

## Translating “The Jews” in the Fourth Gospel

Over half of the references to “the Jews” in the Gospel of John suggest a negative literary association, so it is not surprising that the text has been used in Anti-Semitic rhetoric throughout the centuries. While scholars today acknowledge that certain verses from the Fourth Gospel have been used to denigrate ethnic Jews, there has been little work done to explore such discriminatory uses. Yet there are many clear examples of discriminatory uses of the Fourth Gospel, even from influential church fathers. Simultaneously studying these later historical interpretations and the original meaning could provide a better understanding of what the text means today. For example, since the meaning or comprehension of certain words in the Gospel of John changes over time, understanding how certain words have been used in that evolution can aid our understanding of the original meaning. After examining the use of the Gospel of John in Anti-Semitic works by the influential church fathers Saint John Chrysostom and Martin Luther, I will propose a particular translation of the term “the Jews” in the Gospel of John – that is, one that partially addresses the discriminatory history and potential and still respects the original meaning.

In the late fourth century<sup>1</sup>, Saint John Chrysostom delivered a series of sermons exhorting his Christian congregants to avoid the Jews and Jewish practices. Collected into eight discourses, the texts of the sermons themselves suggest that the polemic stems from some Christians continuing to observe certain Jewish holidays or respecting Jewish oaths more than their Christian affirmations. Chrysostom addresses a multitude of contemporaneous issues, ranging

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<sup>1</sup> Saint John Chrysostom, *Discourses Against the Judaizing Christians* (trans. Paul W. Harkins; vol. 68 of *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*; eds. Hermigild Dressler et al.; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1977), liii.

from participation in Jewish synagogues, to simple fraternization with Jews, to intra-church dissension regarding this Jewish-Christian polemic. To support his own conclusions, Chrysostom appeals to a broad range of Scripture with an emphasis on the following: Jesus' relationship with "the Jews" in the Gospels, Paul's counsel about the new church and its relation to Judaism, and the historical and prophetic accounts of the Jews<sup>2</sup> in the Old Testament. Though in these Discourses Chrysostom more often uses elements from other biblical books such as Matthew and Daniel to disparage the Jews, the focus of this paper is on the way Chrysostom uses particular texts and themes from the Gospel of John in order to understand how historical figures incorporated the Gospel into their Anti-Judaism. Not all of the references to the Fourth Gospel are Anti-Judaic; there are a few references to the Gospel of John that focus mainly on Christian morality and living, as the center of attention of the Discourses is not the Jews but the congregants' relationship with them. Nonetheless, Chrysostom's overall method of persuasion continuously disparages the (unbelieving) Jews and their practices. In these Discourses, Saint John Chrysostom uses certain Johannine references to "the Jews" in specific thematic ways to justify his negative portrayal of Jews and Judaism.

Particularly in his references to the Gospel of John, Chrysostom's debasing of the Jewish character reaches a moral and spiritual level, characterizing the Jews as apart from God. This debasement is in his very first description of the Jews in the First Discourse; he labels the Jews "pitiful and miserable."<sup>3</sup> While throughout the Discourses Chrysostom will quote the Old Testament to conclude that the Jews' behavior is immoral, these first adjectives entail a different, mystical kind of justification: "They really are pitiable and miserable... [because] the morning Sun of Justice arose for them, but they thrust aside its rays and still sit in darkness."<sup>4</sup> Though

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<sup>2</sup> I use this term anachronistically to mirror Chrysostom

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 5.

Chrysostom does not explicitly quote the Gospel of John, this metaphor connecting light with Christ and darkness with Jews evokes similar imagery found in the Gospel, which, for example, quotes Jesus as saying, “I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness” (John 12:46). Later, Chrysostom demonstrates his mastery of the Fourth Gospel with a specific quote and uses it to eternally separate the Jews from God.

