The issue of translating the Greek term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel has occasioned considerable concern from English-speaking scholars in recent years. This article examines some of the most prominent translation options taken by Johannine scholars. Using modern translation theory and the literary theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, this article argues that the recent history of the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is linked to the ideological concern of scholars either to demonstrate or to refute the presence of anti-Judaism in the Gospel. Demonstrating that the rhetoric of the Gospel is monologic in the Bakhtinian sense, this article questions the ability of some “dynamic equivalence” translation options to account for the ways in which the Gospel rhetoric shapes its largely negative portrayal of the Jews in the narrative.

The problem of anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel needs little introduction. It is of central, not peripheral, concern because it intersects with and gives shape to so much of the narrative and theology of the Gospel. Two examples are the characterization of Jesus and the exclusivist Christology that may be derived from...
that (see 1:17–18; 8:58; 14:6) and the Gospel’s infamous dualistic picture that paints two clear-cut options for Jesus’ interlocutors—the light-filled path of belief and life in Jesus’ name (1:12; 3:18a, 19, 21, 36a; 5:24; 8:12; 11:25; 12:35–36, 12:46) or the path of rejection of Jesus and his claims, a path that is shrouded in darkness and that ends in death and judgment (1:10; 3:18b, 20, 36b; 12:48). In all of this, a group of characters called οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι plays a key role: they are most often those characters who refuse to believe in Jesus and who seek his death (5:18; 7:1, 20; 8:37, 40; 11:53; 18:28–32; 19:7, 12).2 A dichotomy is drawn between them and Jesus: the Jews are said to have the “devil” as their “father” and to act as the devil acts (8:44), whereas Jesus does the work of God his “Father,” and thus his origins are in God (6:46; 7:29; 8:42; cf. 10.34).3

The depiction of the Jews has not only geographical (3:22, 25; 7:1) and religious (5:1; 7:11; 10:22) connotations but political, national, and ethnic connotations as well (4:9; 11:48; 18:35), a broad associative range that makes the task of interpretation—and translation—difficult. Understandably, the vast literature on Johannine anti-Judaism has focused largely on discovering the historical referent of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι before decisions are made about how best to translate the term into the vernacular.4 Historical investigation is thus in the service of a presumably adequate translation of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. As such, historical-critical inquiry is often seen by scholars as prior to the task of translation, even when diametrically opposing theories of translation are advocated.

In this article I wish to focus on the issue of translating from the koinē Greek the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John. Acknowledging the commonplace “all translation is interpretation,” I argue that the recent history of the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is linked to the ideological concern of scholars either to demonstrate or to refute the presence of anti-Judaism in the Gospel. While previous studies have argued for particular translations of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, I move, rather, in the direction of critical engagement with these studies, exploring the assumptions supporting the

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2There is some nuance, however. Positive uses of the term occur (4:9, 22; cf. 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 8:31; 9:2; 11:8; 12:11) as do “neutral” uses (2:6, 13; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55; 19:40, 42).


4See the early study by A. Hilgenfeld, “Der Antijudaismus des Johannesevangeliums,” ZWT 36 (1893): 507–17. For the most extensive coverage of the field to date see the collection of essays in Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel: Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, January 2000 (ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanmeule; Jewish and Christian Heritage Series 1; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2001); and the ancillary volume, Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel (see n. 1 above).
preference for one translation option over another, before offering my own suggestions for translation.

In the first part of this article, I review the most common options taken when translating οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel. These are options derived (a) from the theory of “dynamic equivalence” (DE) and (b) from the theory of “formal correspondence” (FC). In the second part of the article, I bring the work of literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin to bear on a recent discussion of the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in a paper written by Stephen Motyer in 2008. In this, I argue against Motyer’s notion that Jesus’ discourse with the Jews in the Gospel is essentially embracive in its socio-cultural character and “dialogic” in its literary voice. In conclusion I contend that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John’s Gospel possibly resists the more conciliatory translation options because of the connotative force of the Gospel’s dualistic rhetoric, which may indeed frustrate and obscure our better attempts at discovering the historical referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

I. Explaining the Problem

There is a wealth of literature on the problem of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John’s Gospel and other early Christian literature. The problem that the term presents is more significant than the problem presented by other polemical constructions in the NT. Clearly, οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι (“the Romans,” John 11:48) cast a threatening pall over much of the NT and are implicitly and subversively criticized by the NT writers; also οἱ ἑθνικοί (“the Gentiles”) occasionally receive dismissive mention (Matt 5:47; 6:7; Gal 2:14–15; cf. τὰ ἔθνη (Matt 6:32; 20:19 and passim; 2 Cor 11:26), but much more so they are characterized positively as they enter the growing church (Acts 13:48; 15:3; 7; 21:19; etc.; Rom 9:21, 30; 11:12–13; 15:9; Gal 1:16; 2:8; 3:8; Eph 3:6; 2 Tim 4:17).

These examples have not raised a critical eyebrow in terms of the problematic of translation; οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is different for three reasons. The fact that there exists

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today a real and large group of people who are identified—both ethnically and religiously—as the Jews creates the first of these reasons, allowing for an easy association between the textual Jews of John and the real Jews of today. The second reason relates to the post-Shoah context in which we live, and the acute attunement to this reality in the Western consciousness and in emergent Jewish-Christian relations after the Second World War. The third reason is hermeneutical: with the recognition of a literary text’s “surplus of meaning” came the concomitant acknowledgment that the Gospel text “now functions,” in the words of Stephen Motyer, as a “literary given in a concrete human situation in which readers respond to what they encounter.” The reader of a text is now accorded an unprecedented significance in meaning making. What is more, all of this blends with a subtle angst discernible in the scholarship, taking its rise from the fact that, for scholars of a Christian commitment for whom the NT is normative for faith, something must be done to attenuate the brunt effect of reading (and hearing) the Jews, particularly when associated with a great amount of negativity and sharp polemic. The question of the ethical appropriateness of translating οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews thus emerges as a matter of concern in a way that translating οἱ Ῥωμαίοι as “the Romans,” for example, does not.

Only rarely is the imputed sacredness of the NT used by scholars as “trump card” against all ethical ambiguity in the text. Yet there is a phenomenon of sorts that has been described as “exculpating” the NT text from any negative charges, especially that of anti-Judaism. Whether expressed or implicit, this “exculpation” of the text must be viewed as a defensive measure, arising from a commitment to protect the NT, not only on the grounds of the scholar’s religious adherence but, more commonly, on historical grounds. Scholarship that yields to the dangerous allure of anachronism usually ignites the ire of hard-nosed historians, and several Johannine scholars have argued that the term “anti-Judaism” is utterly anachronis-
tic when describing the Gospel. These debates also enter into the discussion of how to translate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John's Gospel. In fact, it is reasonable to claim, as I shall demonstrate, that they undergird translation theories and translation choices advanced by scholars of John's Gospel.

