology will insist that her belief is rational in the strong sense. But she may be wrong. She may be wrong, for instance, in her assertion that all good deeds will be rewarded and all evil ones punished at some final day of reckoning—even though her doubting this may be irrational in the restricted sense that the viability of her social system depends upon general agreement that the claim is true.

The existence of weakly rational ideologies cannot be ruled out *a priori*. Nonetheless, our methodological preference must be for interpretations that present an ideology as being strongly rational; only if we have independent evidence to the contrary, or if such an interpretation fails on internal grounds, can resort plausibly be made to an interpretation that imputes only weak rationality to the natives. Functionalist interpretations of religion are typically of the latter kind. And, indeed, we may frequently be able to supply explanations—usually historical in nature—to show how a system, through entrenchment in an inflexible tradition, comes to embody an enfeebled rationality.[41] But it is especially hard to see how a new ideology

---

[39] For example, the Christian believes her society is blessed because the faithful pray to a God who answers; the functionalist sociologist suggests that prayer binds congregants into a cohesive group whose unity and commitment to common goals enhances the likelihood that those goals will be achieved.

[40] My terminology here coincides with that of I. C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi, "The Problem of the Rationality of Magic," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 173. However, my distinction is not theirs.

[41] Structure-functionalists have tended to see social arrangements as subject to something like Darwinian selection; there was debate over the existence of "survivals"—institutions that no longer served any useful purpose or were even deleterious. But there is no reason why in principle, like vestigial organs, institutions may not outlive their original rationale or purposes and survive, if only because change itself exacts costs.

can come initially to be adopted on grounds that supply only a weak rationality. Weak rationality generally requires the umbilical cord of tradition to sustain it. Yet at the same time, the logical status of tradition is just such as to make entrenchment-induced weak rationality harder to achieve (and strong rationality easier to achieve!) than might be supposed.

All social organizations require traditions of some sort (in the broadest sense of imposed uniformities of practice). And, though this might be disputed, I take it that the rationality (in the strong sense) of any particular system of traditions is underdetermined by the ecological situation in which a society finds itself. Past history supplies many additional constraints. Considering a society synchronically, however, against the background of external environmental constraints (and the basic requirements of survival), I think we discover that purely logical and empirical constraints are insufficient to determine uniquely an optimal set of social rules, especially when limitations in the ability of even very intelligent natives to ascertain optimality are taken into consideration. Since, however, it is surely more rational to have some particular set of rules, subject to constraints of internal coherence and the meeting of social necessities, than it is to have none, an element of conventionality must be introduced in the decisions that are made or are imposed by tradition. A failure to distinguish between such conventional aspects of social systems, which may vary quite remarkably from one society to the next, from the empirical and logical constraints that nevertheless confine such conventionality, has contributed heavily to the thinking that has led Winch and others into a position of extreme relativism.

A far more interesting and fruitful suggestion has been made by Robin Horton, who considers native religious and magical doctrines to constitute explanatory theories that exhibit strong structural parallels to our own scientific theories.[42] Horton details a number of these isomorphisms,

---

[42] Robin Horton, "African Traditional Thought and Western Science," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 131–71. Horton seems to minimize the importance of one of the structural similarities between the two. Emile Duhem propounded the thesis, much emphasized in subsequent reflection on science, that scientific laws are interconnected in such a way that no single experimental result is sufficient to falsify a law: failures in prediction can be explained away by appeal to outside interference, non-standard conditions, errors regarding other laws, etc. Precisely this kind of defensive strategy is detailed by Evans-Pritchard's account of how the Azande explain the apparent failures of their poison oracles and other witchcraft practices (see Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic*, 466–78). Just where one crosses the line from reasonable defense of a theory against apparent counterevidence to stubbornness is not amenable to algorithmic determination. (But to admit this is not to open the door to the kind of radical epistemological relativism that tempted Thomas Kuhn and some others.) That African natives are more stubborn or irrational in this respect than the history of modern science bears Westerners out to be remains, I think, to

and while objections can be raised at numerous points regarding both his conception of science and his interpretation of native thought, I believe this type of approach suffers far less from the opposing sins of relativism or ethnocentrism.[43] Nevertheless, I do not think Horton's approach goes nearly far enough. This is partly due to the fact that Horton, while correctly distinguishing native theory from science, locates the grounds for the distinction in a misleading way, one that convicts the natives of a far more pervasive epistemological myopia than they may deserve.

Since I agree with Horton that there is an important distinction here, it will be useful to consider what he says about the distinction between native theory and science: "What I take to be the key difference is a very simple one. It is that in traditional cultures there is no developed awareness of alternatives to the established body of theoretical tenets; whereas in scientifically oriented cultures, such an awareness is highly developed."[44] Horton uses this lack of conceptual alternatives to explain the fact that

> A central characteristic of nearly all the traditional African world-views we know of is an assumption about the power of words, uttered under appropriate circumstances, to bring into being the events or states they stand for….
>
> Now if we take into account what I have called the basic predicament of the traditional thinker, we can begin to see why this assumption should be so deeply entrenched in life and thought. Briefly, no man can make contact with reality save through a screen of words. Hence no man can escape the tendency to see a unique and intimate link

---

be demonstrated. Such greater reluctance to scrap established doctrines as does exist among them can, I think, be better explained by the forthcoming considerations.

[43] See the important exchange between John Skorupski, "Science and Traditional Religious Thought," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3 (1973): 209–30; "Comment on Professor Horton's Paradox and Explanation," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 5 (1975): 63–70; and Robin Horton, "Paradox and Explanation: A Reply to Mr. Skorupski," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3 (1973): 231–56. I am in rough agreement with Skorupski's elucidation of the non-paradoxicality of the relationship between observable entities and the congeries of invisible subcomponents into which the scientist analyzes these, though I will not give a detailed reply to Horton's arguments concerning scientific explanation here. I agree, moreover, with Skorupski's conclusion, contra Horton, that *this* relationship is not the place to look in Western thought for a counterpart to puzzling native notions of unity-in-diversity. It does *not* follow that the only available analogy is to *paradoxical* elements in Western thought. There may be—indeed I think there are—detailed analogies to thoroughly *non*-paradoxical Western conceptual traditions. What those better analogies might be is a matter I defer to Chapter 4, where I will show how they shed light on Western religious "mysteries" and suggest—confirming one of Horton's suspicions—an original explanatory (and non-paradoxical) function for them, as well.

[44] Horton, "African Traditional Thought and Western Science," 153.

> between words and things. For the traditional thinker this tendency has an overwhelming power. Since he can imagine no alternatives to his established system of concepts and words, the latter appear bound to reality in an absolute fashion. There is no way at all in which they can be seen as varying independently of the segments of reality they stand for. Hence they appear so integrally involved with their referents that any manipulation of the one self-evidently affects the other.[45]

This view is reminiscent of old "associationist" theories of magic, such as James Frazer's, and it convicts the natives of a blunder that is implausible to imagine them guilty of. Indeed, it violates one of the conditions necessary for learning a language at all: if "no man can make contact with reality save through a screen of words," then how would a newborn acquire a language at all; and how would empirical evidence-driven conceptual change be possible? If Africans are guilty of this confusion between words and world, why do they not press the conclusion further and, abandoning their labor in the fields, content themselves with a ritual description of the products of that activity? Why is it that—as Godfrey Lienhardt points out—the Dinka only pray for rain when the rainy season is about to commence? Nor is it clear on Horton's theory why the natives take their utterances to be efficacious only when uttered in certain ritual contexts and by certain designated officials. This suggests that we should seek an interpretation that can at least partially vindicate native practice by showing that their words, properly uttered, really do have power in at least some situations of fundamental concern to them. This, we shall see, is not as implausible as it seems. The result will be that, while we will have marked out a difference between scientific theory and native mythology, we will in no sense have denigrated the latter. Rather, it will be rescued from a kind of criticism that is inappropriate to it.

I want to examine therefore what sense can be given to the notion of a "socially defined truth" and of an efficacious utterance. For, conformably with the methodological constraints imposed upon anthropologists, we ought to hold native statements to be true and strongly rational whenever we have no good independent explanation as to why these people should be deceived.

C. Conventions and Performatives

In many human societies there are certain persons who are recognized as having a special power to perceive and speak the truth. A few examples, picked more or less at random, will serve to illustrate this phenomenon. Among the Dinka, the headmen of certain clans—masters of the fishing spear—are said, when possessed during certain rituals by a power or spirit

[45] Horton, "African Traditional Thought," 155–56.

known as Flesh, to speak the Truth concerning social matters.[46] Among the Azande, it is held that the verdicts of the king's oracle are above suspicion.[47] Similarly, the Roman Catholic pope is considered, by virtue of being in the line of apostolic succession, to be infallible when speaking *ex cathedra*.