Chrysostom quotes John 8:19 in reference to all non-believing Jews’ relationship with God after the coming of Jesus Christ: “No Jew adores God! Who says so? The Son of God says so. For he said: ‘If you were to know my Father, you would also know me. But you neither know me nor do you know my Father’.”<sup>5</sup> The author of the Gospel repeats this assertion four or five times (7:28; 8:19, 47; 15:21; 16:3), so it seems that Chrysostom is picking up an important element of the Gospel—that is, that “the Jews” in their darkness do not know or are not from God the Father.

Chrysostom demonstrates that the Jews no longer have access to God to show that there is no good reason to follow Jewish practices, such as worship in synagogues. Using elements of the previous quote from John 8:19, he debases Jewish worship as not of God: “If, then, the Jews fail to know the Father, ... who should not make bold to declare plainly that the synagogue is a dwelling of demons? God is not worshipped there.”<sup>6</sup> Continuing to try to convince his parishioners of this demonic element in Jewish practice, Chrysostom cites John 8:44, a verse infamous for Anti-Judaic use. His goal is to counter the argument that nonbelievers, particularly the Jews, can perform good, so he turns to John’s connection of “the Jews” with the devil: “To learn how false [that the demons do effect cures] is, listen to what Christ said about the devil: ‘He was a murderer from the beginning’ ...do you rush to him as you would to a physician?”<sup>7</sup> By

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 236.

connecting the Jews with all that is dark and apart from God, Chrysostom seeks to discourage his parishioners from practicing any part of Judaism and furthermore not to associate at all with the Jews.

Chrysostom seamlessly weaves together the Passion narratives from all Four Gospels in his many statements that the Jews crucified Jesus. His caricatures of the Jews almost always include some sort of reference to this point. The following is a good example: since some of the Christians are observing the fast along with the Jews, Chrysostom asks his parishioners to “Consider, then... It is with those who shouted: ‘Crucify him, Crucify him.’”<sup>8</sup> A little later, he calls the Jews “the slayers of Christ.”<sup>9</sup> Comparing Judaism and Christianity during his time, Chrysostom continues to make the same claim: “They crucified the Christ whom you adore as God.”<sup>10</sup> While it is hard at times to differentiate which Gospel Chrysostom is referencing, his other uses of the Gospel of John reveals that he relied more heavily on the Fourth Gospel’s Passion than the others – save, perhaps, Matthew. The specifically Johannine influence could come from the emphasis in the Johannine Passion narrative on the Jews’ indictment of Jesus according to their Law, which allows Chrysostom to make the piercing statements against the Jews of his time who continue to follow that Law.

For Chrysostom, the primary purpose of indicting the Jews as crucifiers of Jesus is to discourage his parishioners from associating with the Jews. In order to show the kind of disassociation he requires, Chrysostom tells a story of a Christian man requiring a Christian woman to take a Jewish oath. For this action, Chrysostom condemns the man saying, “he was no better off than a mule if he, who professed to worship Christ, would drag someone off to the dens

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 78-79.

of the Jews who had crucified him.”<sup>11</sup> Later, he uses the same justification to keep Christians away from the Jews: “They slew the Son of your Lord; do you have the boldness to enter with them under the same roof?”<sup>12</sup> When this association becomes one of religious practice, Chrysostom worries that his congregants will justify the practices of the Jews over and against church practices: “For when they see that you, who worship the Christ whom they crucified, are reverently following their ritual, how can they fail to think that the rites they have performed are the best and that our ceremonies are worthless?”<sup>13</sup> In all of these situations, we see that Chrysostom emphasizes that the Jews crucified Christ to plea that his followers not associate with the Jews nor follow their rituals.

Chrysostom’s characterization of the Jews of his time in these sermons, often translated under the title *Discourses Against the Judaizing Christians*, is notably disparaging. The influence of the Gospel of John on this characterization is also significant. Not only does he use the Fourth Gospel to exclude the Jews of his time from knowledge of God but also to identify the Jews as the very same people who killed Jesus Christ. Of course this conclusion does not seem to be a huge logical leap since he never distinguishes from the Jews of Jesus’ time, the characterization of the Jews by the Fourth Gospel writer, or the Jews of his own time. Chrysostom then uses this blurring of distinct groups of Jews to discourage his parishioners from following any Jewish ritual and from even associating with the Jews, thereby belittling not only Jewish practices but also the Jews themselves.

