

MATTHEW MICHAEL

Soundscape, Weeping Scenes, and Resistance in the Acoustic Poetics of Revelation 18

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*
660

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe

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ISBN 978-3-16-164277-7 / eISBN 978-3-16-164278-4

DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-164278-4

ISSN 0340-9570 / eISSN 2568-7484

(Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <https://dnb.dnb.de>.

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Printed on non-aging paper.

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To all the marginalised places on the faces of the earth, where the soundscape
of human pain and grief have continually lamented in protest and
subversive action against the oppression and injustices
of the Babylon-like institutions of the world.

Acknowledgements

The book has come to completion through the active support, constant encouragement and critical guidance of particular individuals. It has also enjoyed the support of particular institutions around the world. Firstly, my most profound appreciation goes to my dissertation's supervisor, Prof. Jeremy Punt whose encouragement, meticulous reading and critical suggestions have shaped the final outcome of this particular work. I will remain eternally grateful for his dedication to this work throughout the period of writing and even later. I would love to express my gratitude also to the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, and the administrative assistance of Mrs Estelle Muller whose friendship provided me with the adequate system to finish this project.

I would like to single out three particular individuals who in the course of this PhD programme also extended their support to me in terms of valuable assistance and encouragement which helped to bring this doctoral programme to a successful completion. Within this category of persons is Prof. Jake Omang Otonko whose friendship, support and encouragement has inspired me in the pursuit of another PhD degree and the general pursuit of academic excellence. Similarly, I thank Prof. Gideon Omachonu, the immediate former Dean of Faculty of Arts, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria who provided the necessary counsel, support and encouragement that rendered this degree feasible. In addition, I also recognise the monumental contributions of Dr. Gesila Uzukwu, the former Head of Department, Philosophy and Religious Studies at Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

On the institutional level, my appreciation goes to the Prof. Haruna Ayuba, the present Vice Chancellor, Bingham University, Karu, Abuja, who then, as the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of Nasarawa State University, Keffi, encouraged me enormously, and facilitated the drive to begin this particular degree. I also acknowledge the support of Prof. Sa'adatu Liman, the present Vice Chancellor, Nasarawa State University, then as the former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) whose support has helped me in no small measure towards the completion of this particular study. I also recognise the love and support of Prof. Adewole Alagbe, the former Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, and the executive director of Institute of Strategic Development and Communication (ISDEV-COM), Prof. Emmanuel Dandaura who provided me with office space and encouraged me at the beginning of this doctoral programme. I appreciate all my

colleagues at the Faculty, the current Dean, Prof. Adam Ayuba Binchi for his exceptional leadership and support for this programme.

I also thank the present Head of Department, Dr. Ishaya Oyewose Owusakyo for his administrative support in the uphill task of converting this dissertation into a book. Similarly, I use this opportunity to thank Mrs Juliana Bukola, the then secretary to the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies for all her administrative assistance and support during this particular PhD programme. In the same vein, I recognise the immense support of Mr. Patrick Egbeji, the examination officer of the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies whose friendship and encouragement have always eased the administrative burden placed on me during the period of this study by running important errands for me.

On the family level, I feel obligated to thank my dear brother Mr. Paul Atanu and his family whose brotherly love and encouragement contributed in heightening my drive for academic work and scholarship. Significantly, my gratitude goes to my mother Mrs Cecelia Michael whose piety and soundscape of motherly love thrust me first into the world of feministic encounters and the intriguing connections of this engagement with the soundscape and voices of women in the book of Revelation. Last, but not the least, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my wife, Juliana, and our three children, Kolel, Keliel and Mikhlael for their immense support, and understanding which greatly facilitated the completion of this particular study. It is within the acoustic interactions of my family's laughter, weeping and tears for a better world that my fascination with the subversive soundscape of the book of Revelation took its major motivations.