Are these various examples all classifiable as instances of a single kind of phenomenon? If so, what sort of logical status may we assign to pronouncements of the sort illustrated? To see that there is an interesting problem here, and to forestall the quick response that such statements are simply either true or false (and by no means guaranteed to be true), I shall shortly consider a case that is closer to home. But first, it is worthy of notice that in almost all instances in which such special insight is attributed to a member of a society, that member occupies one of a number of antecedently specifiable official positions in the social organization of the group. Legitimate occupancy of such a position is itself determined by cultural norms. While general intelligence may help to qualify a person for such a position, and will often cause others to heed his or her words with particular care, intelligence is usually not a necessary (and is never a sufficient) condition. Moreover, the special status of such a person's words is conferred upon them after he or she acquires the role in question, not before.[48] Among the Dinka, one must be a member of a fishing-spear clan in order to be possessed by the spirit Flesh, and the dicta taken most seriously are those spoken by a fishing-spear master having been possessed during previous ritual ceremonies. Statements made by the pope have a similar status for Catholics only when issued under the proper formalities.

How can such practices be rational? Since investiture and insight may seem logically distinct matters, it will help if I advert to a more familiar example. Arguments over what is and what is not the law of the United States frequently turn upon points of interpretation of the Constitution; and in such matters, the Supreme Court is the established adjudicator of disputed claims. Members of the Court will ordinarily be selected on the basis of their intelligence, legal scholarship, and wisdom, but it is clear that these are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions. It is sufficient that a person be duly nominated and confirmed according to certain traditional ritual procedures. Moreover, even once he or she is confirmed, a justice's legal opinions carry neither more nor less legal force than any other citizen's, unless they are uttered in the properly ritualized way, in the proper place, and upon a suitable occasion. But more crucial to our present concern is the logical status of the properly executed verdicts of the Court. These display a curious ambivalence in character, which may be brought out by reference to

---

[46] Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience*, 138–40.

[47] Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic*, 475.

[48] Except, perhaps, in some cases where a person may attempt, with some success, to usurp power or foment social change.

Austin's previously mentioned distinction between performative and constative uses of declarative sentences.[49]

Attending to Austin's point, we may notice that when the court hands down an opinion, it is not merely stating what the law of the land is, in the sense that an ordinary citizen might offer an opinion about this. For an ordinary citizen might be either mistaken or correct, whereas the pronouncements of the Court have the force of law. They dictate, in effect, what the law shall be. In this sense, a declaration of the Court is not a statement, capable of being straightforwardly assessed as true or false, but more aligned with such performances as "I christen thee…" and "I pronounce you man and wife." For there, as here, the sayings by the Court (under proper conditions) make it so. Here, we have a rather straightforward case, from our own culture, of the efficacy of certain ritually uttered words.[50]

But, curiously, this is not all there is to the matter, for Court rulings purport to state what the law of the land (as given by the Constitution) objectively is. As such, Court declarations appear to have the status of statements about facts, particularly about what other people (e.g., the "Founding Fathers") meant to say. Concomitantly, they require empirical justification and are open to relevant criticism and disagreement.[51] The facts of the case, social exigencies, and the probable intentions of the framers of the Constitution must all be considered.[52] Indeed not only the correctness of the decision but, ultimately, the viability of the Constitution itself is subject to rational criticism—though such ultimate questions, which may threaten the legitimacy of the Court itself, are likely to be mooted. Societies require a

---

[49] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 3–6. The fact that Austin came to view the utterance of statements—correctly—as also being a performance does not undermine the distinction between constatives and other types of performatives, such as "I promise."

[50] It may be objected that the analogy is a poor one, as Court opinions are intended to regulate social practice, whereas magic purports to have causal efficacy over natural phenomena and religious authorities claim to address or report on the wills of supernatural agents. I will return to the first of these in the next section, as well as to the second objection in Chapters 4 and 7). My analysis of ritual here has been in part anticipated by Gregory Bateson, "Conventions of Communications Where Validity Depends Upon Belief," in *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*, ed. Jurgen Reusch and Gregory Bateson (Piscataway, NY: Transaction Publishers, 1951), 212–27 and S. J. Tambiah, "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts: A Point of View," in *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies*, ed. Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 199–229. Neither author, however, recognizes the dual logical status of such utterances, mediating between their dependence for truth upon fiat and also upon fact (see below).

[51] The Court's rulings are authoritative because the Constitution says they are, but what makes the Constitution authoritative? On this, see Chapter 4n8 and §II, D.

[52] Which is why wisdom is a desirable character trait in judges.

(roughly) stable framework, and there are abundant reasons on the side of holding the Constitution sacred (even when reinterpreting it).

In recognition of this aspect of the status of Court decisions, the Court has available to it a mechanism for publishing dissenting opinion and, more importantly, a mechanism for overruling its own earlier decisions. Now when this occurs, the reversal has the effect of declaring the overturned decision to be false, in the sense that it never was the law of the land.[53] Thus, in one sense, decisions can be assigned a truth-value conformably with their status as statements. Hence, official opinions of the Court apparently have dual status: on the one hand, they are treated as performatives, effecting the situation they describe; on the other hand, they are taken to be statements that are capable of demanding justification and, therefore, capable of inadequate justification (and even falsity). This Janus-faced character may give the formal logician an uneasy turn, but clearly the dual treatment is eminently rational from a pragmatic point of view.[54]

Now, in the case of the Constitution and of Supreme Court opinions, we have specific acts of a performative character historically locatable in time. Much more typically, the origins of the religious myths and traditions which guide social practice cannot be traced to such specifically locatable events. They are, rather, phenomena which emerged out of a complex historical matrix of evolving customs, susceptible to faster or slower rates of change according as internal difficulties and environmental factors may demand.[55] Nevertheless, myths often perform very much the same sort of function as Supreme Court decisions (among other things). They establish and legitimize social customs within the framework of a justificatory and explanatory apparatus that serves both to

---

[53] As a result, violators of the earlier Court decision are held never to have broken the law. For a much more detailed discussion along somewhat similar lines, cf. H. L. A. Hart, *The Concept of Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 100–23, 141–54.

[54] See also the somewhat more formal discussion of this matter in Chapter 4.

[55] Specification of necessary and sufficient conditions for a procedure *P* or a doctrine *D* to count as an accepted norm is an undertaking I think is unlikely to succeed. Must *P* (or *D*) govern the practice of most of the natives most of the time? Must there be feelings of guilt upon violation, and punishment or reprobation upon discovery of violation? Must there be explicit and sincere verbal espousal of *P* or *D*? None of these is a necessary condition for tradition-hood, though perhaps they are jointly sufficient. Mere general belief in the truth of a doctrine, and conformity to its demands, is not a sufficient condition for performative status, even when that general agreement brings about the truth of the claim. The fact that many people believe that the stock market is failing, and act accordingly, is bound to produce the expected result; yet it would not be accurate to assess this belief, no matter how often it is asserted or by whom, as having any performative force analogous to that of Supreme Court decisions. The criteria here are once again necessarily informal. Moreover, acceptance of a practice, and the performative force of the promulgation of a doctrine, must both admit of degrees.

accommodate the sense in which conventions are arbitrary and the sense in which reasons are relevant.[56] Moreover, in a culture in which traditions are changeable, the line of demarcation between what is charter and what is authoritative interpretation of charter may be far from sharp.

We are now in a position to see what the crucial difference between native myth and natural science is. Scientific theories, as we know them, deal exclusively with explanation and prediction. Whatever services myths may provide in that line of business,[57] they also serve to set forth action-guiding conventions of a normative character within a framework that permits both justification and, if necessary, criticism. The persons who, within a specific culture, are the sanctioned interpreters and elaborators of that tradition, do speak the "Truth" in so far as agreed-upon practice conforms to the principle that their dicta shall count as normatively binding.