Unfortunately, Saint John Chrysostom was by far not the only important church leader to write against the Jews. Specifically, the great reformer Martin Luther wrote four broadly considered anti-Judaic treatises in his later life. The second treatise, *On the Jews and Their Lies*,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 20.

is “widely recognized as Luther’s most violent piece of writing,” according to Michael Mullett.<sup>14</sup> It calls for the burning of synagogues and schools, for restrictions on Jews using the highways, and five other similarly aggressive measures.<sup>15</sup> However influential or non-influential one considers these particular statements on later Anti-Semitism, particularly in Germany, Luther’s treatise reflects the Reformation’s incorporation of the Anti-Semitism that had existed from the early church down through the Middle Ages.

Again, let us examine the incorporation of elements from the Gospel of John into this one particularly notable work in the history of Christianity.<sup>16</sup> I must note that, somewhat like Chrysostom, Luther in *On the Jews and Their Lies* appeals primarily to the Old Testament for justification. Even though the use of the Fourth Gospel is sparse and not primary to the discussion, the way in which Luther incorporates Johannine quotations and themes reveals a distinct aspect of Anti-Judaism. Like in Chrysostom, the arguments from the Gospel reach a new metaphysical level that not only separates Jews from God but also portrays them as evil forces arrayed against God. Of the Johannine elements that Luther incorporates, the two strongest are the differentiation between different kinds of Jews and the demonization of the Jews. While not central to his argumentation, these components provide certain lynchpins allowing the extent to which he condemns the Jews.

Fascinatingly, just as many contemporary scholars seek to distinguish amongst different Johannine uses of the term “the Jews,” Luther also differentiated between two specific kinds of Jews: the unbelieving Jews of his time and those from which Christians trace their theological ancestry. This contrast becomes obviously apparent towards the end of *On the Jews and Their*

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<sup>14</sup> Michael A. Mullett, “Luther’s later years,” in *Martin Luther* (London: Routledge, 2004), 246.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Luther, “On the Jews and Their Lies, 1543,” trans. Martin H. Bertram in *The Christian in Society* (ed. Franklin Sherman; vol. 47 of *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 121-306.

<sup>16</sup> For the relationship between *On the Jews and Their Lies* and Luther’s other works, such as *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, see the chapter entitled “Luther’s Prejudices: Luther and the Jews” in Michael Mullett’s *Martin Luther*.

*Lies*, when Luther encourages other pastors to “tell [the Jews] that there are two classes of Jews or Israelites.”<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, the way to distinguish between the two groups is how they handled the coming of the Messiah in Jesus. The first followed the Law of Moses “until the advent of the Messiah,”<sup>18</sup> while the latter switched allegiances to the Emperor in order to continue following the Law. It is unclear whether Luther means to imply that the latter were never true Jews when he says of them: “The other Jews are those of the emperor and not of Moses.”<sup>19</sup> However, the rest is fairly clear; Luther connects hereditarily the Jews involved in the Gospels’ crucifixion stories with the Jews of his own time: “From these the present remnant of Jews descended, of whom Moses knows nothing.”<sup>20</sup> These unfaithful and disconnected Jews are contrasted with the first group that was truly faithful, and it is those Jews that Luther generally favors. Earlier in the treatise, he cites the Fourth Gospel’s positive use of the term “the Jews” as coming directly from Jesus’ mouth: “Christ himself declares in John 4[:22], ‘Salvation is from the Jews.’”<sup>21</sup> In fact, much earlier in his life Luther recognizes certain Jews positively by titling his somewhat more favorable work on the Jews, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*. And so it is that, at the end of *On the Jews*, Luther articulates clearly a distinction between kinds of Jews, just as many Johannine critics do today.