**Dynamic Equivalence**

The translation theory of dynamic equivalence and its application to the Bible was established by Eugene A. Nida and has been further refined over the years to become the theory of “functional equivalence.” A basic tenet of DE translation is that “meaning has priority over form when the meaning will not be understood” if a purely linguistic transfer is adopted. If particular cultural contingencies render the text unintelligible for the modern reader, DE translations aim, in practice, to achieve a “necessary grade of differentiation” between the meaning and form of the difficult phrase. Too much explanation inserted into the translation produces

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13 See Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating, with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964); and Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*, in which the theory of dynamic equivalence was developed. See also Eugene A. Nida and Jan de Waard, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Nelson, 1986). The refinements made to the original theory of dynamic equivalence are relatively minor, and scholars still use the term “dynamic equivalence.” Therefore I refer to “dynamic equivalence” rather than “functional equivalence” in this article. Recently, see *Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda; McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), which contains no essays on the Gospel of John but usefully comments on dynamic and formal equivalence models and how they might be nuanced. In this collection, see esp. Stanley E. Porter, “Assessing Translation Theory: Beyond Literal and Dynamic Equivalence,” 117–45. The volume also devotes substantial attention to the Byzantine priority/eclectic method impasse in text criticism and translation.


15 Ibid., 504. See also Mary Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1988). For other, more recent approaches to translation theory,
“overdifferentiation” and makes the text read rather paraphastically, while a too-literal rendering of the words sometimes produces “underdifferentiation.” The grade of differentiation must therefore be enough to make the text intelligible without importing new or other connotations through excessive “explanation.” DE seeks to “reproduce among the receptor languages the response which the text evoked in its first voice.” In short, DE finds an equivalent term or word in the vernacular that functions dynamically to produce the sort of effect that the original term or words had on its first audience.

When we turn to the issue of a DE translation of John’s use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι into English, we meet with a variety of possibilities. Although all major English New Testaments translate John’s οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews (JB, NJB, RSV, NRSV, GNB, KJV, NKJV, CEB [Common English Bible]), several Johannine scholars contend that a DE translation should be preferred. The originating historical situation behind the Gospel’s composition plays a critical role here, as it determines what kind of meaning we impute to the group referred to as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and, therefore, how we find an equivalent term in English. Some of the most common suggestions are:

- The historical referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is “the authorities.” This translation is often chosen to prevent anti-Semitic interpretations of the Gospel. The argument here is that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are often positioned in Jerusalem, affiliated with the temple, and are able to take authoritative action against Jesus and the disciples. The weaknesses in the argument are apparent in the shifting sense of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι: sometimes they emerge in Judea but also in Capernaum in Galilee (cf. 6:41, 52) and are merged with the festival crowd (cf. ch. 7).

- Other, less common suggestions for the historical referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι include οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as standing in the tradition of “the Yahudim” of exilic times; οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as Torah/temple loyalists; and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as fellow Jews who are vilified precisely because they and the Fourth Evangelist are “family,” and yet οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι do not believe in Jesus.

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16 Omanson, “Reconsidered,” 504.
17 Motyer, “Bridging the Gap,” 152.
A Recent Approach to Dynamic Equivalence: Stephen Motyer

After surveying the literature on the translation history of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and the Fourth Gospel, Motyer states that “dynamic equivalence is surely the only theory of translation by which the historical particularity of the text can be fully respected.” Eschewing the objection that DE takes too much freedom with the original Greek or that DE espouses fidelity to the reader’s sensibilities at the expense of fidelity to the text, Motyer claims that the ethical imperative for DE translations is to preserve the “message” of the original text (p. 148). Like proponents of formal correspondence theory, Motyer wants to let the text of the Gospel speak in its own voice, but he insists that this does not mean letting the text speak in its own words (p. 148). Motyer suggests that we start with the Gospel’s “first voice,” that is, the historical situation in which the members of the Johannine community found themselves vis-à-vis the parent synagogue. Motyer goes on to insist that “historically, we are not bound to decide that there is an ineradicable hostility toward Jews and Judaism in the Fourth Gospel” (p. 148).

Cutting through an accretion of historical reconstructions and calling into question the dominant hypothesis of synagogue expulsion and its attendant hermeneutical premise of a “two-level drama,” Motyer proposes a historical construct with “arguably … more historical plausibility” than the one formulated by J. Louis Martyn, although he does note that constructs other than his own are “available” (pp. 148–49). Because the Gospel engages with issues so characteristically “Jewish”—temple, festivals, revelation, restoration, law—Motyer claims that it should be understood not as a kind of literary rebuff of Jews and Judaism but, to the contrary, as an appeal to Jews that spoke “powerfully to the needs of Jews in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple” (p. 149). The variety of “Judaisms” obtaining in antiquity—now a commonplace in the literature—assists Motyer in his thesis, for if the Gospel is designed to speak to the needs of Jews at a time of crisis, the Gospel could have spoken to the needs of many types of Jews, even Samaritans and Diaspora Jews (p. 149). For Motyer, the Gospel presents Jesus as the answer to the loss of the presence of God in the temple. Accordingly, for Motyer, a “more nuanced reading” of the Jews in John now results: “the Jews” of the Gospel who were supposed to have been instrumental in the synagogue expulsion of believers in Jesus “could have been Jews of any type” or even “a mixed type” (p. 150).

Why does this matter? Because, as Motyer correctly observes, the identity of the Jews shifts in the course of the Gospel of John. Sometimes they are identified

Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John [Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009], 39); before him the view was put forward by Karl Bornhäsiser, Das Johannesevangelium: Eine Missionschrift für Israel (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928). The family-feud model has many proponents: see, e.g., Dunn, “Question of Anti-Semitism,” 197.

20 Motyer, “Bridging the Gap,” 147. In this section, page references to Motyer’s article are given in parentheses in the text.

with the leaders (9:22; 18:14) but also separate from them (7:32–35; 12:9–11), linked with the Pharisees (1:19, 24; 3:1; 9:13–18) but also distinguished from them (11:45–46). They are found in Judea (7:11; 11:7–8) but also in Galilee (6:41, 52); they are integrated into the crowd (6:41; 12:19) but also stand apart from the crowd (7:1, 20) (p. 150). While conceding that in places οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι takes on broader ethnic and religious connotations (4:9; 5:1; 18:20), Motyer argues that the term has a more “precise usage” where “the Jews” are distinguished from other Jews; in these places οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι take on particular characteristics: they, paraphrasing Motyer, are devoted to Torah and the temple and to notions of purity and are mostly associated with Judea (p. 150). Motyer calls these Jews (perhaps anachronistically) “ultra-observant Jews” and claims that they are “at the heart of the theological interest in the Fourth Gospel” (p. 150). These Jews “felt most keenly the loss of the Temple” and “formed the heart of the reconstruction under Johanan ben Zakkai” and were addressed by the Gospel (p. 150).