It will be evident that adoption of the performative analysis of myth and ritual suggested here further places a non-trivial constraint upon the interpretation of the content of ritualized beliefs. It was the prior presumption of rationality that first led to this analysis; now we must be reminded that not just anything can count as a rational objective of performative action. It is reasonable to expect institutionalized authority to be efficacious only where the exercise of that authority is, in the primary instance, addressed to social issues whose outcome is controlled by the

---

[56] As W. E. H. Stanner explains in his discussion of aboriginal beliefs in Australia, "The tales are also a collation of what is validly known about such ordained permanencies. The blacks cite The Dreaming as a charter of absolute validity in answer to all questions of *why* and *how.* In this sense, the tales can be regarded as being, perhaps not a definition, but a 'key' of Truth. They also state … the ways in which good men should, and bad men will, act now. In this sense they are a 'key' or guide to the norms of conduct…" (W. E. H. Stanner, "The Dreaming," in *Reader in Comparative Religion*, 3rd ed., ed. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt [New York: Joanna Colter Books, 1972], 272). Likewise, Roy Rappaport has put forward the interesting view that the purpose of religious belief is to sanctify—that is, certify the truth of—communications of certain information which are important to tribal survival. The information obtains certification within the ritual context through association with religious statements which are sacred: "Sanctity … *is the quality of unquestionable truthfulness imputed by the faithful to unverifiable propositions*" (Roy A. Rappaport, "Ritual, Sanctity, and Cybernetics," *American Anthropologist* 73, no. 1 [1971]: 69; italics in original). But this is mysterious. Why should the truth of empirically significant propositions be certified by association with ones that appear to be either false or devoid of empirical content—unless, just conceivably, the religious statements are deliberately purified of empirical content by way of emphasizing their role in pointing to the norm of truthfulness itself? Yet, if *that* is their only purpose, it would be hard to explain both their complexity of structure and the non-random mappings between that structure and the social lives of the believers. Far more plausible is the conclusion that such statements are either non-literal discourse about social realities or else literal but mis-translated discourse about such matters.

[57] About which see the further discussion in Chapter 4.

acceptance of conventions. The fundamental role of ritual cannot, on this understanding, be directly to command nature. Mythology is in this respect *more like* political ideology than science, and native soothsayers are more like Supreme Court justices than modern natural scientists.[58]

VII. The Social vs. the Natural

My use of the expression "more like" in the preceding statement was deliberate since it cannot be denied that religious and magical practices do purport to exert control over natural, as well as social, phenomena. There are two reasons why this is less irrational, and should be less surprising, than it seems. In the first place, such control is often indirectly achieved. Horton, Lienhardt, and others[59] have pointed out the efficaciousness of witchcraft beliefs in dealing with physical illness, which is at least partially attributed to social maladjustments. Similarly, when it was said by ancient Egyptians and Hebrews that a just king causes the crops to flourish and the harvest to be bountiful, we may observe that social stability and security are essential prerequisites for the sustained and cooperative investment of labor required to produce that result. There is no reason to suppose that these people were ignorant of the relevant natural mechanisms.

But a second, and perhaps deeper, reason is this. As Claude Lévi-Strauss has pointed out, tribal theoreticians take those social relationships that structure their lives to be a model for understanding the relationships between phenomena in the natural world (and vice versa).[60] Both the natural world and the social world are viewed as structured by social relationships or something akin to these—as is, often enough, the relationship between the two realms. If this kind of thinking seems strange to those who possess our

---

[58] It would be, at best, misleading to assimilate simplistically the relationship between Supreme Court dicta (and their social results) to the relationship between natural causes and effects. Just as Horton's view, which states that native belief in the efficacy of words results from their commitment to a single conceptual scheme, unconvincingly convicts the natives of far too elementary a mistake, so too J. H. M. Beattie's interpretation of the native's confidence in the potency of ritual (while closer to the mark) fails to provide any intelligent rationale for the mistake the natives are (presumably) making (J. H. M. Beattie, "On Understanding Ritual," in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson [New York: Harper and Row, 1970], 240–69). What I am suggesting is that the native *may* parasitically assimilate natural relationships to social ones, which is the reverse mistake, but is at least a sophisticated mistake. Moreover, the assimilation, where it exists, is rarely an unintelligent one. The Dinka do their rain-dance only before the rainy season; and in certain societies, a man cursed by a powerful witchdoctor often does fall ill and die precisely because he has been cursed.

[59] Cannon, "'Voodoo' Death," 1593–96.

[60] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," in *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 206–31.

own tradition, it is nevertheless, as I think I can show, the same type of thinking which characterizes much of modern scientific thought. Roughly, the difference is that for the native, social relationships provide the most accessible and comprehensible model of structured interconnections in terms of which he can attempt to explain the natural phenomena he encounters. For a modern scientist, the laws and causal relationships of physics provide the paradigm of intelligible access to phenomena. To the extent that this difference exists, it can be largely accounted for by differences in the empirical data to which natives and scientists have access. An important similarity, however, underlies their theoretical endeavors. For just as the native may sometimes attempt to reduce natural phenomena, as well as social ones, to a theoretical explanation modeled on social principles,[61] so too the tendency among scientists has been to attempt to explain social and psychological phenomena in terms of physical theories, or at least by the use of causal laws. In both cases, intellectual insight is presumed to be achievable through success at subsuming all phenomena within the embrace of a single theoretical framework, an endeavor suggesting a rather sophisticated level of rationality.[62]

It may be noteworthy that the failure, thus far, of physicalists to achieve their theoretical aims no more diminishes their faith in its ultimate achievability than native faith in their social models of reality is undermined by failure to explain apparently recalcitrant phenomena. For us moderns, the paradigms of successful and deep explanation are to be found in the physical sciences. What resists reductive explanation in such terms are, centrally, psychological and social phenomena. But it will hardly be surprising that,

---

[61] This, I believe, is the best way to understand the so-called anthropomorphism and animism which are said to characterize primitive thought. It remains to be shown, to be sure, that the primary source for the content of native ritual beliefs is their reflection upon the nature of their social system (see below).

[62] Stanner puts the point very well when speaking of the Australian Aborigines, though I will presently disagree with Stanner's de-emphasizing of Aborigine metaphysics: "Their creative 'drive' to make sense and order out of things has, for some reason, concentrated on the social rather than on the metaphysical or the material side. Consequently, there has been an unusually rich development of what the anthropologist calls 'social structure,' the network of enduring relations recognized between people. This very intricate system is an intellectual and social achievement of a high order … it has to be compared … with such a secular achievement as, say parliamentary government in a European society…. One may see within it … the use of the power of abstract reason to rationalize the resultant relations into a system….It has become *the source of the dominant mode of aboriginal thinking.* The blacks … have taken some of its fundamental principles and relations and have applied them to very much wider sets of phenomena. This tends to happen if any type of system of thought becomes truly dominant. It is, broadly, what Europeans did with 'religion' and 'science' as systems: extended their principles and categories beyond the contexts in which the systems grew" (Stanner, "The Dreaming," 274; italics in original).

for tribal peoples who lack a sophisticated physics and chemistry, the paradigm of explanation (the things that most naturally convey understanding) are roughly folk psychology and principles of social order. These principles might not be very successful at explaining physical and biological phenomena; but in the absence of any better wide-ranging theory, they would surely be worth a try. And should it prove to be the case that neither reduction can (even in principle) be effected, then both the native and the scientists will have been guilty of the same type of sophisticated conceptual error.[63] That either or both of them should be proven wrong here, however, would not convict them of holding their faiths irrationality.

If I am so far correct in this analysis of the status of traditional belief systems, then it becomes apparent that they are the products of complex and highly sophisticated attempts to deal intellectually with the world. Neither their complexity nor their sophistication has (perhaps forgivably) been adequately understood, but at least many of the methodological underpinnings which engender these systems are to be found in our own thought. To that extent, radical skepticism and radical relativism, with respect to the translation problem, are untenable positions.

I am of course well aware that the arguments offered here constitute support for only part of an adequate methodology. The argument I have furnished in support of the claim that native thought is more rational than previously thought is still incomplete in one major respect. To complete it, I will have to show that the content of these beliefs can (typically) be rationally understood, in the full sense which admits the appropriate sorts of empirical access. Since the presumption of native rationality in treating myths performatively requires that those myths be intended fundamentally as social charters, doing this would require showing several things. First, that, conformably with the principles announced here, there are *prima facie* grounds for according favored status to interpretations under which talk of deity, spirits, and other "ghostly" entities is just, at root, theoretical talk about social phenomena and norms of the requisite kinds. Second, that such talk is more conscious, literal, sophisticated, and I think more intelligible than was suggested by Durkheim or most of his followers. And third, that such talk is therefore empirically un-mysterious. Such an interpretation must vindicate the Lukes-Hollis insight that requires understanding the texts as literally as possible, without excluding on *a priori* grounds the existence of those poetic and metaphorical means of expressing a truth that are clearly part of any language user's repertoire. That project will be the task of several of the remaining chapters of this book, and it is entirely appropriate to withhold judgment about whether it leads to fruitful results until it has been

[63] Chapter 4 will examine the prospects for a reduction of the social to the psychological. My conclusion to this will be negative.

demonstrated through concrete engagement with a significant number of myth traditions.[64]

Before such concrete engagement can begin, however, there are theoretical underpinnings of various sorts that must occur. In Chapter 4, for example, I will set forth one of the major theoretical building blocks, a general framework for mapping some of the central vocabulary of myths onto social realities. In other chapters, I will develop other essential features of the theoretical framework. Once that is done, I will then use the theory to give analyses of biblical texts as a set of case studies.