Without this separation of different kinds of Jews, Luther would not have been able to condemn the Jews of his time as he does. First of all, though he later will not admit their descent from Abraham but only from the emperor, Luther begins this condemnation of the Jews of his time arguing that their boasting about this ancestry offends God. While constructing the Jews of his time as totally offensive to God, he begins to totally separate his Jewish Messiah from

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<sup>17</sup> Luther, “On the Jews and Their Lies, 1543,” 271.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 140.

contemporaneous Jews. This separation is to such a degree that it is not simply about their misunderstanding. They become ones who Moses does not know and thereby only find authority in the “emperor.” This argument then becomes the justification for his sixth measure of political advice that keeps the Jews from banking: “since they are dwelling in and disobeying Moses in foreign countries under the emperor, they are bound to keep the emperor’s laws and refrain from the practice of usury.”<sup>22</sup> Later, before he argues that the Jews should only be allowed physical labor for work, the justification becomes more intense: “Their wish to be Mosaic Jews must not be indulged.”<sup>23</sup> So we see that Luther uses the separation of different kinds of Jews common to Johannine study to condemn the Jews, though it will become even more profound with his incorporation of Johannine metaphysics.

Luther transforms the Jews into the epitome of the evil that opposes God primarily through referencing the Gospel of John. In the middle section of the treatise regarding the Jews’ understanding of Messiah, Luther lists many insults against the Jews and attributes them to the mouth of Christ. This list ends by referencing Matthew and John on who the Jews are: “in brief, a brood of serpents and children of the devil.”<sup>24</sup> Later in the treatise, while giving justification for his destructive, political proposals of what should be done with the Jews, Luther begins to favor this title “children of the devil” for the Jews, extending it to mean that they do the devil’s works: “people who will accord us [Christians] the same benefits as does their father, the devil.”<sup>25</sup> As though he has only insufficiently condemned the Jews, Luther intensifies his argument even admitting that he is speaking “more spiritually about this.”<sup>26</sup> He then states that the Jews’ actions against Christians and Christ are actions against God Himself, possibly

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 271.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 272.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 232.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 277.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 278.

alluding to John 16:2. While he first uses Matthew and Luke's somewhat softer articulation of this relationship ("He who receives me receives him who sent me" from Matthew and "He who rejects you rejects me" from Luke), he turns and quotes John twice as abstract icing on the cake: "And in John 15[:23], 'He who hates me hates my father also.' In John 5[:23], 'That all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him,' etc."<sup>27</sup> Luther uses this dichotomy to condemn the Jews for not reading the New Testament and to advocate political action against the Jews.

The use of the Fourth Gospel to establish the Jews as evil and against God provides abstract justification for his atrocious advice of what to do with the Jews, specifically personal denigrating acts of Christians towards Jews. His basic argument is that Christians, by permitting the evil done by Jews against God, should receive the same punishment as the Jews should receive for cursing God and His Son: "if we ourselves do not wish to stand condemned by their sins, we cannot tolerate that the Jews publicly blaspheme and revile God the Father, before our very ears by blaspheming and reviling Jesus our Lord, for as he says, 'He who hates me hates my Father also.'"<sup>28</sup> Luther explicitly uses quotations from John to encourage intolerance of Jews. As the ultimate act of intolerance, though not among the official list of political advice, Luther advocates the expulsion of Jews from Germany as had already occurred in other European countries: "If we wish to wash our hands of the Jews' blasphemy ... we have to part company with them."<sup>29</sup> Just in case his listeners did not get the point and do not want to follow his advice regarding the Jews, Luther warns of the eternal consequences of such non-action: "God's honor and the salvation of us all, including that of the Jews, are at stake."<sup>30</sup> Though for the first one-

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 280.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 288.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 289.

hundred and thirty pages of the treatise Luther barely mentions the New Testament, we see that Luther uses the Gospel of John to portray the ultimate sins of “the Jews” and bring the battle to a supernatural level.

Though in a more complex manner than that of Chrysostom, Luther’s arguments against the Jews of his time reveal the same sort of correlation between the Jews of his time and “the Jews” portrayed in the Gospel of John as opposing Jesus. Separating the Jews from whom Christ came and the Jews who don’t believe in Christ allows Luther to utterly condemn the non-Christ-believing Jews of his time. Luther then establishes the Jews as diabolical evil to encourage Christian separation from the Jews to the point of Jewish expulsion from the country. These objectives are only accomplished through Luther’s use of the Gospel of John.