Matthew Michael

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List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>Acta Acust united Ac</i>	<i>Acta Acustica United with Acustica</i>
AJGR	<i>The African Journal of Gender and Religion</i>
Arion	<i>Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the classics</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin of Biblical Research</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BZAW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
Ex Aud	<i>Ex Auditu: An International Journal for the Theological Interpretation of Scripture</i>
HNT	<i>Handbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
HR	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>Int J Environ</i>	<i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>
<i>Res Public Health</i>	
<i>J Relig Disabil Health</i>	<i>Journal of Religion, Disability & Health</i>
<i>J. Audio Eng. Soc</i>	<i>Journal of the Audio Engineering Society</i>
JANR	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBS	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JDR	<i>Journal of Disability and Religion</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>J. Theol. Interpret.</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</i>
LMJ	<i>Leonardo Music Journal</i>
<i>Neurosci Biobehav Rev.</i>	<i>Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews</i>
NIGTC	<i>New International Greek Testament Commentary</i>
NTL	<i>New Testament Library</i>
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
SBL	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>
TBT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

The book of Revelation presents a heightened sensory space which is driven primarily by the formidable force of its animated soundscape.¹ The powerful representation of its soundscape is seen glaringly in diverse constructs of sounds and the acoustic management of its apocalyptic space.² These diverse constructs of sounds are loudly mediated through the vengeful voices of its martyrs (6:9–10 cf. 7:10), the painful cries of a pregnant woman (12:2), the dirge for a prostitute (18:1–24), the angelic trumpets of divine judgments (8:6, 7, 10, 12, 13; 9:1, 13; 11:15), the marriage song of the lamb (19:6–7), wailing kings (18:9–10), painful cries of merchants (18:11–16), weeping sea captains (18:17–19), the hordes of howling demons from the abyss (9:1–2, 9), the chanting voices of the four living creatures (4:8, 10; 5:8–10; 7:11–12; 11:16–18; 19:4), the anonymous voices from the divine throne (16:17; 19:5), the instructional voices of angelic guides (10:4, 8–11 cf. 19:9–10), the screeching wings of the demonic soldiers and locust-like army of the netherworld (9:9), the woeful song for predatory birds (19:4), the movements of warring horses (9:9 cf. 6:2, 4, 5, 8; 19:14), the roars of lions (10:3 cf. 13:2), the echoing speeches of the risen Christ (1:10, 15; 4:1), and the oratory powers of the Antichrist/the beasts (13:5–6, 15).³

¹ The term, “soundscape” was coined by Michael Southworth and popularised by R. Murray Schafer. See Michael Southworth, “The Sonic Environment of Cities,” *Environment and Behavior*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1969): 49–70; R. Murray Schafer, “Acoustic Space,” in *Voices of Tyranny, Temples of Silence* (Indian River: Arcana Editions, 1993), 29–44. Schafer’s work was originally published in the work, *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, eds. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), 87–98. Concerning the history of soundscape see Ari Y. Kelman, “Rethinking the Soundscape: A Critical Genealogy of a Key Term in Sound Studies,” *The Senses and Society* 5, no. 2 (2010): 212–234. See also Catherine Guastavino, “Current Trends in Urban Soundscape Research,” *Inter-noise and Noise-non Congress and Conference Proceedings* 261, no. 1 (2020): 5857–5868.

² For the past three decades, various approaches have been deployed in the studies of the book of Revelation. These include the use of intertextual explorations, historical methods, sociological investigations, empire studies, feminist hermeneutics and queer studies. Concerning the descriptions of the trends and trajectories of these studies in the context of empire studies and resistance in the book of Revelation see Shane J. Wood, *The Alter-Imperial Paradigm: Empire Studies and the Book of Revelation* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1–27.

³ The beast from the earth has the “voice” of the dragon or “spoke” with the “voice” of the dragon. See Revelation 13:11b.