[64] Some telling work in this direction has been done in recent years by biblical scholars, such as J. Z. Smith, Richard Horsley, and N. T. Wright, among others. For a good summary, see Richard Carrier, *On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014). Of great interest is Edmund R. Leach, *Genesis as Myth and Other Essays* (London: Cape, 1969) and the structural analysis of the Oedipus cycle, which is a tour de force, in Terrence Turner, "Oedipus: Time and Structure in Narrative Form," in *Forms of Symbolic Action: Proceedings of the 1969 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, ed. Robert F. Spencer (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1969), 26–68. These works are of special interest inasmuch as they exhume parts of the rationale which explains the venerable myths of our *own* culture, and these have been notoriously neglected by social anthropologists.

Bibliography

Adams, Robert Merrihew. *Finite and Infinite Goods*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Adams, William. "An Essay on Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles (1752)." Lydia McGrew. Accessed April 8, 2020. http://www.lydiamcgrew.com/AdamsEssayonHume.htm.

Agassi, Joseph. "Methodological Individualism." *The British Journal of Sociology* 11, no. 3 (1960): 244–70. http://doi.org/10.2307/586749.

Aldwinckel, Russell. *More Than a Man: A Study in Christology*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1976.

Allison, Dale C. "How to Marginalize the Traditional Criteria of Authenticity." In *The Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, edited by Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter. Vol. 1, 3–30. Boston: Brill, 2011.

———. *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Translated by Anton C. Pegis. New York: Doubleday, 1955.

Archer, Gleason. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982.

Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Resurrection was Not on Sunday*. 1952. Reprint, N.p.: Worldwide Church of God, 1972.

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. 2nd ed. Edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Baber, H. E. "Eucharist: Metaphysical Miracle or Institutional Fact?" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 74, no. 3 (2013): 333–52. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-012-9383-0.

———. "Sabellianism Reconsidered." *Sophia* 41, no. 2 (2002): 1–18. http://doi.org/10.1007/bf02912232.

Bardill, Jonathan. *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Barker, Margaret. *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem*. London: SPCK, 1991.

———. *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy*. London: T&T Clark, 2003.

Barnes, Timothy D. *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Barnett, P. W. "The Feeding of the Multitude in Mark 6/John 6." In *Gospel Perspectives*, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg. Vol. 6, *The Miracles of Jesus*, 273–93. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986.

Barr, James. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Barton, John, and John Muddiman, eds. *The Oxford Bible Commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Bateson, Gregory. "Conventions of Communications Where Validity Depends Upon Belief." In *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*, edited by Jurgen Reusch and Gregory Bateson, 212–27. Piscataway, NY: Transaction Publishers, 1951.

Batto, Bernard F. "Red Sea or Sea of Reeds? How the Mistake Was Made and What Yam Sup Really Means." *Biblical Archaeology Review* 10, no. 4 (1984): 57–63.

Bauckham, Richard. "The Coin in the Fish's Mouth." In *Gospel Perspectives: The Miracles of Jesus*, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg. Vol. 6, 219–52. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986.

Beattie, J. H. M. “On Understanding Ritual.” In *Rationality*, edited by Bryan R. Wilson, 240–69. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Beckman, Gary. “How Religion Was Done.” In *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, edited by Daniel D. Snell, 343–53. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Bell, Lanny. “The New Kingdom ‘Divine’ Temple: The Example of Luxor.” In *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Byron E. Shafer, 127–84. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Bellah, Robert N. “Confessions of a Former Establishment Fundamentalist.” *Theology Today* 28, no. 2 (1971): 229–33. http://doi.org/10.1177/004057367102800210.

Beskow, Per. *Rex Gloriae: The Kingship of Christ in the Early Church*. Translated by Eric J. Sharpe. Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962.

Biale, David. *Blood and Belief: The Circulation of a Symbol between Jews and Christians*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.

Blomberg, Craig. “Concluding Reflections on Gospel Perspectives and Miracles.” In *Gospel Perspectives*, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg. Vol. 6, *The Miracles of Jesus*, 443–57. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986.

———. “The Miracles as Parables.” In *Gospel Perspectives*, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg. Vol. 6, *The Miracles of Jesus*, 327–59. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986.

Boers, H. “Religionsgeschichtliche Schule.” In *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, edited by John H. Hayes. Vol. 2, 383–87. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Bonnefoy, Yves, ed. *Mythologies*. Translated by Wendy Doniger. Vol. 1. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Bonner, Campbell. “A Dionysiac Miracle at Corinth.” *American Journal of Archaeology* 33, no. 3 (1929): 368–75. doi.org/10.2307/498351.

Bonz, Marianne Palmer. *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.

Borg, Marcus J. *Conflict, Politics, and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus*. 2nd ed. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998.

Boswell, J. *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1988.

Boudry, Maarten, Stefaan Blancke, and Johan Braeckman. "How Not to Attack Intelligent Design Creationism: Philosophical Misconceptions About Methodological Naturalism." *Foundations of Science* 15, no. 3 (2010): 227–44. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-010-9178-7.

Bowker, J. W. "'Merkabah' Visions and the Visions of Paul." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16, no. 2 (1971): 57–73. http://doi.org/10.1093/jss/xvi.2.157.

———. *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

Boyarin, Daniel. *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*. New York: The New Press, 2012.

———. *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.

Boyd, Richard N. "The Current Status of Scientific Realism." In *Scientific Realism*, edited by Jarett Leplin, 41–82. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984.

Brandon, S. G. F. *History, Time, and Deity: A Historical and Comparative Study of the Conception of Time in Religious Thought and Practice*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1965.

Brown, Judith C. *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Burridge, Richard A. *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004.

Caird, George B. *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.

Cannon, Walter Bradford. "'Voodoo' Death." *American Journal of Public Health* 92, no. 10 (2002): 1593–96. http://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.92.10.1593.

Carrier, Richard C. "The Burial of Jesus in the Light of Jewish Law." In *The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond the Grave*, edited by Robert M. Price and Jeffrey Jay Lowder, 369–92. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005.

———. *Not the Impossible Faith: Why Christianity Didn't Need a Miracle to Succeed*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu, 2009.

———. *On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014.

———. *Proving History: Bayes' Theorem and the Quest for the Historical Jesus*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2012.

———. "The Spiritual Body of Christ and the Legend of the Empty Tomb." In *The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond the Grave*, edited by Robert M. Price and Jeffrey Jay Lowder, 105–232. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005.

Carson, D. A. "Matthew." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein. Vol. 8, *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, 1–599. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.

Cartwright, Nancy. *How the Laws of Physics Lie*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Castañeda, Carlos. *Journey to Ixtlan*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1972.

———. *A Separate Reality*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1971.

———. *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqi Way of Knowledge*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1968.

Cavin, Robert Greg, and Carlos A. Colombetti. "The Implausibility and Low Explanatory Power of the Resurrection Hypothesis—With a Rejoinder to Stephen T. Davis." *Socio-Historical Examination of Religion and Ministry* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 37–94. http://doi.org/10.33929/sherm.2020.vol2.no1.04.

Chavel, Charles B. "The Releasing of a Prisoner on the Eve of Passover in Ancient Jerusalem." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 60, no. 3 (1941): 273–78. http://doi.org/10.2307/3262626.

Chilton, B. D. "Exorcism and History: Mark 1:21–28." In *Gospel Perspectives*, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg. Vol. 6, *The Miracles of Jesus*, 253–71. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986.

———. "Jesus' Dispute in the Temple and the Origin of the Eucharist." In *Sources of the Jesus Tradition: Separating History from Myth*, edited by R. Joseph Hoffmann, 253–71. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2010.

———. *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program Within a Cultural History of Sacrifice*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992.

Clarke, Samuel. "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion." In *The Works of Samuel Clarke*. 1705. Vol. 2. Reprint, 580–733. New York: Garland Publishing, 1978.

Claussen, Carsten. "Turning Water into Wine: Re-reading the Miracle at the Wedding in Cana." In *Jesus Research: An International Perspective*, edited by James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný, 73–97. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009.

Clissold, Stephen. *St. Teresa of Avila*. London: Sheldon Press, 1979.

Coady, C. A. J. *Testimony: A Philosophical Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

Cohn, Haim Hermann. "Witness." In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 2nd ed, edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 21. New York: Macmillan Reference, 2007.

Collins, Adela Yarbro. "The Empty Tomb and the Gospel According to Mark." In *Hermes and Athena: Biblical Exegesis and Philosophical Theology*, edited by Eleonore Stump and Thomas P. Flint, 1–10. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993.

Collins, Adela Yarbro, and John J. Collins. *King and Messiah as the Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.

Collins, John J. "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1974): 21–43.