Familiarizing ourselves with how these historical interpreters understood and used the Gospel of John’s references to “the Jews” should inform our understanding of the term today. While my formal understanding of semiotics and semantics is insufficient to fully examine the meaning of the words “the Jews” in the history of the Fourth Gospel, I would like to carefully delineate a few of the reasons that the above historical interpretations inform the study of translation and interpretation of the Gospel of John. First and foremost, studying discriminatory uses of the Gospel makes us aware of the high stakes that surround translation and interpretation. While Chrysostom’s conclusions reveal at least the interpersonal discrimination against the Jews in the development of Christianity, we see how Luther’s scriptural understanding led to conclusions regarding the political treatment of an entire religious group.

Now, whether or not one finds Chrysostom’s and Luther’s interpretations historically influential, understanding the way in which diverse authors, even historically, have interpreted and continue to interpret the original meaning of the gospel of John should also influence our

constructions. Lastly, whether specifically through the works of Chrysostom and Luther or simply mirrored in such works, this denigrating history against the Jews is part of our own linguistic understanding of the term. In what follows, I propose a particular translation of “the Jews” that seems to address some of the discriminatory history and potential but is based on contemporary scholars’ understanding of original literary meaning.

Today there are various proposals regarding the original meaning and context of the term *hoi Ioudaioi*, usually translated as “the Jews.” Scholars have suggested many ways to address its contentious history and the evolution of the term “the Jews.” Some scholars suggest changing the translation itself, as Stephen Motyer recommends extending the phrase by giving contextual meaning.<sup>31</sup> Other scholars do not specifically address the translation itself but choose outside the Biblical texts to use quotation marks around the term “the Jews” in its negative uses.

Considering the semantic variation between the numerous uses of the term in the Fourth Gospel, I will propose the use of quotation marks in translating the expression “the Jews” when used to represent those who oppose Jesus because it more closely resembles the original literary meaning.

The reasons are summarized as follows: Quotation marks around “the Jews” in certain contexts indicate that the author is using the term differently, not only from the contemporary understanding, but especially from the general ethnic usage in the Gospel itself. Quotation marks also more strongly suggest the irony that many Jews are not accepting the true revelation that comes through the Jews. In fact, because other proposals for changing the translation, such as giving the term greater context, eliminate the literary irony, they are not convincing alternatives. Finally, as it seeks to mitigate the universal ethnic or religious quality of the term

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<sup>31</sup> Stephen Motyer, “Bridging the Gap: How Might the Fourth Gospel Help Us Cope with the Legacy of Christianity’s Exclusive Claim over against Judaism?” in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (ed. R. Bauckham and C. Mosser; Grand Rapids: Eerdsman, 2008), 153.

“the Jews” in contemporary translation, the use of quotation marks should also at least partially address the portrayal that has been used to subjugate Jews over the centuries, as we have seen, and towards which Jews continue to react today upon reading the Gospel.

Because John uses the term *hoi Ioudaioi* in certain contexts to represent those unbelieving Jews and even the Romans that oppose Jesus<sup>32</sup>, quotation marks distinguish the term “the Jews” from its more general ethnic usage and to that particular, significantly distinct usage. Lincoln’s characterization of this group is quite convincing: “There is a strangeness about this usage that makes clear that the term cannot refer to all Jews but only to those who are representatives of the unbelieving world.”<sup>33</sup> He uses the example of Pilate in 18:35 to show that “Jew” can apply to anyone “who belongs to the world that does not believe in Jesus.”<sup>34</sup> This characterization is the one used in all of the heated verses. For example, the context of chapter eight reveals that when Jesus tells “the Jews” that “You are of your father, the devil,” he, as a Jew, is not arguing against religious or ethnic Jews in general but against Jews who once did but no longer believe in him.