When the historical situation affecting the Johannine community in the 90s c.e. is constructed in this way, Motyer claims, the Gospel’s apparent anti-Jewish polemic need no longer be read as “hostile barbs” directed against Jews qua Jews and as a sort of “distant other,” but rather as an “appeal, because they present a dialogue in which the arguments push to and fro and readers are drawn to reassess the case for themselves” (p. 151). Nodding to the work of Andrew T. Lincoln, which examined the rhetoric of the Gospel for how it creates readers as “jurors” in a “trial,” Motyer suggests that the Gospel invited Christian and non-Christian Jews to assess whether Jesus was really a “blasphemer” (as the Jews accuse him of being) or if he was an innocent man wrongly executed (as the Gospel presents him) (p. 151). This is one of Motyer’s strongest insights and accords with two interpretations of the Gospel advanced by different scholars. Recently, Kasper Bro Larsen used A. J. Greimas’s theory of the cognitive dimension of narrative to argue that the Gospel invites readerly judgment on the “veridictory” (truth) status of actants/characters, particularly of Jesus: is God the real sender of Jesus, or is Jesus compelled by a demon? Adele Reinhartz articulated what is involved in a “compliant” and a “resistant” reading of the Gospel and applied this to the Gospel’s presentation of the Jews.

Moter states his intention clearly. In the Fourth Gospel he wants to “discover a non-offensive text,” and his aforementioned reconstruction supposedly “undermines the historical roots of that offense” (p. 151). From there, Motyer determines that the Gospel’s “first voice” was not meant to be “anti-Jewish,” and so he creates a DE translation solution that reproduces that intention. To simply translate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as “the Jews” would be, in Motyer’s words, “an error” because in our contemporary context it would be understood as a referent to “the Jewish people in

24 Reinhartz, Befriending.
that location” (p. 152). Instead of a generalizing translation, the *particularity* that was “clear to the original receptors” must be conveyed in translation (p. 152).25

Based on the idea that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι referred to a distinct set of Jews who were profoundly devoted to Torah and temple, Motyer offers four translation examples from the Gospel. For the sake of brevity I quote only two of these, with Motyer’s expansions on the original Greek text in italics:

In the same volume in which Motyer’s essay was published, Judith Lieu offered a detailed response to the points Motyer raised.26 I agree with much of Lieu’s incisive criticism of Motyer’s argument, and I also share her appreciation of Motyer’s deep concern over the trouble that the Gospel can cause for readers, either Jewish or Christian, but in this article I present my own points of difference from Motyer.

I take as my starting point Motyer’s insistence on recovering the Gospel’s “first voice.” Motyer expresses his desire to “give a hearing to the Gospel’s first voice amidst

| Motyer’s translation: “For this reason, *these Jews, passionate about legal observance*, sought all the more to kill him.” |

| NA27 John 9:22: ταῦτα εἶπαν οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἐφοβοῦντο τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· ἢ ἡ γὰρ συνετέθειντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα ἔνα τις αὐτὸν ὀμολογήσῃ Ἰησοῦν, ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται. |
| Motyer’s translation: “His parents said this because they were afraid of the more hardline Jews in the synagogue leadership. For *these Jews* had determined that anyone who confessed Jesus as Christ should be expelled from the synagogue.” |

25 It should be stated that Motyer’s claims and arguments about the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in this essay only preface his larger concerns with the Gospel’s exclusivist Christology (see John 14:6) and how this relates to the issue of the Gospel’s “first voice.” The disciples, not only the Jews, are “excluded” from “insight and shared glory”; they too, like the Jews, will seek Jesus but cannot go where he goes (cf. 13:33; see p. 157). But I think that it is too much to say that this is a “relegation of the disciples to the position of the Jews” (p. 157). The disciples are not characterized by the same intent to kill Jesus as are the Jews (see 5:18; 7:1, 11; etc.). Judas betrays Jesus, to be sure, but his association with the devil (13:21–31; cf. 8:44) and his name Ἰούδας, so close to Ἰουδαῖος, positions only him (not all the disciples) with the Jews. Motyer also devotes four pages (pp. 164–67) to Miroslav Volf’s philosophy (see Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1996], 233–73) in order to read the vitriol against the Jews in the context of the Gospel’s wider concern for truth, and for “truthfulness of character” that remains open to the other (p. 166, emphasis in original). In the final analysis, Motyer returns to the issue of translation (p. 167).

the clamor of readerly reactions” (p. 145). Motyer’s confidence in his ability to excavate that first voice is one concern; but the more disturbing part of his statement is the latter half, wherein he characterizes other interpretations that do not accord with his own as mere clamorous reactions. Toward the end of his essay he returns to the self-consciously “Jewish” interpretation of the Gospel of John developed by Reinhartz, which in his own words found the Gospel text “deeply offensive because it promotes violence and hatred toward Jews today” (p. 166). Rather than accord Reinhartz’s work the status of a “reading” (a word he sets off with quotation marks in his essay in her regard), he calls it, once again, a “reaction,” and one that is moreover, “violent” toward the text of the Gospel. To quote Motyer directly, Reinhartz’s interpretation “does not evince the other-centeredness that would allow the Fourth Gospel to speak in its own voice. Concern for one ‘other’—the contemporary Jewish reader—is allowed to obliterate concern for a different ‘other’—the text itself” (pp. 166–67). Much can be said in response to this strong language, not the least of which is the fact that Motyer overlooks Reinhartz’s more nuanced and detailed account of her initial reaction to John’s Gospel, and the compliant, resistant, sympathetic, and engaged readings of the Gospel that she offers. But the two questions I have at this point are (1) whether Motyer has in fact succeeded in getting back to the Gospel’s “first voice,” and (2) whether the Gospel really does evince “other-centered dialogue” in the way that Motyer proposes. The answers will assist an evaluation of how useful DE translations are for interpreting οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John, and also how much “concern for the contemporary Jewish reader” must factor into our reading of this Gospel.

The First Voice

Reading a narrative such as the Gospel of John is difficult. The story of Jesus is told from the point of view of an omniscient narrator, one who “knows” that Jesus preexisted with God in the beginning (1:1–2) and one who sees Jesus as the dynamic principle (the Word) through which the world was created (1:3). The Christology is highly developed (see 5:18; 6:35; 8:24, 58; 10:30), but there are “eyewitness” reports to the events interspersed in the story (19:35; 21:24–25). Curious anachronisms emerge in the ἀποσυνάγωγος passages (9:22; 12:42; 16:2), which suggest that a story of a later date (ca. 90s c.e.) has been transposed onto the story of Jesus in and around 20–30 c.e. The narrative assumes a thorough knowledge of the festival celebrations of Judaism before the temple’s destruction but also explains Hebraisms as if addressing a Gentile audience (1:38, 41, 42; 19:18). This narrative complexity is what

28 Reinhartz, Befriending.
29 This witness is tied in with questions of authorship. See Richard Bauckham, “The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author,” in idem, The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History and Theology in the Gospel of John (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), esp. 78–82.
inspired Martyn to articulate a “two-level” reading of the Gospel, a reading that today still inspires consensus.30