Collins, Robin. "The Energy of the Soul." In *The Soul Hypothesis: Investigations Into the Existence of the Soul*, edited by Mark C. Baker and Stewart Goetz, 123–36. New York: Continuum, 2011.

Craig, William Lane. *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*. Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 16. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989.

Cray, Ed. *Ramblin' Man: The Life and Times of Woody Guthrie*. 2004. Reprint, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Daniélou, Jean. *The Lord of History: Reflections On the Inner Meaning of History*. Translated by Nigel Abercrombie. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1968.

Davis, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325–787): Their History and Theology*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1987.

Davis, Stephen T. *Risen Indeed: Making Sense of the Resurrection*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993.

Delling, Gerhard. "ἡμέρα." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. 2, 948–50. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964.

DeMille, Richard. *Castañeda's Journey: The Power and the Allegory*. Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press, 1976.

———. *The Don Juan Papers: Further Castañeda Controversies*. Santa Barbara, CA: Ross-Erikson Publishers, 1980.

Dennis, G. W. *Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic, and Mysticism*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 2007.

Dietl, Paul J. "On Miracles." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 5 (1968): 130–34.

Dorsey, David A. *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary On Genesis–Malachi*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Douglas, Mary. *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986.

———. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1996.

———. *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

Drews, Carl, and Weiqing Han. "Dynamics of Wind Setdown at Suez and the Eastern Nile Delta." *PLoS ONE* 5, no. 8 (2010): e12481. http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0012481.

DuChaillu, Paul B. *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa: With Accounts of the Manners and Customs of the People*. 1868. Reprint, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Library, 2009.

Dundes, Alan. "Binary Opposition in Myth: The Propp/Levi-Strauss Debate in Retrospect." *Western Folklore* 56, no. 1 (1997): 39–50. http://doi.org/10.2307/1500385.

Dunn, James D. G. "Myth." In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, 566–69. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. 1915. Translated by J. Swain. Reprint, New York: Free Press, 1965.

———. *The Rules of Sociological Method: And Selected Texts on Sociology and Its Method*. 1982. Edited by Steven Lukes. Reprint, New York: Free Press, 2013.

Earman, John. *Hume's Abject Failure: The Argument Against Miracles*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Eddy, Paul Rhodes, and Gregory A. Boyd. *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.

Edersheim, Alfred. *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Christ*. 1874. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1994. http://philologos.org/__eb-ttms/temple04.htm.

Edmonds, Radcliffe G. III. *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Engnell, Ivan. *A Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays On the Old Testament*. Translated by John T. Willis. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969.

———. *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967.

Eusebius of Caesarea. *Life of Constantine*. Translated by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

Evans, Craig A. "Life-of-Jesus Research and the Eclipse of Mythology." *Theological Studies* 54, no. 1 (1993): 3–36. http://doi.org/10.1177/004056399305400102.

Evans, Craig A. and N. T. Wright. "The Surprise of the Resurrection." In *Jesus, The Final Days: What Really Happened*, edited by Troy A. Miller, 75–108. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Evans-Pritchard, Edward Evan. *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937.

Fairman, H. W. "The Kingship Rituals of Egypt." In *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, edited by S. H. Hooke, 74–104. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

Fales, Evan. "Can Science Explain Mysticism?" *Religious Studies* 35, no. 2 (1999): 213–27. http://doi.org/10.1017/s0034412599004801.

———. *Causation and Universals*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

———. "Davidson's Compatibilism." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 45, no. 2 (1984): 227–46. http://doi.org/10.2307/2107426.

———. *A Defense of the Given*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996.

———. "Divine Freedom and the Choice of a World." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 35, no. 2 (1994): 65–88. doi.org/10.1007/bf01318326.

———. *Divine Intervention: Metaphysical and Epistemological Puzzles*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

———. "Is a Science of the Supernatural Possible?" In *Philosophy of Pseudoscience: Reconsidering the Demarcation Problem*, edited by Massimo Pigliucci and Maarten Boudry, 247–62. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2013.

———. "It is not Reasonable to Believe in Miracles." In *Debating Christian Theism*, edited by J. P. Moreland, Chad Meister, and Khaldoun A. Sweis. Oxford Contemporary Dialogues, 298–310. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

———. "Must Sociology Be Qualitative?" and "Reply to Professor Brown." *Qualitative Sociology* 5, no. 2 (1982): 89–105, 145–56. http://doi.org/10.1007/bf00987155.

———. "The Road to Damascus." *Faith and Philosophy* 22, no. 4 (2005): 442–59. http://doi.org/10.5840/faithphil200522459.

———. "Scientific Explanations of Mystical Experiences, Part I: The Case of St. Teresa." *Religious Studies* 32, no. 2 (1996): 143–63. http://doi.org/10.1017/s0034412500024203.

———. “Scientific Explanations of Mystical Experiences, Part II: The Challenge to Theism.” *Religious Studies* 32, no. 3 (1996): 297–313. http://doi.org/10.1017/s0034412500024367.

———. “Taming the Tehom: The Sign of Jonah in Matthew.” In *The Empty Tomb: Jesus Beyond the Grave*, edited by Robert M. Price and Jeffrey Jay Lowder, 307–48. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005.

———. “Theoretical Simplicity and Defeasibility.” *Philosophy of Science* 45, no. 2 (1978): 273–88. http://doi.org/10.1086/288800.

———. “Truth, Tradition, and Rationality.” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (1976): 97–113. doi.org/10.1177/004839317600600201.

———. “Uniqueness and Historical Laws.” *Philosophy of Science* 47, no. 2 (1980): 260–76. http://doi.org/10.1086/288932.

Fales, Evan, and Edward A. Wasserman. “Causal Knowledge: What Can Psychology Teach Philosophers.” *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* 13, no. 1 (1992): 1–27.

Feldman, Louis H. *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 107. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2006.

Finkelstein, Israel, and Neil Asher Silberman. “Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, the Remaking of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30, no. 3 (2006): 259–85. http://doi.org/10.1177/0309089206063428.

Fogelin, Robert J. *A Defense of Hume on Miracles*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Fortes, Meyer. “Ritual and Office in Tribal Society.” In *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations*, edited by Max Gluckman, 53–88. New York: Manchester University Press, 1962.

Foster, John. “Induction, Explanation and Natural Necessity.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 83, no. 1 (1982–83): 87–102. http://doi.org/10.1093/aristotelian/83.1.87.

Frankfort, Henri. *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. Abridged ed. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1922.

Frei, Hans W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974.

Furnish, Victor Paul. *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1968.

Garrett, Don. *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Geivett, R. Douglas. "The Evidential Value of Miracles." In *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action In*, edited by R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas, 178–95. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Gellner, Ernest. "Concepts and Society." In *Rationality*, edited by Bryan R. Wilson, 18–49. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

———. "Holism versus Individualism in History and Sociology." In *Theories of History*, edited by Patrick L. Gardiner, 489–502. New York: Free Press, 1959.

———. *Saints of the Atlas*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Gilders, William K. *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Ginzberg, Louis. *The Legends of the Jews*. Vol. 1. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946.

Goetz, Stewart C., and Craig L. Blomberg. "The Burden of Proof." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 4, no. 11 (1981): 39–63. http://doi.org/10.1177/0142064x8100401103.

Goldberg, David M. “What Did Ham Do to Noah?” In *The Words of a Wise Man’s Mouth Are gracious. (Qoh 10, 12)*, edited by Mauro Perani, 257–65. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005. www.sas.upenn.edu/~dmg2/what%20did%20ham%20do.pdf.

Goldstein, Leon J. “Mr. Watkins on the Two Theses.” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 10, no. 39 (1959): 240–41. http://doi.org/10.1093/bjps/x.39.240.

———. “The Two Theses of Methodological Individualism.” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 9, no. 33 (1958): 1–11. http://doi.org/10.1093/bjps/ix.33.1.

Goodenough, Erwin R. *The Politics of Philo Judaeus: Practice and Theory*. London: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Goodman, Martin. “Under the Influence: Hellenism in Ancient Jewish Life.” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 36, no. 1 (2010): 60–67.

Gould, Stephen Jay. “Non-Overlapping Magisteria.” *Skeptical Inquirer* 23, no. 4 (1999): 55–61. https://skepticalinquirer.org/1999/07/non-overlapping-magisteria/.

Gowan, Donald E. *Genesis 1–11: From Eden to Babel*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.

Grice, H. P. “Meaning.” *The Philosophical Review* 66, no. 3 (1957): 377–88. http://doi.org/10.2307/2182440.

Guthrie, Stewart Elliot. *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Guthrie, Woody. *Bound for Glory*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1943.

Gutting, Gary. *Religious Belief and Religious Skepticism*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982.

Habermas, Gary R. *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1996.