Similarly, the acoustic environment in the book of Revelation is also seen subtly in the sonic textures of its inanimate worlds which are reflected audibly in the thunderclaps and flashes of lightening (6:1; 8:5; 10:3–4; 11:19; 14:12; 16:18), the sounds of hailstorms (8:7; 11:19; 16:21), the noise of millstones (18:22 cf. 18:21), the dashed pieces of broken pottery (2:27), the cries of an eagle (8:13), the joyful melodies of harps (5:8; 14:2; 15:2), the knocks on a door (3:20; 4:1 cf. 3:8), the violent tremors of earthquakes (6:12; 8:5; 11:13; 19; 16:18), the shaking of mountains (6:14–16; 8:7; 16:20), the blazing sounds of fire (1:14; 2:18; 4:5; 8:10; 19:12), the restless waves of the sea (8:7; 12:12; 16:3; 18:21 cf. 20:13; 21:1) and the sounds of rushing waters (1:15; 14:2; 19:6).⁴ Through these animated sounds, it appears subtle protests permeate the different rhetorical layers and social contestations in the book of Revelation.⁵ John seems to have appropriated the rhetorical power of this acoustic space (also) to confront, challenge and undermine the existing social/political order.⁶ The diverse sounds in the book of Revelation naturally turn the book into an important site of polyvalence, cacophony and the acoustic symphony of different voices.⁷ Significantly, the book of Revelation is one of the most intriguing acoustic spaces in the mapping of sounds in the entire New Testament.⁸ The world of Revelation is madly noisy, and dramatically loud with an unprecedented deployment of sounds for characterisation, plots and rhetoric.⁹

⁴ Recent studies in the book of Revelation have acknowledged the importance of sounds, sound patterns and structure in the public reading of the book by ancient professional lectors. See David R. Seal, “Hearing the Lector’s Voice: The Reception and Delivery of the Oracles in Revelation 1:7–8,” *Australian Biblical Review* 68 (2020): 89–99.

⁵ The book of Revelation reverberates dramatically with acoustic poetics. Recent studies of the book have engaged this dramatic character. See Roland England, *Worthy is the Lamb: The Book of Revelation as Drama* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2020).

⁶ Sounds contribute significantly to apocalyptic setting and genre. Apart from the single moment of silence in Chapter 8 verse 1, the entire book of Revelation is orchestrated by the presence, performance and activation of sound. This strategic deployment of sound underlines the rhetorical patterns of communication in the book of Revelation. For the use of the established communication patterns in the book of Revelation see Craig R. Koester, “The Rhetoric of Digressions: Revelation 7:1–17 and 10:1–11:13 and Ancient Communication,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 35, no. 5 (2011): 377–379.

⁷ In addition to the preceding representation of sounds, there are also others such as the altar speaking (16:7), the talking image of the beast (13:15), the gnawing sounds of excruciating pain of the rebellious (16:10), the mouths of the beast and the false prophets are full of croaking frogs (16:13), the sounds of collapsed cities (16:19), the sharp doubled-edge sword in the mouth of Jesus (19:15 cf. 1:16; 2:12) etc.

⁸ The presence of sounds in the book of Revelation is also complemented by the artful positioning of intermissions. For the study of such intermissions in Revelation see Ranko Stefanovic, “The Angel at the Altar (Revelation 8:3–5): A Case Study of Intercalation in Revelation,” *AUSS* 44, no. 1 (2006): 79–94.

⁹ Certain roles are given voices in the apocalyptic discourses of Revelation, even voices of persons or angels that are not expressed or recorded. For the different scholarly discourses on Revelation 10:4 particularly concerning the divine command to John not to record the

Besides, there are more references to sounds in the book of Revelation than in any other books of the New Testament. In particular, the acoustic intensity, the frequency and the sheer number of different artful uses of sounds in the book of Revelation attest to the centrality of sounds in the mapping of its apocalyptic environment.¹⁰ However, this management of sounds in the world of Revelation has additional significance because of its apocalyptic character. The apocalyptic universe of Revelation is submerged in a high pitch performance of eerie, sorrowful, celestial, human and inanimate sounds.¹¹ In this apocalyptic world sounds subtly enhance the strategic representations of persons, events and the message of its apocalyptic space.¹² As we are going to see, sounds in the book of Revelation are strategically deployed in its heightened space for polemic and combative ends. Sounds in solidarity with the divine being and the community of faith are deployed in protest against the imperial and systemic structures in the world of Revelation