Motyer rejects Martyn’s two-level reading in favor of his own historical reconstruction, which seeks to get back to the Gospel’s “first voice.” But neither Motyer’s historical theory nor his translation choices that flow from it convincingly give that voice a hearing. Motyer’s second translation choice is illustrative (John 9:22). Motyer refers to οἱ Ἰουδαίοι as “the more hardline Jews in the synagogue leadership” who expel Christians from the synagogue. The focus on a “hardline” stance and on a convocation of established synagogue leadership sounds more like the 90s C.E. than 20–30 C.E.31 Likewise, Motyer’s construction of οἱ Ἰουδαίοι as those who “felt most keenly the loss of the Temple” and as those who galvanized under the leadership of Yochanan ben Zakkaï, infers a great deal that makes οἱ Ἰουδαίοι seem too removed from the time of Jesus in the 20s–30s C.E. Talmudic legend depicts ben Zakkaï as opposing the Sadducees’ views of Torah in defense of Pharisaic principles (b. Menahē. 65a; b. B. Bat. 115b; m. Yad. 4:6). After establishing the rabbinic school at Yavneh, ben Zakkaï and his disciples, like other rabbis, famously reflected on how to come close to God in the absence of the temple, deciding that prayer (‘Abot R. Nat. 4–6) and gemilut chasadim (cf. Pirqe Avot 1:4) and study of Torah should replace animal sacrifice as a means to God. If this group of Jews, as Motyer suggests, are denoted by the Fourth Gospel’s οἱ Ἰουδαίοι and were thus either Pharisaic in orientation (or, later, tannaitic), then we would expect not only that John’s Gospel would refer to them more uniformly as οἱ Ἰουδαίοι, but we would also wonder about the passionate zeal for the temple and for the festivals imputed to them by Motyer, particularly given ben Zakkaï’s innovations around prayer and gemilut chasadim.

But the more pertinent issue is that none of this takes us back to the Gospel’s “first voice” or answers the question as to why Jesus was opposed by Jews in his lifetime. Despite his dislike for Martyn’s two-level reading, Motyer is forced to follow the logic of that reading because of the way the Gospel transposes the “first voice,” that is, the story of Jesus and the Jews, onto conflicts of a later period. To be sure, Motyer refers to the Gospel’s “first voice” as the historical situation originating its composition. Motyer places this situation roughly after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E., since he considers the Gospel to be designed to speak to the needs


31 A point also made by Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 173.
of a very broad range of Jews as a means of consoling them and appealing to them in light of the temple's destruction. But if this “voice” is to have a kind of “ethical priority” in the task of translation, then it must be persuasive. Motyer's own qualifications around his reconstruction (“arguably … more historical plausibility”) hint at the difficulty he experiences here. Moreover, the idea that the Gospel is designed to appeal to such a broad range of Jews who can at the same time be specifically enumerated is difficult to accept.

But perhaps most tellingly, these problems are reflected in Motyer's DE translations of John 5:18 and 9:22. There can be no doubt that these translations do not achieve a “necessary grade of differentiation”—in fact they are very much over-differentiated. First, both examples translate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as though the Greek text read οὗτοι Ἰουδαῖοι (“these Jews”), a semantic restriction that is not actually present. Even if at times in the broader narrative context a subset of Jews seems to be implied in the denotation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, as Motyer has shown, to always read a referential particularity into the text when it is not there linguistically takes a significant and unwarranted liberty with the Greek. Second, Motyer is up-front about wishing to “capture the flavor” of John's characterization of the Jews without being disparaging. Therefore, Motyer's optimal choice is to insert explanatory clauses in his translations, such as “passionate about legal observance” and “more hardline.” But, despite Motyer’s goodwill (with which I duly credit him), these clauses create new problems of surplus connotation. It is difficult to see how words such as “observance,” “hardline,” and “legal”—not to mention Motyer’s previous adjective, “ultra-observant”—cannot fail to conjure up images of the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem and of the Charedim, who are often a controversial presence in the media. The task of arriving, then, at the Gospel’s “first voice” through DE translations such as these, is weakened by the inescapable event of reading other realities into the text in order to explicate more forcefully what we think that first voice might have been.

**Other-centered Dialogue?**

I want to question Motyer’s claim that the Gospel is in fact “hospitable to the [Jewish] Other” (p. 167). Consistent with his historical thesis that the Gospel presents an “appeal” to Jewish neighbors in the wake of the temple's destruction, Motyer states that the Gospel “admits the voice of the Other”: the Word made flesh does not “strike all other words dumb but seeks to win their assent through other-centered dialogue” (p. 167). As a case in point, Motyer briefly examines John 8:31–59, a text notorious for its allegedly anti-Jewish character. Yet Motyer claims that this text is crafted as a dialogue—and, in the most literal respect, he is right. This text is not merely a discursive soliloquy of Jesus but represents a two-party contestation between Jesus and the Jews over who constitutes the true child of Abraham and the true child of God. As such, there is some degree of “to-ing and fro-ing” in the text,
which Motyer interprets as a reflection of the Gospel’s Sitz im Leben, that is, to make Jewish readers think about whether to believe the claims made for Jesus by the Johannine Christians (pp. 167–68).

To use the word “dialogue” is to invoke the name of Russian literary and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Motyer does not use Bakhtin’s name or his concept of dialogism in his essay. But Motyer does hold the view that John’s presentation of Jesus’ dispute with the Jews is cast as an “appeal,” something open-ended, not hostile and closed off. Without saying that Motyer argues that John is dialogic in the Bakhtinian sense, I nevertheless consider that applying Bakhtin’s theories to the problem of the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John’s Gospel—using Motyer’s thoughts of John’s Gospel as an appeal—is as useful as it is important.

The word “dialogic” is used by Bakhtin as a technical term to describe the verbal interaction between two or more characters (or “voices”) in a text. When an authorial voice brings characters together and allows their disparate perspectives to stand side by side in a representation of active discussion, “dialogism” occurs as an event. The authorial voice in the narrative may also interact with the character’s voices in the text, but it does so in a way that allows the truth of those voices to speak. Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism describes the “eventness” of a text—what happens in the narrative—but another term is used by Bakhtin to describe the nature of a text in which dialogism occurs. This term is “polyphony.” While in practice Bakhtin’s distinction between polyphony and dialogism is a fine one, and though at times he uses the terms interchangeably, technically polyphony describes works that incorporate multiple consciousnesses that nevertheless remain autonomous and equally valid. In other words, polyphonic narratives betray no moral hierarchy of voices, with lesser voices depending on higher voices for their realization. Rather, the independence—or “unmergedness”—of the voices is what allows the event of dialogism to occur. In like manner, the author’s relationship with the narrative characters is “unmerged.” In a polyphonic work, therefore, the authorial perspective exerts no ideological control over other views in the narrative to privilege them or to marginalize them.