Hägerland, Tobias. “The Future of Criteria in Historical Jesus Research.” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 13, no. 1 (2015): 43–65. http://doi.org/10.1163/17455197-01301003.

Halperin, Mordechai. "Metzitzah B'peh Controversy: The View from Israel." Wayback Machine. March 6, 2012. http://web.archive.org/web/20120306221308/http:/www.ou.org/jewish_action/article/8987.

Harlow, Harry F. "The Nature of Love." *American Psychologist* 13, no. 12 (1958): 673–85. http://doi.org/10.1037/h0047884.

Harris, Marvin. *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*. New York: Vintage, 1989.

Harrison, Andrew. "Works of Art and Other Cultural Objects." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 68, no. 1 (1968): 105–28. http://doi.org/10.1093/aristotelian/68.1.105.

Hart, H. L. A. *The Concept of Law*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Hay, David. "Religious Experience Amongst a Group of Post-Graduate Students: A Qualitative Study." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 18, no. 2 (1979): 164–82. http://doi.org/10.2307/1385938.

Hemer, Colin J. *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*. Edited by Conrad H. Gempf. Tübingen, Germany: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989.

Hendrickx, Hermann. *The Resurrection Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels*. London: G. Chapman, 1984.

Hick, John. *The Fifth Dimension: An Exploration of the Spiritual Realm*. Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 1999.

Hollis, Martin. "The Limits of Irrationality." In *Rationality*, edited by Bryan R. Wilson, 221–39. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Hooke, S. H. "The Myth and Ritual Pattern of the Ancient East." In *Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to the Culture Pattern of the Ancient East*, edited by S. H. Hooke, 1–14. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Horsley, Richard A. *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1987.

———., ed. *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.

Horton, Robin. "African Traditional Thought and Western Science." In *Rationality*, edited by Bryan R. Wilson, 131–71. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

———. "Paradox and Explanation: A Reply to Mr. Skorupski." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3 (1973): 231–56.

Houston, J. *Reported Miracles: A Critique of Hume*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. 1779. Edited by Norman Kemp Smith. Reprint, Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947.

———. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. 1748. Edited by Tom L. Beauchamp. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

———. *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. 1748. Edited by Charles W. Hendel. Reprint, Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955.

Isserlin, B. S. J. *The Israelites*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Jakobson, Roman, and Morris Halle. *Fundamentals of Language*. The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1956.

James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Macmillan, 1961.

Jantzen, Benjamin C. "Peirce on Miracles: The Failure of Bayesian Analysis." In *Probability in the Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Jake Chandler and Victoria S. Harrison, 27–45. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Jarvie, I. C. *Concepts and Society*. New York: Routledge, 1972.

Jarvie, I. C., and Joseph Agassi. "The Problem of the Rationality of Magic." In *Rationality*, edited by Bryan R. Wilson, 172–93. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Jensen, Lloyd B. "Royal Purple of Tyre." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 22, no. 2 (1963): 104–18. http://doi.org/10.1086/371717.

Jeremias, Joachim. *Golgotha*. Leipzig, Germany: E. Pfeiffer, 1926.

Johnson, David Kyle. "Identifying the Conflict between Religion and Science." *Socio-Historical Examination of Religion and Ministry* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 122–48. https://doi.org/10.33929/sherm.2020.vol2.no1.06.

———. "Justified Belief in Miracles is Impossible." *Science, Religion and Culture* 2, no. 2 (2015): 61–74. doi.org/10.17582/journal.src/2015/2.2.61.74.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.

Kantorowicz, Ernest H. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Keck, Leander, ed. *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Vol. 8. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Kee, Howard Clark. *Medicine, Miracle, and Magic in New Testament Times*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Keener, Craig S. *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.

Kelber, Werner H. *Apostolic Tradition and the Form of the Gospel*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Klaniczay, Gábor. "The Process of Trance, Heavenly and Diabolic Apparitions in Johannes Nider's *Formicarius*." In *Procession, Performance, Liturgy and Ritual: Essays in Honor of Bryan R. Gillingham*, edited by Nancy van Deusen, 203–58. The Institute of Medieval Music: Ottawa, Canada, 2007.

Klawans, Jonathan. *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Klein, Zöe. “Wrestling with Man, Not Angel.” ReformJudaism.org. December 4, 2006. https://reformjudaism.org/wrestling-man-not-angel.

Koperski, Jeffrey. “Divine Action and the Quantum Amplification Problem.” *Theology and Science* 13, no. 4 (2015): 379–94. http://doi.org/10.1080/14746700.2015.1082872.

Kraeling, C. H. *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*. New Haven, CT: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938.

Lackey, Jennifer. “Religious Belief and the Epistemology of Testimony.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology*, edited by William J. Abraham and Frederick D. Aquino, 203–20. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

———. “What Is Justified Group Belief?” *Philosophical Review* 125, no. 3 (2016): 341–96. http://doi.org/10.1215/00318108-3516946.

Larmer, Robert A. “Against ‘Against Miracles’.” In *Questions of Miracle*, edited by Robert A. Larmer, 54–59. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996.

———. “Divine Intervention and the Conservation of Energy: A Reply to Evan Fales.” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 75, no. 1 (2013): 27–38. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-013-9411-8.

———. *Water Into Wine? An Investigation of the Concept of Miracle*. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988.

Latourelle, René *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988.

Law, Stephen. “Evidence, Miracles, and the Existence of Jesus.” *Faith and Philosophy* 28, no. 2 (2011): 129–51. http://doi.org/10.5840/faithphil20112821.

Leach, Edmund R. *Genesis as Myth and Other Essays*. London: Cape, 1969.

———. *Political Systems of Highland Burma*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1954.

———. "Ritualization in Man in Relation to Conceptual and Social Development." In *Reader in Comparative Religion*. 3rd ed, edited by William Lessa and Evon Vogt, 333–37. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

———., ed. *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1967.

Leach, Edmund R., and D. Alan Aycock. *Structural Interpretations of Biblical Myth*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Lehman, Hugh. "Statistical Explanation." *Philosophy of Science* 39, no. 4 (1972): 500–6. http://doi.org/10.1086/288471.

Levenson, Jon D. *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. 1949. Edited by Rodney Needham. Translated by J. H. Bell, J. R. von Sturmer, and Rodney Needham. Reprint, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969.

———. *From Honey to Ashes*. 1966. Translated by John Weightman and Doreen Weightman. Reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

———. *The Jealous Potter*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

———. *The Naked Man*. 1971. Translated by John Weightman and Doreen Weightman. Reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1981.

———. *The Origin of Table Manners*. 1968. Translated by John Weightman and Doreen Weightman. Reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

———. "The Story of Asdiwal." In *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*, edited by Edmund Leach. Translated by Nicholas Mann, 1–47. London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1967.

———. *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1963.

———. "Structuralism and Ecology." *Social Science Information* 12, no. 1 (1973): 7–23. http://doi.org/10.1177/053901847301200101.

———. *Totemism*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1963.

Levinson, David, and Melvin Ember, eds. *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996.

Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. *How Natives Think*. 1910. Translated by Lilian A. Clare. Reprint, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Lewis, I. M. *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*. Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1971.

Licona, Michael R. "Historians and Miracle Claims." *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 12, no. 1/2 (2014): 106–29.

———. *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.

Lienhardt, Godfrey. *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka*. New York: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Lipton, Peter. *Inference to the Best Explanation*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Locke, John. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Alexander Campbell. Vol. 2, Book 4. New York: Dover Publications, 1959.

Lukes, Steven. "Relativism: Cognitive and Moral." *Aristotelian Society: Supplementary Volume* 48 (1974): 165–89.

———. "Some Problems about Rationality." In *Rationality*, edited by Bryan R. Wilson, 194–213. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Lund, Nils Wilhelm. *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formsgeschichte*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1942.

Macdonald, Dennis R. *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.

———. *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.

Maclean, Jennifer K. Berenson. "Barabbas, the Scapegoat Ritual, and the Development of the Passion Narrative." *Harvard Theological Review* 100, no. 3 (2007): 309–34. http://doi.org/10.1017/s0017816007001605.

Malina, Bruce J., and Jerome H. Neyrey. *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of an Ancient Personality*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1966.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. 1922. Reprint, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1961.

Mandelbaum, Maurice. "Societal Facts." In *Theories of History*, edited by Patrick L. Gardiner, 476–87. New York: Free Press, 1959.

Margolis, Joseph. "Collective Entities and the Rules of War." Paper presented at the International Conference on War and Violence, Union, NJ, April 1974.

———. "The Ontological Peculiarity of Works of Art." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36, no. 1 (1977): 45–50. http://doi.org/10.2307/430748.

———. "Reductionism and Ontological Aspects of Consciousness." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 4, no. 1 (1974): 3–16. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.1974.tb00327.x.

