Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations

Pearl Maria Barros [ThD]

Transforming Suffering: Insights from the Work of Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa

Gloria Anzaldúa's understanding of suffering is inextricably connected to subjectivity and spirituality. Tracing her rethinking of stories/histories involving the violent dismemberment of female religious figures, specifically Teresa of Ávila and Coyolxauhqui, I show how Anzaldúa's critical engagement and creative reimagining of these stories/histories led her to develop a conception of fragmentation and wholeness that resists dualistic epistemologies. For Anzaldúa, suffering emerges from dualism and the violence inherent in processes of categorization, especially as they function in identity formations. "Self," Anzaldúa argues, cannot be neatly organized or fully understood; it is always in process. Writing, as an act of "spiritual activism," mirrors this process of becoming because it demands critically and creatively analyzing the stories/histories that inform our understandings of self and others–of *nos/otras*. Writing becomes a spiritual and shamanic act capable of inviting personal and political transformation. Through her writings, I argue, Anzaldúa acts as poet-shaman, calling us toward a spirituality of transformation and inspiring visions of what it might mean to live together in nonhierarchical multiplicity.

Adviser: Mayra Rivera

Mara Gertrude Block [PhD]

"Care of the Afflicted Flock": Pastoral Counseling, Psychiatry, and Disorderly Sexual Subjects

While scholars have argued that modern medical authority over sexuality stands in some relation to earlier religious discourse, modern religion and its new relationship to medicine are absent from these narratives. This dissertation takes up just such a study through narrating the emergence of modern pastoral counseling and its assumptions, categories, and therapeutic techniques, all of which were deeply

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entangled with modern sciences of the mind. Modern pastoral counseling marks a decisive discontinuity from the long tradition of philosophical and Christian care for the soul in its relation to medicine and in its view of the self. This dissertation argues that mid-century American Protestant understandings of sexuality depended on a modern psychological conception of the self.

Through an analysis of archival documents, theological texts, and hospital case histories from the early clinical pastoral training movement, this study investigates the shifting pastoral rhetoric used to understand sexual maladjustment, and it traces shifting attempts to rework Christian sexual ethics. While psychiatry was the primary framework for making sense of queer love—at times even for queer people themselves—some fashioned new and imaginative languages for expressing forms of queer love and queer religion. Juxtaposing clinical discourse with these diverse genres not only illuminates the limits of contemporary debates about religion and sexuality, but it also illustrates the importance of studying the entanglements of religion, science, and medicine in everyday life and social practice.

Advisers: Amy Hollywood and Mark Jordan

Faye Bodley-Dangelo [ThD]

Veiled and Unveiled Others: Revisiting Karl Barth's Gender Trouble

Karl Barth is frequently named as the poster-child for modern patriarchal and heteronormative theologies. In *Church Dogmatics* he secures a binary, hierarchically-ordered, marital relationship between a man and woman as the norm for conceptualizing not only sexual difference but all inter-subjective relationships among human beings. Human beings find in the opposite sex their paradigmatic human "other," and marriage to someone of the opposite sex provides the occasion in which one is able to most fully realize the sort of being-in-encounter that conforms to the self-giving, self-revealing, aid-lending relationship that Christ has established with the Christian community. The asymmetry of the relationship between Christ and his community translates into the super-/subordering of the relationship between the sexes, wherein women are lead, directed, and inspired by men. Barth applies this "ordering" beyond marriage to all interactions between the sexes. Many critics have argued that Barth's ordering of the sexes exposes a systemic structure of domination and submission instantiated in the many relationships that comprise his theology. Others have sought a corrective to his ordering in his doctrine of the Trinity, but a corrective that demands a reconstruction of his innovative reformulation of the doctrine of election along with his christocentric theological anthropology. Until recently little critical attention has been given to his heteronormative framework. This dissertation advances a fresh approach by shifting focus from the question of the function of "order" in Barth's theology to Barth's christocentric understanding of human agency itself.

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As a critical and constructive analysis of sexual difference in *Church Dogmatics*, this dissertation locates in Barth's christocentric account of human agency an untapped resource for unsettling and reimagining the heteronormative and patriarchal structure of human fellowship at the heart of his theological anthropology. Through contextualized close readings in Barth's doctrines of revelation, creation, theological anthropology, and special ethics I show that his methodological, theological, and ethical commitments lead to an account of the human agent that is carefully detached from the sort of naturalizing and scientific discourses that support heteropatriarchal projects. Instead the human agent is an imitation of the aid-lending, self-revelatory activity of the incarnate Christ, and such a christocentric model of human agency, I argue, cannot on its own terms sustain Barth's version of female subordination nor his rejection of same-sex relationships. Furthermore, once freed from its sexist and heterosexist entanglements, Barth's account of agency is amenable to constructive appropriations that engage and respond to contemporary conversations about sex, gender, and sexuality, for it contains the critical and reflective mechanisms to contest the normative constraints of a rigid two-sex regulatory framework, and it lends itself to an anti-essentialist, performative account of gender that subverts a two-sex binary and its compulsory oppositional ordering of gender identity and desire.