The antonym of “polyphony” in Bakhtinian theory is “homophony,” but, strangely, this term does not receive much mention in Bakhtin’s writings. The

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35 Bakhtin, Problems, 21.
36 For the concept of unmergedness, see Bakhtin, Problems, 6. Voices may still agree in a polyphonic novel. There is nothing to suggest that autonomous voices must always differ; the polyphonic novel presents a plurality of unmerged voices.
37 Cf. Bakhtin, Problems, 64.
concept that functions conversely to polyphony and dialogism in Bakhtin’s thought is monologism. Unlike the polyphonic novel, the monologic novel merges the authorial perspective with the voices of other narrative characters. The effect of this is to create a story-world in which the voices of some characters, namely, those that accord with the ideological perspective of the author, are privileged over others. If the protagonist, for example, is made to espouse the dominant voice in the story then the less privileged characters sometimes end up functioning as ficelles, with little narrative subjectivity or character development. Divergent views may indeed be present in a monologic text and scenes of dispute may also occur in monologic narratives, but this does not ipso facto render them polyphonic. Rather, if some characters contest the dominant ideology of the text by means of a narrative dispute with a favored protagonist, the authorial voice may intercede to support the views of the protagonist and to sideline the views of the (necessary) antagonists. The view of the monologic narrator is usually not subtle. It is often expressed as the only valid viewpoint that other characters and even readers should adopt as their own.

39Bakhtin’s concept of authorship is substantially different from those developed in narratology and formalist poetics (e.g., Bakhtin does not use the concept of an “implied author”; neither does he consider the text and its structures as the sole locus of meaning). For Bakhtin, the “author” is a distinct human personality, but who brings his/her own cultural conditions, ideologies, and so on. These conditions also “author” a work. Bakhtin’s philosophy of the author is complex and stands in the background of his exposition of dialogic theory. Each individual is responsible for “authoring” his or her own self (Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990]; Barbara Green, Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship [SemeiaSt; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000], 33). With the constitution of the “self” comes the possibility of being an “I-for-the-other” and to find a limit against which one’s own self-authoring is understood (Green, 34). One’s self is fully understood when one enters into the consciousness of another and engages with the other. Authoring (of self and other) is not a one-time event but continues throughout life. When authoring a work of art, one can only bring to art what one knows in life. For dialogism to be present in art, it must be present in the author in the sense of engagement with the other. And what the author projects of himself in a polyphonic novel is not so much a plot as an “idea or question for conversation” (Green, 37), effectively surrendering totalizing control of the question. A comprehensive reading of Bakhtin’s philosophical contribution can be found in Graham Pechey, Mikhail Bakhtin: The Word in the World (Critics of the Twentieth Century; London: Routledge, 2007).


absolute truth, whereas dialogic rhetoric allows divergent truths to stand without
authorial judgement.43

In a recent work analyzing the rhetorical dimensions of the Talmud, Daniel
Boyarin notices a curious phenomenon. The Babylonian Talmud (known colloqui-
ally as “the Bavli”) appears “vauntedly dialogical” in content, abounding with reams
of open-ended, “roundtable” debates between the sages that lead the modern reader
to think that the text operates out of a kind of precursor to pluralism.44 But, accord-
ing to Boyarin, the “plethora of voices” represented in the Babylonian Talmud does
not mean that it constitutes what Bakhtin would call a dialogic text.45 In fact, there
is a monologism disguised in the represented dialogue of the Babylonian Talmud:
its prose is no doubt dialogic in that it is conversational (or, in fact, disputational)
in form, but with respect to its “dialectic, the Bavli is anything but dialogical.”46
Boyarin convincingly demonstrates that the dialectic developed by the *stamma*
produces a monologic overlay on the text as a function of its protreptic genre (i.e.,
as an extended admonition for the only “valid” way of life, that of *beit haMidrash*).47
This stammaitic monologism equates to a sort of unifying consciousness—as much
as a chaotic text like the Babylonian Talmud can be said to be unified—that in the
end subordinates all other voices to itself as “accidental and unnecessary.”48

Boyarin’s results obtain, *mutatis mutandis*, for the Gospel of John.49 There can
be no doubt that John’s Gospel has an overriding agenda: it is concerned that its
readers may “have life in Jesus’ name” as a result of believing him to be “the Christ”
and the “Son of God” (20:31). What is more, the authorial voice of the Gospel
presents itself as the most reliable of narrative voices because it is truly omniscient,
knowing even the divine origins of Jesus as pre-incarnate Word and creative force

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45 Ibid., 141.
46 Ibid. (emphasis original).
47 Ibid., 144.
48 Ibid. The *stammaim* are understood by a number of scholars to be the final redactors of
the Talmud, postdating the Amoraim at around 550–750 C.E. and providing an anonymous,
unifying commentary in the Gemara. See David Weiss Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara: The
to the Babylonian rabbinic academy that arose in the post-Amoraic era; see Rubenstein, “The
49 The Gospel is not, of course, protreptic in genre, but is most likely modeled on ancient
in the universe (1:1–18).\(^50\) This authorial perspective is utterly “merged” with the voice of Jesus in the text, such that at times Jesus almost constitutes a mouthpiece for the implied author (cf. 1:4–5 and 8:12; 3:35 and 17:1–2; 1:1 and 17:3).\(^51\) Instead of offering a polyphonic narrative where disparate voices have equal standing, Jesus’ voice reigns supreme and other characters who come some way to understanding his words or his person are also favored by the narrator (see 13:23). It goes without saying that characters who resist or reject Jesus are “othered” by the same monologic rhetoric. The persistent cosmological and theological dualism of the narrative undermines any serious attempt to think of it as polyphonic in nature: two choices are offered the reader (and the characters)—life and light, or death and judgment (3:17–21; 8:12; 12:35). Frequently, belief in Jesus is presented as the only valid way to God, and there is an undercurrent of exclusivism that cannot be denied (6:53; 10:10; 14:6; 15:1–2).

Yet, as Motyer correctly notes, John 8:31–59 depicts a dialogue between Jesus and the Jews over their paternity and status with God. This dispute places two perspectives side by side; but one is privileged, the other marginalized. The dispute ends not with the neutral amicability we might expect with a dialogic event but with a triumphant Jesus claiming preexistence and trumping the objections of the Jews (8:58). Their violent reaction to his words—clearly judged in a negative light by the monologic perspective of the text (cf. 15:24–25)—does not succeed against Jesus because, like the all-subsuming authorial voice, is in total control and evades his would-be captors until his designated “hour” (cf. 7:30; 8:20; 10:39; 12:23). Dialogue there may be in plenty in the Gospel, and in John 8:31–59 in particular, but because the conversational exchanges are part of “a single unitary language” they are not truly diverse, even if the speech is argumentative.\(^52\) The complaints of the Jews are sidelined as illegitimate (8:14, 19, 43, 45, 46, 55) or proven to be erroneous (5:45–46; 8:26; 10:26; 15:25). A resistant reading of the Gospel may indeed reclaim their legitimacy, but it does not alter the fact that the rhetoric of the text is designed with a monologic narratorial voice.