———. "Works of Art as Physically Embodied and Culturally Emergent Entities." *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 14, no. 3 (1974): 187–96. doi.org/10.1093/bjaesthetics/14.3.187.

Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Primitive Societies*. 1950. Translated by W. D. Halls. Reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 2000.

McGrew, Timothy, and Lydia McGrew. "The Argument from Miracles: A Cumulative Case for the Resurrection." In *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, edited by William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, 593–662. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.

Miles, Jack. "Jacob's Wrestling Match: Was It an Angel or Esau?" *Bible Review* 14, no. 5 (1998): 22–23.

Morrison, Clinton D. *The Powers That Be: Early Rulers and Demonic Powers in Romans 13: 1–7*. Studies in Biblical Theology 29. Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960.

Mounce, W. D. "Mahanaim." In *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Rev. ed, edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. 3, 222–23. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986.

Möwinckel, Sigmund. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. Translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas. Vol. 1. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Murray, Harris J. "'The Dead are Restored to Life': Miracles of Revivification in the Gospels." In *Gospel Perspectives*, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg. Vol. 6, *The Miracles of Jesus*, 295–326. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986.

Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Neill, Stephen, and Tom Wright. *The Interpretation Of The New Testament, 1861–1986*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Nelson, Charles A., Nathan A. Fox, and Charles H. Zeanah. "Anguish of the Abandoned Child." *Scientific American* 308, no. 4 (2013): 62–67. doi.org/10.1038/scientificamerican0413-62.

Nickelsburg, George W. *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.

Nielsen, Kai. "Rationality and Relativism." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 4 (1974): 313–31.

Nolland, John. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary On the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.

Noth, Martin. *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies*. 1960. Translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas. Reprint, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1967.

Novak, Ralph Martin. *Christianity and the Roman Empire: Background Texts*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International Press, 2001.

O'Collins, Gerald. *The Easter Jesus*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1973.

O'Daly, Gerard. *Augustine's* City of God*: A Reader's Guide*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

Oesterley, W. O. E. "Early Hebrew Festival Rituals." In *Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to the Culture Pattern of the Ancient East*, edited by S. H. Hooke, 111–46. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Ouro, Roberto. "The Garden of Eden Account: The Chiastic Structure of Genesis 2–3." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 219–43.

Ozment, Steven E. *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973.

Parpola, Simo. "From Whence the Beast?" *Bible Review* 15, no. 6 (1999): 24.

———. "Sons of God: The Ideology of Assyrian Kingship." *Archaeology Odyssey* 2, no. 5 (1999): 16–27.

Patai, Raphael. *On Jewish Folklore*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1983.

Payne, Thomas. *The Age of Reason*. 1795. Reprint, Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1974.

Pedersén, Olof, Paul J. J. Sinclair, Irmgard Hein, and Jakob Andersson. "Cities and Urban Landscapes in the Ancient Near East and Egypt with Special Focus on the City of Babylon." In *The Urban Mind Cultural and Environmental Dynamics*, edited by Paul J. J. Sinclair et al. Upsala, Sweden: Upsala University Press, 2010.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Pennock, Robert T. "Naturalism, Evidence, and Creationism: The Case of Phillip Johnson." In *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives*, edited by Robert T. Pennock, 77–98. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001.

Persinger, Michael, and Faye Healey. "Experimental Facilitation of the Sensed Presence: Possible Intercalation between the Hemispheres Induced by Complex Magnetic Fields." *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* 190, no. 8 (2002): 533–41.

Persinger, Michael A., Yves R. J. Bureau, Oksana P. Peredery, and Pauline M. Richards. "The Sensed Presence as Right Hemispheric Intrusions into the Left Hemispheric Awareness of Self: An Illustrative Case Study." *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 78, no. 3 (1994): 999–1009. doi.org/10.1177/003151259407800358.

Petersen, David L. *Zachariah 9–14 and Malachi: A Commentary*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Philo. *Questions On Exodus*. Translated by Ralph Marcus. Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1953.

Pitts, J. Brian. "Conservation of Energy: Missing Features in Its Nature and Justification and Why They Matter," in "Special Issue on James Joule." Special issue, *Foundations of Science* (2020): 1–45. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-020-09657-1.

Plantinga, Alvin. "Introduction: The Evolutionary Argument against Naturalism." In *Naturalism Defeated? Essays On Plantinga's Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism*, edited by James Beilby, 1–12. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002.

———. "What is 'Intervention'?" *Theology and Science* 6, no. 4 (2008): 369–401. http://doi.org/10.1080/14746700802396106.

Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. 4th ed. London: Routledge, 1962.

Price, H. H. *Thinking and Experience*. 2nd ed. London: Hutchinson Publishing, 1969.

Purtill, Richard L., Norman L. Geisler, Francis J. Beckwith, Winfried Corduan, Ronald H. Nash, and J. P. Moreland. "Replies to Evan Fales from the Contributors to in Defense of Miracle." *Philosophia Christi* 3, no. 1 (2001): 37–87. http://doi.org/10.5840/pc2001313.

Quine, Willard Van Orman. *Word and Object*. Boston, MA: MIT Press, 1960.

Rappaport, Roy A. "Ritual, Sanctity, and Cybernetics." *American Anthropologist* 73, no. 1 (1971): 59–76.

The Really Big Questions. "Giving Without Expecting Something in Return Is a Key Part of Maasai Life." February 24, 2014. http://trbq.org/giving-without-expecting-something-in-return-is-a-key-part-maasai-life/.

Rebbi, Lubavitcher. "The First Mitzvah." *Come and Hear*. Accessed June 15, 2020. http://www.come-and-hear.com/editor/br-painful/.

Reddit, Paul L. *Haggai, Zecharia, and Malachi*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.

Reinbold, Meyer. *History of Purple as a Status Symbol in Antiquity*. Vol. 116. Brussels: Collection Latomus, 1970.

Reynolds, Bennie H. "Molek: Dead or Alive? The Meaning and Derivation of *mlk* and מלך." In *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, edited by Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange, and K. F. Diethard Römheld, 133–51. Boston, MA: Brill, 2007.

Rodríguez, Rafael. "Authenticating Criteria: The Use and Misuse of a Critical Method." *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 7, no. 2 (2009): 152–67. http://doi.org/10.1163/174551909x447374.

Rogerson, J. W. *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974.

Rosenberg, Joel W. "Genesis: Introduction." In *Harper-Collins Study Bible NRSV*, edited by Wayne Meeks. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1993.

Ruben, David-Hillel. *The Metaphysics of the Social World*. London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1985.

Ruse, Michael. "Methodological Naturalism Under Attack." In *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives*, edited by Robert T. Pennock, 363–85. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001.

Russell, Robert John. "Divine Action and Quantum Mechanics: A Fresh Assessment." In *Philosophy, Science, and Divine Action*, edited by F. LeRon Shults, Nancey Murphy, and Robert John Russell, 351–403. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1999.

Russell, Robert John, Nancey Murphy, and Arthur R. Peacocke, eds. *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*. 2nd ed. Vatican City: Vatican Observatory Publications, 2000.

Russell, Robert John, Nancey Murphy, and C. J. Isham, eds. *Quantum Cosmology and the Laws of Nature: Scientific Perspectives On Divine Action*. Vatican City: Vatican Observatory Publications, 1999.

Ryan, Jordan J. "Jesus at the Crossroads of Inference and Imagination." *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 13, no. 1 (2015): 66–89. http://doi.org/10.1163/17455197-01301004.

Salmon, Wesley. *Four Decades of Scientific Explanation*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 1989.

Samanta, Suchitra. "The 'Self-Animal' and Divine Digestion: Goat Sacrifice to the Goddess Kālī in Bengal." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 3 (1994): 779–803. http://doi.org/10.2307/2059730.

Sanders, E. P. *Jesus and Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

———. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. London: SCM, 1977.

Sandnes, Karl Olav. *The Gospel 'According to Homer and Virgil': Cento and Canon*. Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2011.

Schröter, Jens. "The Historical Jesus and the Sayings Tradition: Comments On Current Research." *Neotestimentica* 30, no. 1 (1966): 151–68.

Schweitzer, Albert. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. 1906. Translated by W. Montgomery. Reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2005.

Scroggie, W. Graham. *A Guide to the Gospels*. London: Pickering & Inglis, 1948.

Searle, John R. *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

———. *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Segal, Alan F. *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.

Seidensticker, Philipp. *Die Auferstehung Jesu in der Botschaft der Evangelisten: Ein Taditionsgeschichtlicher Versuch Zum Problem der Sicherung der Osterbotschaft in der Apostolischen Zeit*. Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 26. Stuttgart, Germany: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1967.