Like the animated soundscape of Revelation, modern soundscapes are continually characterised by the growing numbers of vocal agitation, political rallies, gender campaigns, student riots, and social resistance against the formidable forces of institutionalised inequality, racial discrimination, economic injustice and imperial ideologies.¹³ Such a soundscape is increasingly marked

speeches of the seven thunders see Jean Pierre Ruiz, "Hearing and Seeing but not Saying: A Rhetoric of Authority in Revelation 10:4 and 2 Corinthians 12:4," in *Reality of Apocalypse: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation*, ed. David L. Barr (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006), 97–101.

¹⁰ See Edith M. Humphrey, "In Search of a Voice—Rhetoric through Sight and Sound in Revelation 11:15–12:17," in *Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse*, eds. Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist (St. Louis: Chalice, 1999), 141–160.

¹¹ Non-human sounds have a defining place in the contemporary study of soundscape. Concerning the important study of animal and non-human sounds see Ben De Bruyn, *The Novel and the Multispecies Soundscape*. Palgrave Studies in Animal and Literature (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 93–133, 133–182.

¹² The shouts of the "mighty angel" in Revelation 10: 1 with a "roar of a lion" are followed in sequence with the "voices of the seven thunders" (verse 3). Describing the communication taking place here, Lohmeyer suggests that the outcry of the "mighty angel" and the subsequent "cries" of the "voices of seven thunders" cannot be reduced to words since they are divine in orientation. The angel shouts and the responses by the "seven thunders" appeared to be a type of mysterious conversations between them that John was privileged to understand. See Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*. HNT 16 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970), 85.

¹³ See Christopher DeLaurenti, *Activist Sound: Field Recording, Phonography, and Soundscape of Protest* (Goldsmiths: University of London, 2020); Nisrine Chaer, "Sensing Queer Activism in Beirut: Protest Soundscapes as Political Dissent," *Women Rising* (2020): 173–184; M. Rizky Sasono, *Aksi: A Soundscape of Political Protest in Indonesia, 1998* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 2020); Celeste D. Moore, "Ray Charles in Paris: Race, Protest and the Soundscape of the Algerian War," *American Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (2019): 449–472; Konca Saher and Murat Cetin, "Music and Performance as Sonic Acts of Political Struggle: Counter-Political Soundscapes in Urban Realm," *Sociology Study* 6,

by the sounds of anger, mourning, and suffering.¹⁴ From the cries of injustice against American mediation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, the sounds of police brutality at Black Lives Matter protests, to the recent agitation on the streets of Sweden challenging COVID-19 restrictions, there is a growing agitation against existing structures of power across the globe.¹⁵ Similarly, the soundscape of the modern world has also seen in recent times a growing network of global activism by civil rights groups who have launched a vocal stand against state-sponsored massacres, patriarchal structures, sexism, the exploitation of global pharmaceutical companies, the climate crisis and the monopolies of neo-colonial financial institutions.¹⁶

Unfortunately, in modern times the soundscape of the African continent oscillates between the poles of dehumanising despair, the general passivity towards conditions of injustice and the subsequent acceptance of chronic suffering as part of divinely fated existence. Thus, critical discourses on the African soundscape often have a masked inherent ambiguity. For example, Andrea M. Grant has examined the African soundscape within the context of a postgenocide Rwanda, where the culture of silence dominates its Catholic population against the noisy sounds of an emerging Pentecostal Spirituality.¹⁷ James Parker has also approached African soundscape from the spectrum of the use of music during the genocide to incite violence.¹⁸ He investigated the impact of the Afri-

no. 6 (2016): 378–391; Christopher Wood, “The Line Beneath Your Feet: Representing the Urban Protest through Sound,” *LMJ* 25 (2015): 94–95; Nimalan Yoganathan, “Soundscape of Resistance: Amplifying Social Justice Activism and Aural Counterpublics through Field Recording – Based Sound Practices,” *Organised Sound* 26, no. 2 (2012): 201–210.