So, is the Fourth Gospel’s voice “hospitable to the [Jewish] other,” as Motyer claims? Does the Word made flesh, as Motyer expresses it, “strike all other words dumb”? Based on the theories of Bakhtin presented above, I would answer no to the first of these questions and yes to the second. In a 1997 article Motyer took issue

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with scholarship that claimed that the Gospel of John was anti-Jewish, stating, “the ‘you’ of [John] 20.31 rise up together and condemn the generation of readers who have violated their rights—for instance, by reading a violent anti-Judaism in John.”53 His advice to such readers is to “get yourself out of the way” in respect for this original “you,” the intended Gospel community.54 But Motyer’s moral argument may be just as much “in the way” of appreciating how the text exceeds its original authorial “signature” in the course of its interpreted history.55 This is not to say that the historical identity of the “you” in 20:31 must always be disregarded in favor of reader-response criticism that postulates other addressees in the process of interpretation. Rather, it is to emphasize that the particulars of this voice cannot be adequately reconstructed on the basis of extrinsic historical evidence but must, to some extent, be reconstructed from evidence internal to the text, and this inevitably yields varying results.56 Motyer’s attempt to argue for the “rights” of the “you” in 20:31 ends up reading like a thinly disguised apology for the “copyright” ostensibly held by modern Christian audiences on the NT—not an authorial copyright but an “ownership” right that permits access to proper interpretation due to the faith of a believing community. The Gospel’s monologic rhetoric creates the “you” of 20:31 and invites new believers of later generations to step into the shoes of that implied audience. To accept this invitation fully on the Gospel’s terms, readers must comply with a dualistic and monologic rhetoric that promotes the self-understanding of believers as supremely in accord with the divine will—to promote the “rights” of believers, as it were.57 For these reasons, Motyer’s reconstructed “first voice” cannot be taken as the “last word” on ὁΙουδαῖοι in John.

53 Motyer, “Method in Fourth Gospel Studies: A Way out of the Impasse?” JSNT 66 (1997): 44. While I think that Motyer’s language of “rights” is too strong here and, drawn from the British Copyright Law of 1995, is quite odd, his simple point is valid: texts express a “principle of prior ownership”—the author lays a “signature” on the work that we cannot disrespect or disregard (p. 41). Yet the concept of the Gospel’s “first ownership” is as contentious as its “first voice.” See the voluminous discussion around The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

54 Motyer, “Method in Fourth Gospel Studies,” 44.

55 See David Paul Parris, Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics (Princeton Theological Monograph Series 107; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009).

56 See, e.g., Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 89: “The presumed concreteness and accessibility of the historical milieu [of a text] are themselves products of the fictive capability of the historians who have studied these contexts.”

57 Motyer’s understanding of discourse as legal property resembles Michel Foucault’s idea of the “name” of the author as the “subjecting” function that regulates jurisdiction over subsequent cultural interpretation. Quite pointedly, for Foucault, all discourse is “anonymous” in the sense that it is “a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined” (Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge [London: Tavistock, 1972], 55, 122). The name of the author alone performs a cultural function but does not speak of a particular subjectivity. See the discussion in Annabel Patterson, “Intention,” in Critical Terms for Literary
What relevance do this critique and my application of Bakhtin’s theories have for the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John? I suggest that if the monologic rhetoric of the Gospel is taken seriously, Motyer’s hypothesis of the Gospel as an “appeal” to Jews of various stripes loses something of its credibility. In fact, we might think that the historical situation motivating the evangelist and his community was the opposite—to drive a wedge between Jews and Jesus-believers. In the process, Jesus-believers, even if they were Jewish, came to see themselves as different from “the Jews”; rather, they were “Israelites” (1:31, 47) who understood the christological meaning of Scripture (ἡ γραφή) but were distanced somewhat from the “law” of the Jews (cf. “their/your law,” 8:17; 10:34; 15:25). If that is the case, then the Gospel’s intention to “other” Jews in the broadest possible sense and to disregard the diversities and divergences in early Judaism is something that needs to be recovered in translation. Reinhartz’s Jewish reading of the Gospel and her move to translate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews is therefore not solely about exposing the incendiary potential of the Gospel text but is also in line with Motyer’s own concern, namely, to make a “back transfer” of meaning on historical grounds in the spirit of DE theory. Nevertheless, the outcome of Reinhartz’s argument, that is, to translate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews, accords with theories of translation that are usually called “formal correspondence,” and these are often positioned against theories of DE in the literature. I now turn to examine some examples of FC in relation to the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John’s Gospel.

**Formal Correspondence I: “The Jews”**

The translation theory of FC differs from DE insofar as it is not paraphrastic and does not seek to communicate an equivalent message but to render words and phrases in a linguistically accurate way. Sometimes in the literature DE and FC are constructed as diametrical opposites, with DE proving superior in that it is an “act of communication” whereas FC is only a “process of transcoding.” This view is reflected in Roger L. Omanson’s work cited earlier, where DE translations are said to prioritize “meaning over form” when the original words would prove too unintelligible to contemporary readers. However, FC does not adopt a literalistic perspective toward language: translation choices arising from FC theory are nevertheless also acts of interpretation and require exegetical work. Where DE translations can at times “overdifferentiate,” proponents of FC argue that their translations do not distort the text but rather reproduce the form of the words as exactly as possible. What is more, the troubling assumption behind DE that meaning is somehow separable from form requires closer attention. Invariably,
when translating an ancient text like the Gospel of John, there will be vast differences between the world of the text and the world of the modern reader. The “boundedness” and particularity of meaning will of course challenge the translator.\textsuperscript{61} But that particularity is often the gateway to meaning. Whatever we might say about a text’s surplus of meaning, the surplus is possible only because the form evokes it. Even some proponents of DE would acknowledge, for example, that to lose all reference to the form of the phrase οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (i.e., “Jews,” “Judeans”) and to translate it as “the authorities” or even “the leaders of the people” makes a communication of equivalent meaning impossible.\textsuperscript{62}

The most well known example of an FC translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is the position adopted by Malcolm Lowe, namely, that the translated text should read “the Judeans.”\textsuperscript{63} The argument here is that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is polyvalent—it can literally mean “the Judeans” and “the Jews.” Lowe’s claim is that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι has a decidedly ethnic-geographical connotation, with Jesus, the northern Galilean prophet coming into conflict with the southern “Judeans” in Jerusalem, who reject Jesus on the basis that they—and not he—understand Torah.\textsuperscript{64} Criticism has been raised against this option on the grounds that reading οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as “the Judeans” does not reflect normal first-century usage (see esp. Josephus, \textit{Ant.} 20.142) and that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι underwent a semantic shift in the Hasmonean period to embrace “religious” as well as ethnic-geographic connotations. The new religious meaning effectively usurped the ethno-geographical one and applied to Jews living in the Land or in the Diaspora.\textsuperscript{65} Moreover, a “Galilee/Judea” typology is not absolutely present in the text.\textsuperscript{66} And the presence of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in Capernaum in Galilee (6:41, 52) suggests that there is more than geography denoted in the term.\textsuperscript{67}


\textsuperscript{67} This issue is admittedly becoming increasingly complex in the secondary literature, as Joshua D. Garroway’s comprehensive article details (“Ioudaios,” in Levine and Brettler, \textit{Jewish
Yet the motivation for this DE translation is made explicit on the part of Lowe: “the Judeans” is to be preferred over “the Jews” because it cannot incite anti-Semitic prejudice in readers, and it does not lead readers to assume that all Jews qua Jews are denoted. “The Judeans” seems to be too restrictive a translation and is therefore underdifferentiated, accounting for only one of the nuances (the geographical) found in the Greek.