Senior, Donald P. *The Passion Narrative According to Matthew: A Redactional Study*. Louvain, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1975.

Shea, William H. "Literary Structural Parallels between Genesis 1 and 2." *Origins* 16, no. 2 (1989): 49–68.

Shlita, Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky. "Parshas Terumah." (2003). yadavraham.org/documents/shemos/terumah/terumah2003.pdf.

Sim, David C. *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1998.

Ska, Jean-Louis. *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch: Exegetical Studies and Basic Questions*. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.

———. *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*. Translated by Sr. Pascale Dominique. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Skorupski, John. "Comment on Professor Horton's Paradox and Explanation." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 5 (1975): 63–70.

———. "Science and Traditional Religious Thought." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3 (1973): 209–30.

Slade, Darren M. "Properly Investigating Miracle Claims." In *The Case Against Miracles,* edited by John W. Loftus, 114–47. United Kingdom: Hypatia Press, 2019.

Smith, Jonathan Z. *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Smith, Morton. *Jesus the Magician*. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

———. "On the Wine God in Palestine." In *Salo Wittmayer Baron, Jubilee Volume*. Vol. 2, 815–29. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

Smith, S. H. "'Heel' and 'Thigh': The Concept of Sexuality in the Jacob-Esau Narratives." *Vetus Testamentum* 40, no. 4 (1990): 464–73. http://doi.org/10.1163/156853390x00154.

Snell, Daniel C. "The Invention of the Individual." In *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, edited by Daniel C. Snell, 357–70. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Sobel, Jordan Howard. "Hume's Theorem on Testimony Sufficient to Establish a Miracle." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 41, no. 163 (1991): 229–37. http://doi.org/10.2307/2219595.

Spencer, W. Baldwin, and F. J. Gillen. *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1904.

Spinoza, Baruch. *Theological-Political Treatise*. 1670. Translated by Samuel Shirley and Seymour Feldman. Reprint, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1998.

Stager, Lawrence E., and Samuel R. Wolff. "Child Sacrifice at Carthage–Religious Rite or Population Control?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 10, no. 1 (1984): 31–51.

Stanner, W. E. H. "The Dreaming." In *Reader in Comparative Religion*. 3rd ed, edited by William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, 269–77. New York: Joanna Colter Books, 1972.

Starbuck, E. D. *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness*. 3rd ed. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1912.

Stephenson, Paul. *Constantine: Roman Emperor, Christian Victor*. New York: Overlook Press, 2010.

Stevens, Marty E. *Temples, Tithes, and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006.

Stevenson, Seth William, C. Roach Smith, and Frederic W. Madden. *A Dictionary of Roman Coins*. London: B. A. Seaby, 1964.

Stökl Ben Ezra, Daniel. *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century*. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003.

Stone, Christopher D. *Should Trees Have Standing? Law, Morality, and the Environment*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Strawson, Galen. *The Secret Connexion: Causation, Realism, and David Hume*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Stump, Eleonore. *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Sumner, Paul B. "The Heavenly Council in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament." *Hebrew Streams* (2012). http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/hebrew/council.pdf.

Sutherland, C. H. V. *Roman Coins*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974.

Swinburne, Richard. *The Resurrection of God Incarnate*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

———. *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Talbert, Charles H. *What Is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1977.

Tambiah, S. J. "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts: A Point of View." In *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies*, edited by Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan, 199–229. London: Faber and Faber, 1973.

Thomas, Alexander. "Urbanization before Cities: Lessons for Social Theory from the Evolution of Cities." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 18, no. 2 (2012): 211–35. http://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2012.479.

Thomas, L. L., J. Z. Kronenfeld, and D. B. Kronenfeld. "Asdiwal Crumbles: A Critique of Lévi-Straussian Myth Analysis." *American Ethnologist* 3, no. 1 (1976): 147–73. http://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1976.3.1.02a00090.

Tobolowsky, Andrew. "Israelite and Judahite History in Contemporary Theoretical Approaches." *Currents in Biblical Research* 17, no. 1 (2018): 33–58. http://doi.org/10.1177/1476993x18765117.

Townsend, Nicholas. "Surveillance and Seeing: A New Way of Reading Mark 12:17, 'Give Back to Caesar…'." *Studies in Christian Ethics* 27, no. 1 (2014): 79–90. http://doi.org/10.1177/0953946813509340.

Turner, Terrence S. "Animal Symbolism, Totemism, and the Structure of Myth." In *Animal Myths and Metaphors in South America*, edited by Gary Urton, 49–106. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1985.

———. "Narrative Structure and Mythopoesis: A Critique and Reformulation of the Structuralist Concepts of Myth, Narrative, and Poetics." *Arethusa* 10 (1977): 103–63.

———. "Oedipus: Time and Structure in Narrative Form." In *Forms of Symbolic Action: Proceedings of the 1969 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, edited by Robert F. Spencer, 26–68. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1969.

Turner, Victor. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970.

———. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. 1969. Reprint, Piscataway, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 1995.

Tylor, Edward B. *Primitive Culture*. 6th ed. Vol. 1. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922.

Udoh, Fabian. *To Caesar What Is Caesar's: Tribute, Taxes, and Imperial Administration in Early Roman Palestine (63 B.C.E.–70 C.E.)*. Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2005.

van der Toorn, Karel. *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Brill, 1996.

van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. 1909. Translated by Monika B. Vizedon and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Reprint, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

van Inwagen, Peter. *Material Beings*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Vauchez, André *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*. Translated by Michael F. Cusato. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.

Vermes, Geza, trans. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. 3rd ed. London: Penguin Books, 1987.

Vilnay, Zev. *Legends of Jerusalem*. Philadelphia, PA: Wish Publication Society of America, 1973.

Walker, Brent L. *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion 1590–1800*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001.

Walker, Norman. "The Alleged Matthaean Errata." *New Testament Studies* 9, no. 4 (1963): 391–94. http://doi.org/10.1017/s0028688500002253.

Walton, John H. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.

Watkins, J. W. N. "Third Reply to Mr. Goldstein." *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 10, no. 39 (1959): 242–44. http://doi.org/10.1093/bjps/x.39.242.

———. "The Two Theses of Methodological Individualism." *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 9, no. 36 (1959): 319–20. http://doi.org/10.1093/bjps/ix.36.319.

Weatherson, Brian. "Probability in Philosophy." *Rutgers and Arché* (2008). http://brian.weatherson.org/PL4.pdf.

Webb, Robert L. "The Rules of the Game: History and Historical Method in the Context of Faith: The Via Media of Methodological Naturalism." *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9, no. 1 (2011): 59–84.

Weeks, Andrew. *German Mysticism from Hildegard von Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Literary and Intellectual History*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993.

Widengren, G. "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation." In *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship: Essays On the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel*, edited by S. H. Hooke, 149–203. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

Winch, Peter. *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*. New York: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1958.

———. "Understanding a Primitive Society." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964): 307–24.

Winn, Albert C. *Ain't Gonna Study War No More: Biblical Ambiguity and the Abolition of War*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

Winter, Paul. *On the Trial of Jesus*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1961.

Wisdom, J. O. "Situational Individualism and the Emergent Group-Properties." In *Explanation in the Behavioral Sciences*, edited by Robert Borger and Frank Cioffi, 271–96. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Wolfson, Elliot R. "Circumcision, Vision of God, and Textual Interpretation: From Midrashic Trope to Mystical Symbol." *History of Religions* 27, no. 2 (1987): 189–215. http://doi.org/10.1086/463112.

Wright, G. E. *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*. London: SCM Press, 1950.

Wright, John P. *The Sceptical Realism of David Hume*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

Wright, N. T. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Vol. 2. Christian Origins and the Question of God. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.

———. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Vol. 1. Christian Origins and the Question of God. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992.

———. "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire." In *Paul and Politics, Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation*, edited by Richard A. Horsley, 160–85. Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000.

———. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Vol. 3. Christian Origins and the Question of God. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003.

Yalman, Nur. "'The Raw : the Cooked :: Nature : Culture'—Observations on *Le Cru et le cuit*." In *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*, edited by Edmund R. Leach, 71–89. London: Tavistock Publications, 1967.

Yamouchi, Edwin. "Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Miracles, and Exorcisms." In *Gospel Perspectives*, edited by David Wenham and Craig Blomberg. Vol. 6, *The Miracles of Jesus*, 89–184. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986.

Yuval, Israel J. “God Will See the Blood: Sin, Punishment, and Atonement in the Jewish-Christian Discourse.” In *Jewish Blood: Reality and Metaphor in History, Religion, and Culture*, edited by Mitchell B. Hart, 83–98. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Yuval, Sinai. “Witness.” In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 2nd ed, edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 21. New York: Macmillan Reference, 2007.

Index