Adviser: Amy Hollywood

María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa [ThD]

Sobre la Marcha: The Fiesta of Santiago Apóstol in Loíza, Puerto Rico

The annual Fiesta of Santiago Apóstol is the most significant religious festival in Loíza, Puerto Rico. This dissertation examines this religious ritual by applying an indigenous methodological approach that I call *sobre la marcha*, meaning "on the move." *Sobre la marcha* places the voices and the stories of the people of Loíza at the center of the narrative. Focusing on people's every day lives, or *lo cotidiano*, I bring to the forefront people's lived experiences, their individual perspectives, and their indigenous ways of being. This ethnographic approach is known as "ethnographies of the particular," privileging the people's own stories, their feelings, sufferings, contradictions, aspirations, hopes, and so on.

The dissertation begins with the lived experiences of a limited number of people who identify as *Loiceños* (natives of Loíza), and their voices illuminate the complex movements great and small that are part of their quotidian experiences, *lo cotidiano*. This includes testimonies from a local artist and an *Espiritista* practitioner, who speak about the presence of the ancestors and the rituals that maintain a relationship between the living and the dead. The people known as *Mantenedores*, or keepers of the image of Santiago Apóstol, also share their stories of the miraculous apparition of Santiago Apóstol and how the Santiago came to live among the people of Loíza.

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Through the stories of the *Mantenedores* we get a glimpse of what it means to be a *Mantenedor/a*, their responsibilities, how the processions are organized, and how the people of Loíza express their devotion to Santiago Apóstol. Finally, I include a discussion about *rescate de terrenos* (land rescues) within the context of the gentrification of Loíza and the impact upon the people's every day lives. As a coastal town, Loíza faces constant threat of indiscriminate tourism expansion. Gentrification displaces individuals and tears apart entire communities who risk losing their homes and their communally held cultural and religious rituals.

In summary, this thesis examines The Fiesta of Santiago Apóstol, *Espiritismo*, and *rescates de terreno* in Loíza, Puerto Rico, through the oral testimonies of a limited number of people. Applying ethnographies of the particular, these oral testimonies show *lo cotidiano*, the day-to-day movements of the people and their connection to the movements within the processions of the Fiesta of Santiago Apóstol, the healing rituals of *Espiritismo*, and the *rescates de terreno*. All of these movements come together *sobre la marcha* and are filled with the potential for transformation in the face of multiple oppressions.

Adviser: Michael Jackson

Margaret Marion Gower [PhD]

The Heart of Peace: Christine de Pizan and Christian Theology

This dissertation argues that, across her corpus, Christine de Pizan (c.1364–c.1431) advanced a notion of the common good that is both, and inseparably, political and theological. The project critically analyzes Christine's theological notions of human personhood, moral formation, prudential self-interest, and destructive preoccupation with personal good. It demonstrates that Christine responded to, retooled, and restructured authoritative texts and traditions in order to compose a constructive notion of the common good. It argues that Christine wrote in the interest of peace in the bodies politic within which she counted herself: France, the Church, and Christendom. It concludes that Christine wrote to form persons for peace.

Adviser: Amy Hollywood

Yonatan Miller [PhD]

Sacred Slaughter: The Discourse of Priestly Violence as Refracted through the Zeal of Phinehas in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish Literature

The story of Phinehas's zealous slaying of an Israelite man and the Midianite woman with whom he dared consort in public (Num 25) is perhaps the most notorious of a number of famed pentateuchal narratives that are marked with vigilante violence. Significantly, these narratives feature members of the Israelite priesthood or their eponymous ancestors. When reading these texts together, we uncover a consistent literary undercurrent which associates the priesthood with acts of interpersonal

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violence—a phenomenon which I refer to as the motif of priestly violence. This dissertation examines the origins and discursive functions of this motif, and, employing the violence of Phinehas as a test-case, explores its interpretive afterlife in biblical and Jewish literature.

I argue that the cultural memory of the violence of the sacrificial cult—be it the violence inherent in the slaughter of animals, or the possible Israelite prehistory of human sacrifice—is likely impelling the motif of priestly interpersonal violence. Despite these seemingly negative associations, the discourse of priestly violence functions as a critical legitimating component of the priestly imagination in the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, numerous biblical texts insinuate that it is violence, not the right lineage, that generates priestly identity. Exploring the *Nachleben* of Phinehas's famed violence, I demonstrate how ancient readers of the Hebrew Bible recognized and were sensitive to these facets of the motif.