Therefore, a number of Johannine scholars prefer to translate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews. This is not done, however, out of any ignorance of the post-Shoah cultural sensitivities of the reader, for an important qualification is made: translations should enclose the English term in quotation marks—hence, “the Jews”—in order, first, to give the impression that Jews in general are not denoted by the text and, second, in order to indicate that the Gospel of John still refers to Jews/the Jews (4:9, 22; 10:19–21; 11:33, 35, 45a; 12:9) in a positive light. In this view, “the Jews” denotes a subset of antagonistic Jews.68 Often Martyn’s synagogue-expulsion hypothesis is used to support this translation choice, as it understands the Gospel’s reference to “the Jews” as a symbolic representation of Pharisaic Jews in the late first century C.E., with whom the Johannine community conflicted.69 This translation choice has a number of virtues, the most notable of which is the recognition that the references to οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel are not uniformly negative. But an unstated commitment is betrayed in this choice—a commitment to the notion that John’s use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι never meant to incite incendiary attitudes and emotions against real Jews, thereby ignoring the Wirkungsgeschichte of the Gospel text, which reveals a targeted use of the text against actual Jews.70 A prior interpretive assumption is made that is also...

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68 Annotated New Testament, 524–26). “Religion” in antiquity was integral to ethno-geographic affiliation: Athenians lived in Athens and worshiped Athenian gods, just as Judeans lived in Judea and worshiped the Judean god; see Fredriksen, Augustine, 6–10. Ἰουδαϊσμός (see 2 Maccabees) does not equate to “Judaism” as a religion in the sense we know it today. On this view, some scholars would argue that “Judean” expresses the sense of ethnic-religious “semantic expansion” that Ἰουδαῖοι underwent, rather than opposing it (see Steve Mason, “Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” JSJ 38 [2007]: 457–512). Accordingly, “the Jews” may not be a FC translation option at all, but rather an approximation to “Judean” and therefore a DE option. Yet, as the example from Josephus cited above shows (Ant. 21.142) and as Acts 2 seems to indicate, “Judaism” begins to look like something that other ethnic groups can come to of their own choice (Garroway, 525; Martha Himmelfarb, “Judaism in Antiquity: Ethno-Religion or National Identity,” JQR 99 [2009]: 68). Other scholarship again argues that to change one's “religion” (or to construct it) was to change one's ethnicity—not the other way around; see Denise Kimber Buell, Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

69 See Moloney, John, 9–10.

somehow contradictory: the Johannine Jews are rhetorical Jews, symbolically crafted out of the excesses of poetic license, but they also denote, historically, a subset of actual Jews with whom the Johannine community came into conflict in the 90s C.E.71

**Formal Correspondence II: The Jews**

I suggest that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι has a broader referent point than a subset of Jews and that, as such, the text allows for an interpretation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews of all times and places, then as now, in an ethnic, geographical, political, and “religious”

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If so, enclosing the Jews in quotation marks speaks against the witness of the text. Indeed, the very desire of some commentators to prevent anti-Semitic interpretations by quotation-marking the Jews implies that such an interpretation may be true to the text itself. But if not all Jews in the Gospel of John are portrayed negatively, what in the text suggests a totalizing referent for οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι? There is no subset of Jews implied in the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι—the text reads not “some Jews” but the Jews. It is more likely that a subset of Jews is implied in the few positive qualifications of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι that we find in the Gospel, references that are often called upon in defense of a nuanced perspective: the Jews who had believed in him (8.33), “the Jews who were with him” (11:31, 33, 35), some Jews (10:21; 11:37, 45), many Jews (12:9). Instead of reducing the referent to a particular opposing faction, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι broadens it. Second, the cosmic symbolism associating the Jews with lack of belief, darkness, a realm below the earth and a “world”-hating Jesus (8:23–59; 15:25) makes the text read as if “the eternal Jew” is condemned by the Gospel.

It could be just as possible to assume, therefore, that the Fourth Evangelist and his community meant to portray actual Jews as “children of the devil” (8:44) and to incite hostile attitudes toward real Jews broadly speaking. As non-Jews embraced the Johannine version of Christianity, they may have been encouraged to distance themselves from Jews and Judaism via the Gospel. Accordingly, Reinhartz has proposed translating οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews, dispensing with the quotation marks. For Reinhartz, who consciously brings her identity as a Jewish reader to bear on her reading of the Gospel, quotation-marking the Jews in fact “absolves” the text from any responsibility for the anti-Jewish/anti-Semitic attitudes and emotions that it really does convey—it “defuses” the text’s violent potential. Scholars who contain the Jews in quotation marks, are sometimes explicit about their concern to protect Jewish sensibilities by attempting to prevent anti-Semitic readings of the text, and yet Reinhartz’s argument—I think rightly—implies that Jewish sensibilities will not always be what non-Jewish readers expect them to be: quotation-marking the Jews in translation subtly suggests that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι “codes” someone or something else. But the general semantic denotation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews and the largely negative connotations need to be exposed rather than “whitewashed.”

As instances of the text’s interpreted history amply demonstrate. This is not at all to suggest that anti-Semitic interpretations of the Gospel are thereby to be encouraged. It is only to note that the Gospel’s repeated and unqualified use of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι—problematically—invites them.

This is the result of the Gospel’s insistent presentation of Jesus as the embodiment of God’s glory. The Gospel’s rhetoric is so polarized precisely because the Fourth Evangelist believes that the presence of the incarnate Word in the world has occasioned a κρίσις (see 10:19), and he wishes his readers to come to life through believing (20:31) rather than to death and judgment (12:48). See Wendy E. Sproston, “‘Is Not This Jesus, the Son of Joseph?’” JSNT 24 (1985): 85.

Leaving οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι Untranslated

A final “translation” option worth mentioning is that of leaving οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι untranslated in the receptor language but transliterated instead (hence simply, “the Ioudaioi”). This option concedes that, in translation, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι presents too much of a problem. The nub of the problem seems to be the connotations, or the “sense” of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.75 In a singular article advocating transliteration as a solution, Tina Pippin argues that violence against Jews is built into the fabric of the Fourth Gospel—into its message and into its subsequent reception history—in such a way as to invite its readers to comply with its anti-Jewish rhetoric. According to Pippin, the most pressing concern for the scholar and interpreter is to transliterate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, not to translate it at all.76 To facilitate intelligibility, Pippin further proposes that in vernacular translations of the Gospel, “the Ioudaioi” should be heavily notated so that readers understand why this term alone is transliterated. Like Reinhartz after her, Pippin wishes in this way to “expose the violence” of the text.77 One may question, however, whether transliteration of the term would adequately constitute an exposé of faith-as-violence, except insofar as written commentary (or pastoral elucidation) reveals it. In this sense, the choice to transliterate οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is “underdifferentiated” in its gradation.