¹⁴ Mishra Pankaj explained the present global crisis from the perspective of extreme anger. Specifically, he described the close connection between ISIS fighters and the emergence of fanatic nationalism in the West. For Pankaj, anger arising from the general alienation of many people from mainstream modernity is largely responsible for the renewed incidents of anger which is manifested in the extreme racism, misogyny and sexism of the modern world. See Pankaj, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (New York: Farrar, 2017).

¹⁵ Abigail Wood, “The Cantor and the Muezzin’s Duets: Contested Soundscapes at Jerusalem’s Western Wall,” *Contemporary Jewry* 35, no. 1 (2015): 55–72; Mahsa Pakravan, “Soundscape and Sonic Memory: Dynamics of Jewish and Muslim Day – to – Day Social Interactions in Udlajan, Tehran,” *Sound Studies* 3, no. 2 (2017): 134–151; Shayna M. Silverstein, “Mourning the Nightingale’s Song: The Audibility of Networked Performance in Protests and Funerals of Arab Revolutions,” *Performance Matters* 6, no. 2 (2020): 94–111; Helle Malmvig, “Soundscape of War: The Audio-Visual Performance of War in Iraq and Syria,” *International Affairs* 96, no. 3 (2020): 649–666; Fernando Orejuela and Stephanie Shonekan, *Black Lives Matter and Music: Protest, Intervention, Reflection* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018).

¹⁶ See Kate Galloway, “Listening to and Composing with the Soundscape of Climate Change,” *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 7, no. 2–3 (2020): 81–105.

¹⁷ Andrea M. Grant, “Noise and Silence in Rwanda’s Postgenocide Religious Soundscape,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 48, no. 1–2 (2018): 35–64.

¹⁸ James Parker, “The Soundscape of Justice,” *Griffith Law Review* 20, no. 4 (2011): 962–993.

can soundscape in fuelling violence, particularly in mass killing and genocide.¹⁹ However, Katongole described the place of hope on the African continent in spite of the seemingly hopeless “soundscape of lament” across Africa.²⁰ For Katongole, hope is a resilient entity in modern Africa, and many communities in Africa still live in the ambience of hope despite the overwhelming lament of the African soundscape.²¹ In addition, Nora Makky has investigated the creative appropriations of sounds/music in the anti-apartheid and reconciliation movements in South Africa, Marleen de Witte has interrogated the dynamic religious character of the African urban soundscape, and Francis C. Madukasi has examined the use of the traditional African soundscape in conveying religious values and spirituality among the Igbo people of Nigeria.²²

Engaging the book of Revelation from the perspective of its soundscape, the present study seeks to harness the diverse appropriation of sounds in the book’s protests against imperial structures of injustice.²³ While past works in Revelation have engaged the formidable motif of resistance in the apocalyptic polemics of the author against imperial institutions of Roman power, it has not done so from the dynamic contour of its anti-imperial soundscape.²⁴ More specifically, the study engages the subtle deployments of the soundscape of Revelation 18 in the mapping of an anti-imperial and rhetorical agenda of the book of Revelation through the acoustic analysis of its weeping scenes. Using an acoustic-centred method, the project examines the poetics of sounds in Revelation 18 through the analysis of its proxy mourners, repetitive woes, dystopian sounds, vindictive celebration, submerged voices, sonic mimicry, the deployment of city-lament and other acoustic devices in the construct of the book’s resistance against the perceived injustices of Rome. Seen from this perspective, the book foregrounds the study of soundscape in Revelation through

¹⁹ Parker described the trial of Simon Bikindi, the Rwandan popstar musician who was accused of genocide before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in terms of “acoustic jurisprudence.” According to Parker, the African soundscape, in its component of pop music, was placed on trial in this particular case. See Parker, *Acoustic Jurisprudence: Listening to the Trial of Simon Bikindi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²⁰ See Emmanuel Katongole, *Born from Lament: Theology and Politics of Hope in Africa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 41–100.