My findings reveal that the legitimating function of Phinehas's priestly violence continues in the Jewish literary tradition. From the literature of the Second Temple period through the rabbinic canon and continuing through the medieval midrashim, Jewish authors employed Phinehas's violence in the service of their own discourses of group (de)legitimation. Priestly groups with questions about their pedigree, such as the Hasmonaeans, appropriated the discourse of Phinehas's violence as a bulwark against the contestation of their priestly identity. But we also find subversive uses of Phinehas's violence, particularly in Palestinian rabbinic texts, which question the integrity of Phinehas's priestly lineage as well as the propriety of his lethal zeal. This serves to delegitimize the priesthood and effectively quash any lingering priestly claims to ritual leadership.

Adviser: Shaye J.D. Cohen

Cian Joseph Power [PhD]

Many Peoples of Obscure Speech and Difficult Language: Attitudes towards Linguistic Diversity in the Hebrew Bible

The subject of this dissertation is the awareness of linguistic diversity in the Hebrew Bible—that is, the recognition evident in certain biblical texts that the world's languages differ from one another. Given the frequent role of language in conceptions of identity, the biblical authors' reflections on language are important to examine.

Of the biblical texts that explicitly address the subject of linguistic diversity, some are specific, as in references to particular languages (e.g., "Aramaic,"), while others refer to linguistic multiplicity generally, as in the Tower of Babel episode (Gen 11:1–9). Linguistic difference is also indicated implicitly, as when the speech of Laban in Gen 29–31 exhibits Aramaic-like features that emphasize his foreignness.

Building on previous studies of limited scope, my approach is to collect and analyse the evidence for awareness of linguistic diversity in the biblical books

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comprehensively. Drawing on concepts from sociolinguistics, including style-switching, code-switching, and language ideology, I categorize such evidence and explain its significance with respect to its literary and historical contexts. I thus contribute to wider debates on the sociolinguistics of ancient Hebrew, the development of the concept of the "holy language" in Judaism, and the topic of linguistic diversity in the broader ancient Near East.

I find that the notion of linguistic diversity is used in the Hebrew Bible to set up, and also to challenge, boundaries of various kinds, be they territorial, as in the Shibboleth test (Judg 12:5–6), ethnic, as with the Judaean-Ashdodite children (Neh 13:23–4), or theological, as in Jeremiah's Aramaic oracle against idols (Jer 10:11). My analysis shows that references to linguistic diversity are concentrated in texts of the Achaemenid Persian period and later, reflecting changes in the sociolinguistic circumstances of Judaeans. Yet in all periods Israel's and Judah's encounters with the empires Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia influenced attitudes towards linguistic diversity, whether this influence be manifested in fear (Jer 5:15) or ridicule (Esth 8:9). Overall, linguistic difference is not the primary means by which the biblical authors distinguish Israel from the nations, nor do they attribute a unique religious function to their own language.

Adviser: Peter Machinist

Amy Paulsen-Reed [ThD]

The Origins of the Apocalypse of Abraham

The *Apocalypse of Abraham,* a pseudepigraphon only extant in a fourteenth-century Old Church Slavonic manuscript, has not received much attention from scholars of Ancient Judaism, due in part to a lack of readily available information regarding the history and transmission of the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha. This dissertation examines the historical context of these works with the aim of assessing the probability that they contain ancient Jewish material. The rest of the dissertation is focused on the *Apocalypse of Abraham* specifically, discussing its date and provenance, original language, the probability that it comes from Essene circles, textual unity, and Christian interpolations. This includes treatments of the issue of free will, determinism, and predestination in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* as well as the methodological complexities inherent in trying to distinguish between early Jewish and Christian works. It also provides an in-depth comparison of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* with *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* and takes up the question of the social setting for these texts based on relevant precedents set by recent scholars of midrash who seek to probe the "socio-cultural and historical situatedness" of midrashic texts. This discussion includes a survey of parallels between the content of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and rabbinic literature to support the argument that a sharp distinction between apocalyptic ideas and what later became rabbinic tradition did not exist in the time between 70 and 135 CE. Overall, this dissertation argues

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that the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is an early Jewish document written during the decades following the destruction of the Second Temple. While seeking to warn its readers of the dangers of idolatry in light of the apocalyptic judgment still to come, it also provides sustained exegesis of Gen 15, which gives cohesion to the entire document.