As certain non-Jews receive an even harsher rebuke in John 15:6 for falling away from faith, the use of this harsh language is not simply because they are Jewish and oppose Jesus. However, what matters for our discussion is merely that the Gospel Writer chooses to refer to this oppositional Jewish group also as “the Jews.” This oppositional/negative usage distinguishes itself from a more general ethnic category, which in fact more closely mirrors contemporary usage. With phrases such as “The Passover of the Jews was near” in 2:13, the general ethnic usage is fairly clear. In fact, Lincoln establishes quickly and persuasively in his commentary that “the sense of the term is the broad one of the Jewish people as distinct from

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 72.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 72.

other ethnic groupings.”<sup>35</sup> It also seems that this ethnic meaning is meant in the most positive use of *hoi Ioudaioi* when Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, “salvation is from the Jews.” Not using quotation marks around the Jews in these contexts but using them when it refers particularly to the Jews in opposition to Jesus not only reveals this distinction in contemporary language but also maintains the original references distinct – whether to those who do not believe in and, by so doing, oppose Jesus or to those who share Jesus’ ethnic identity.

While I have categorized this usage through the actions of a certain group (those that do not believe in and oppose Jesus), because it distinguishes the particular literary and historical reasons, scholars often describe this use of the term “the Jews” as “negative.” There are clear reasons that other scholars do so. Firstly, John’s purposeful representation of this group as negative is an important literary tool. It is hard to argue against the fact that “a group of people, unfortunately also called ‘the Jews,’ are consistently presented negatively.”<sup>36</sup> While Lincoln sees this as a “reflection of intra-Jewish conflict,”<sup>37</sup> which may or may not be true, its literary purposes almost certainly reflect the creation of opposition to Jesus, which in any story is presented negatively. Unfortunately, the other reason to describe these usages as negative is that the interpretation of “the Jews” over the centuries, especially in its usage against Jews, is negative. Therefore, this categorization of the term as “negative” does not allow these authors to clearly distinguish between their literary and historical explanation of this term’s usage and the way historical reception has affected that understanding. For example, right after saying that “the unfortunate choice of this term has generated centuries of pain for the Jewish people,” Moloney argues that “the repeated use of the expression ‘the Jews’ in a negative sense has

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>36</sup> Francis J. Moloney, "The "Jews" in the Fourth Gospel: Another Perspective," in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2005 [2002]), 40.

<sup>37</sup> Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, 72.

*nothing* to do with national, political, or religious affiliation.”<sup>38</sup> It makes it harder to understand whether or not his argument’s justification comes from the later usage of these negative passages. This distinction is necessary because later usage cannot justify historical and literary claims about original meaning, but merely explain our understanding of the term today and maybe make ethical claims about the text itself. Therefore, I articulate the usage in the Gospel primarily based on the action of the group – opposing Jesus – instead of on its negative usage. For the rest of this paper, I will use both, oppositional/negative, for the sake of clarity.

The distinction through the use of quotation marks between the oppositional/negative usage and the general ethnic usage also highlights the irony that the Fourth Gospel author intends. Quotation marks tend to purposefully distance semantic meaning from what is normally thought. If the inscription on the cross reads King of “the Jews,” the contemporary reader would at least question which Jews the author, through Pilate, had in mind. Since most scholars agree that the literary usage of this term in oppositional/negative contexts is ironical in its different meanings, the quotation marks emphasize that use. Some translations, such as those proposed by Stephen Motyer, incorporate some contextual understanding, which does not seem to preserve this irony. This is unfortunate because at least Stephen Motyer’s translations have the advantage of combating Anti-Semitism and well-categorizing the contextual uses of *hoi Ioudaioi*. For example, Motyer chooses to translate 9:22 “His parents said this, because they were afraid of *the more hard-line Jews in the synagogue leadership*. For *these Jews* had determined that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ should be expelled from the synagogue.”<sup>39</sup> However, this translation “introduc[es] a restrictive (implicitly only ‘some’) where none is semantically” in Judith Lieu’s critique. It is the lack of focus on the specific group that literarily gives space for

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<sup>38</sup> Moloney, “The “Jews” in the Fourth Gospel: Another Perspective,” 40.