II. Fidelity and Interpretation

In this article I have demonstrated that, in general, the options advanced for a DE translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John are “overdifferentiated,” capturing a meaning that is not present linguistically but must be read into the translation on the basis of narrative content. On the other hand, some of the FC options (notably Lowe’s “the Judeans”) are “underdifferentiated,” capturing only one nuance found in οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, namely, the geographical sense. DE options presume that a subset of Jews is always denoted by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, but this presumption rests more on contextual readings than on semantic accuracy. Even some FC options, such as “the Jews” (with quotation marks) seek to strike a balance between a literalism that is deemed to be offensive to Jewish readers and a broad DE translation that does not exactly follow

the Greek. This option (“the Jews”) also implies that a subset of Jews, and not Jews in general, is denoted by ὁι Ἰουδαῖοι.

The broader issue of competing ethical constraints plays a part in the task of translating ὁι Ἰουδαῖοι in John. This is often cast in the language of “fidelity,” for example, whether one should be “faithful to the text” or faithful to readerly sensibilities—or somehow, to both. This can be seen in the polemical language of C. K. Barrett, who writes that there is an “unforgivable exegetical sin” in translating ὁι Ἰουδαῖοι in ways that might try to defuse the anti-Judaism of the text—the sin of “making a passage mean something other than the meaning intended by the author and conveyed by his words.”

Barrett’s contention is striking for the way that it assumes that the intention of the author is necessarily linguistic in its delivery. Form and meaning cannot be separated. The language of “exegetical sin” is no doubt strong and premises not only the legitimacy of FC translations (“conveyed by ... words”) but also attests to the notion that FC options are “faithful” to the text, a text taken to be holy by Christians.

But it would be simplistic to claim that, in general, FC translations are motivated by fidelity to the text whereas DE options are motivated by sensitivities to the reader’s situation. As my reading of Motyer’s work has shown, DE still claims to be “faithful” to the text insofar as the “message” of the text is preserved. And for Reinhartz, formally translating ὁι Ἰουδαῖοι as the Jews is a way of being faithful to Jewish sensibilities while respecting what she understands to be the historical situation behind the Gospel.

III. Conclusions

Setting out to prove that the originating historical situation of the Gospel was or was not anti-Jewish, and from there attempting to suggest translation options for ὁι Ἰουδαῖοι that suitably reflect that situation, are admittedly difficult endeavors. We only have the text, and we have to work with the rhetoric, which, even if it does not clearly indicate the author’s intention, at least betrays “intentionality” inasmuch as rhetoric is purposive in design. In this article I attempted to show that Bakhtin’s concept of monologism can assist us in determining this rhetorical purpose. Even if early Judaism was diverse and factional, the rhetoric of John’s Gospel is not dialogic; the monologism of the Gospel that effectively “others” the Jews as characters suggests that it is best to translate ὁι Ἰουδαῖοι as “the Jews,” rather than seeking to create qualifying clauses around the term to specify a distinct group of Jews with whom the author meant to dialogue.

Even if translating ὁι Ἰουδαῖοι in this way seems unacceptable in a post-Shoah setting, I think that it expresses accurately the sense of the Greek term, which,

through the process of semantic expansion, came to signify not only geographical location but peoplehood and “religious” commitment as well.\textsuperscript{79} I am concerned about other, more accommodating and conciliatory translations of \(\text{oĩ Ἰουδαῖοι} \) that may obscure the harsh anti-Judaism of the text, as though the “rights” of the text need to be defended or protected. The connotative force of the term \(\text{oĩ Ἰουδαῖοι} \) creates a problem for the interpreter, because no matter what option is taken in terms of translating \(\text{oĩ Ἰουδαῖοι, this group is associated with disbelief (5:47–48; 8:45–46; 10:26), intent to kill (5:18; 7:1, 19, 25; 11:53), and obduracy (12:40) in the Gospel.}\textsuperscript{80} Whether “the Jews,” “the Jewish authorities,” or “the Judeans” is chosen in place of the Jews, all of these translations nevertheless retain some reference to Jews, and so despite the goodwill of the translators who seek to prevent anti-Semitic “misunderstandings” of the text, readers will still associate Jews with the strongly negative thoughts and actions narratively attributed to this group.

But neither do I stand against DE translations on principle; in fact they are by far the most suitable options, for example, when translating idiomatic expressions from one language to another that would be utterly unintelligible if FC translations were used. However, \(\text{oĩ Ἰουδαῖοι} \) is not strictly idiomatic, just as \(\text{oĩ Ρωμαῖοι} \) or \(\text{oĩ Φαρισαῖοι} \) are not: they contain enough internal semantic resonance to make sense in FC translation.\textsuperscript{81} Translating \(\text{oĩ Ἰουδαῖοι} \) as the Jews allows the monologic and polemical rhetoric to be exposed, but it must also be explained. For this reason, translating \(\text{oĩ Ἰουδαῖοι} \) as “the Jews” (with quotation marks) is also ideal in many settings, as it implies that not all “Jews” in the narrative are othered by the Gospel text, even if it does also imply something about their putative historical identity in the 90s C.E. Finally, this translation achieves the necessary grade of differentiation that others often miss and does not attempt to operate out of “fidelity” to one reality over another.

\textsuperscript{79}To say this is also to question the implicit divide placed between ancient Judeans and their way of reckoning peoplehood (ancestral customs, temple, Torah) and modern Jewish ways of reckoning communal religious identity—as though modern Jews have no continuity with ancient Judeans. Modern Jewish religious identity is still conceived of in terms of peoplehood, Torah/halakah and covenant (these too could be called “ancestral customs”). The translation option “the Jews” might therefore express the ethno-geographic and religious connotations of \(\text{oĩ Ἰουδαῖοι} \) just as well as Mason claims “the Judeans” does (see Mason, “Jews, Judeans”).

\textsuperscript{80}The referent of \(\text{αὐτῶν} \) in 12:37 is not clear but must be determined from the wider context of the Book of Signs. It is noteworthy that the JB/NJB headlines this section as “the unbelief of the Jews.”

\textsuperscript{81}“Pharisee” is in fact an English transliteration of \(\text{oĩ Φαρισαῖοι} \) and as such is an FC translation (the Greek term itself is a transliteration of the Aramaic \(\text{pĕrîšayyâ} \)). The term is in a sense “foreign” to us today because there are no Pharisees (rabbi’s being something quite different from, if originally continuous with, the Pharisic movement). At the same time, the term makes so much sense to us due to its Gospel connotations, and it has even undergone consequent semantic expansion. The Australian OED defines its second entry as “a self-righteous person; a hypocrite” (\textit{The Australian Oxford English Dictionary} [ed. Bruce Moore; 2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 968).
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