Adviser: Jon Levenson

Klaus Yoder [ThD]

Adiaphora and the Apocalypse: Protestant Moral Rhetoric of Ritual at the End of History (1544–1560)

This dissertation argues that the Protestant Reformation did not degrade the importance of ritual, but instead reinvested it with a new form of power. By interpreting a theological controversy over the benefits and dangers of "human ceremonies," this project demonstrates how liturgical practices and implements made competing theologies materially present in moments of apocalyptic expectation. Following their defeat by Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire in 1547, German Protestants were supposed to assist in repairing the breakdown of the western Latin Church by accepting compromises in church ceremonies as "external things" that were immaterial to their core theological commitments. However, the mere suggestion that traditional Catholic elements could "make no difference" to Protestant worship touched off a firestorm of protest among a group of theologians and pastors passionately devoted to the memory of Luther. Far from being "indifferent things," or *adiaphora*, ritual materials and gestures were instead presented by these critics as the means for infecting pious souls with the "prostitution of idolatry" and inscribing the apocalyptic "mark of the Beast" (*Malzeichen des Thiers*) on their bodies.

I argue that the polemical rhetoric of the *adiaphora* controversy reflects a larger trend in early modern Protestant thought: the fusion of the concepts of pollution and idolatry. Idolatry remained associated with opinions and dispositions, however it was also transmitted through corrupted speech. Corrupted speech, in turn, polluted the material of idolatry. The objects and practices stained in this way materialized idolatry in Protestant liturgical settings. Idolatry, therefore, was not just located in false beliefs or statements, but was also embodied and transmitted through tainted practices and paraphernalia. The materialization of idolatry threatened bodies, souls, doctrines, and communities, and its dangers were brought into view through metaphors of filth, disease, and prostitution. These were employed in polemical rhetoric to mark the practices of allegedly hypocritical Protestants, making their moral and theological corruption legible to a broader Protestant public. By exploring the operations of this rhetoric, I offer an interpretation of Protestant liturgical purification that stands in contrast to dominant scholarly accounts of the Reformation as a moment of "anti-ritualism" and rationalization.

Adviser: David Lamberth

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Iosif Zhakevich [PhD]

Contraditctions and Coherence in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

The subject of this dissertation is the conception of congruity in the narrative of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Ps-J). A literary study of Ps-J reveals a two-part conundrum regarding congruity in the Targum. First, congruity seems to be disrupted with regard to the vertical dimension of the Targum, that is, between the Aramaic translation and its Hebrew *Vorlage*. This appearance of incongruity is considered in the analysis of five cases of translation that seem to state in the Aramaic the exact opposite of what the corresponding passages state in the Hebrew. Second, congruity seems to be disrupted with regard to the horizontal dimension of the Targum, that is, within the literary boundaries of the Ps-J corpus itself. This appearance of incongruity is considered below in the analysis of twenty-two cases of contradiction that seem to emerge in the narrative as a result of the targumist's interpretive translation and expansion of the text. On account of the apparent incongruities, two interrelated questions arise: As regards the vertical dimension, does Ps-J preserve continuity with its Hebrew *Vorlage*? As regards the horizontal dimension, does Ps-J itself render a coherent narrative?

Addressing this query, the present dissertation offers a contribution to the study of Ps-J, and to the study of ancient Jewish literature in general, by analyzing a broad variety of passages that within the surface structure seem to disrupt narratival congruity, and by demonstrating how these passages ultimately prove to be congruous once the underlying interpretive traditions associated with the narrative are taken into consideration. This dissertation hopes to show that as the targumist translated the biblical narrative, he both exegeted the Hebrew text of each passage and he relied on various interpretive traditions associated with the respective passage. Once the targumist's exegetical reading of the narrative is perceived, the congruity of the text that may otherwise seem fractured becomes evident. For inasmuch as the targumic additions are often terse, they are, in effect, often difficult to reconcile at first sight with the Hebrew *Vorlage* and with the broader context of the Ps-J narrative. Attention to the targumist's interpretive reading of the narrative and the traditions associated with the narrative, therefore, is necessary to discern the manner in which the apparently discrepant passages hang together.

The presence of apparent contradictions in Ps-J also implies two characteristics about the targumist himself. First, while the targumist exegeted the Hebrew text and sought to bring clarity to ambiguity in the biblical narrative, he nevertheless had high tolerance of and exercised patience toward literary tension in the surface structure of the Aramaic text, but, to be sure, tension that is ultimately brought to

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resolution in the light of the traditions associated with the text. Second, the targumist maintained certain readerly expectations of his audience: he expected his audience to be able to follow his interpretive approach to the text in order to ascertain the sense of the translated and expanded text and to discern the overall coherence and logical consistency of the narrative.

Reckoning with these aspects of Ps-J, this study shows how a coherent synchronic reading of a difficult narrative is possible and, indeed, necessary for a better understanding of the literary nature of an early Jewish text as well as for the understanding of the encounter a text such as Ps-J provided for its audience.

Adviser: Andrew Teeter

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