<sup>39</sup> Motyer, “Bridging the Gap: How Might the Fourth Gospel Help Us Cope with the Legacy of Christianity’s Exclusive Claim over against Judaism?” 153.

the irony in John's portrayal that Jews are persecuting Jewish followers of Jesus, who is not only a Jew but the Jew who is meant to come to save them. Of course, since only certain Jews are seen as persecuting Jesus, quotation marks highlight the above ironic distinction because of their general semantic meaning and by maintaining the same words.

Beyond the above literary and historical reasons for the utilization of quotation marks around certain uses of the term "the Jews," this punctuation also questions the use of the negative emotions associated with the term to apply to contemporary Jews such as that which is done by Chrysostom and Luther. In Motyer's introduction to his section on translation, he quotes Johannes Beutler's rationale for using quotation marks around the Jews: "so that the reader is admonished not to read into the text the general meaning of 'the Jews' in everyday language and to come to conclusions which make the Jewish people or religious community responsible for the death of Jesus."<sup>40</sup> For example, Jesus' words in 18:36 would instead read, "If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to 'the Jews'," which rhetorically forces the reader to question whether the Johannine usage here simply indicates the general ethnic group and particularly the ethnic group today. It is possible that some groups might interpret the enclosure of quotation marks as emphasizing the ethnicity, thereby inducing greater Anti-Semitism, but in general, it seems that their use would distinguish a different meaning, which closer study would determine to be the group in opposition to Jesus.

Some scholars, such as Adele Reinhartz, do not find that the use of quotation marks adequately translates the Johannine usage. Motyer summarizes Reinhartz's objections: "to enclose 'the Jews' in quotation marks blurs their historical actuality in the setting of the Evangelist and his community, and this illegitimately *defuses* the real, historical anti-Judaism of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 146.

this text.”<sup>41</sup> If one were to assume that the Johannine community distinguished between believing and non-believing ethnic Jews, and came to regard the latter as the Jews in its broad usage when they left the synagogue, one might agree with at least the latter of her objections. However, the ethnic/positive use of the same words as in “The Jews” in the oppositional/negative uses should reveal the possible anti-Judaism of the Johannine community, while indicating the distinction in the story. Therefore, though it might “defuse” the anti-Judaism in the text, it does not disregard these possibilities in the original intentions of the Johannine community. I find it is more important to use quotation marks as they better convey in contemporary language the original distinction between the oppositional and ethnic uses of the term *hoi Ioudaioi*. Appropriately, they also neutralize the anti-Jewish interpretation that ethnic Jews should be blamed for the death of Christ.

In summary, there is a particular literary use of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* in the Fourth Gospel that applies to the group of Jews and even others like Pilate who oppose Jesus.<sup>42</sup> Because the author creates this opposition in a story, the portrayal of this group is generally negative, but it is more helpful to describe the Johannine usage as oppositional instead of negative because it distinguishes between the original use and later reception. However one calls this use, it is particular and distinct from the other uses of the term *hoi Ioudaioi*, often purely ethnic and religious in nature. Therefore the use of quotation marks to distinguish the oppositional/negative use better conveys this distinction in contemporary language. The use of quotation marks also highlights the original irony inherent – an irony, unfortunately, that is lost in other new translations, such as Motyer’s expansions. The main hermeneutic benefit to this approach is that it seems to reduce a major issue we found with Chrysostom and Luther—that is, the automatic

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Of course not all uses of *hoi Ioudaioi* are oppositional, such as John 4:22: “...for salvation is from the Jews.”

association of contemporaneous Jews with the Johannine negative/oppositional use of the term. While Reinhartz, along with other scholars, argues that quotation marks do not adequately convey the original message, her objections do not seem to apply when quotation marks are only used to indicate oppositional/negative use. All in all, quotation marks used in this manner in translation better convey the literary meaning of the term “the Jews,” while also addressing some of the discriminatory history of the Fourth Gospel.

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