²¹ Katongole, *Born from Lament*, 41–100.

²² Nora Makky, *Song in the Anti-Apartheid and Reconciliation Movements in South Africa* (Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2007); Marleen de Witte, “Encountering Religion through Accra’s Urban Soundscape,” *Encountering the City* (2016): 135–150; Francis C. Madukasi, “*Ikolo*: An Igbo Idiophone of Indigenous Religious Sacred Sound among the Aguleri People of Anambra State, Nigeria” (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Kwazulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 2016).

²³ In the category of protest noise, rhythms, music and radio technology sound have been used to breach exclusive borders. See Emma K. Russell and Bree Carlton, “Counter-carceral Acoustemologies: Sound, Permeability and Feminist Protest at the Prison Boundary,” *Theoretical Criminology* 24, no. 2 (2020): 293–313.

²⁴ See the discussion below in 1.4 *Soundscape, Resistance and Revelation*.

the dynamic relationship of sounds to the constructs of emotions, power and weeping scenes in the book of Revelation in general, and in conversations with the emotive soundscape of Chapter 18 in particular.

1.1 Weeping Scenes, Literary Markers and Functions in Revelation

Weeping scenes in literary works are strategic sites for heightened emotional expressions, subtle persuasions and creative negotiations.²⁵ These scenes often appropriate diverse cultural constructs in the performance of emotional space.²⁶ Remarkably, the conversations and emotional expressions at weeping scenes often take different forms depending on the rhetorical agenda invested on the subject/object, context and performance of the weeping scenes.²⁷ Recent studies have engaged the social constructs of sympathy, reconciliation, forgiveness and affection through the poetics of the weeping scenes.²⁸ The critical issues of mimesis, characterisation, gender, and the therapeutic character of the weeping scenes have also assumed central importance in these studies.²⁹ Valerie Hope has

²⁵ See Qi Kun, "Sonic Expressions of Cosmological Awareness: A Comparative Study of Funeral Rituals among Han Chinese Living in the Yangzi River Valley," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 46 (2014): 159–169; Alexander J. Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscape of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Michael Sizer, "Murmur, Clamor, and Tumult: The Soundscape of Revolt and Oral Culture in the Middle Ages," *Radical History Review* 121 (2015): 9–31.

²⁶ Recent studies have engaged the aesthetic and stylistics of the weeping scenes. There is also a quest to compare weeping scenes across literary works. For example, see David A. Bosworth, "Weeping in Recognition Scenes in Genesis and the 'Odyssey,'" *CBQ* 77, no. 4 (2015): 619–639.

²⁷ See Sheila P. Bayne, *Tears and Weeping: An Aspect of Emotional Climate Reflected in 17th Century French Literature*. Etudes Littéraires Françaises 16 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub Co, 1981); Rachel S. Mikva, "Weeping as Discourse between Heaven and Earth: The Transformative Power of Tears in Medieval Jewish Literature," *Crying in the Middle Ages* (2012): 186–202.

²⁸ See Heather Kerr, "Sociable Tears in *Tempest*," *Shakespeare and Emotions* (2015): 164–172; Michael Neill, "'Noises/Sounds, and Sweet Airs': The Burden of Shakespeare's *Tempest*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2008): 36–59; Stephen Pender, "Rhetoric, Grief, and the Imagination in Early Modern England," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 43, no. 1 (2010): 54–85. See also Robert Henke, "'Gentleman-like Tears': Affective Response in Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Play," *Comparative Literature Studies* 33, no. 4 (1996): 327–349; Anton Bosman, "Seeing Tears: Truth and Sense in *All is True*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (1999): 459–476.

²⁹ See Daniel Larlham, "The Felt Truth of Mimetic Experience: Motion of the Soul and the Kinetics of Passion in the Eighteenth Century," *Theory and Interpretation* 53, no. 4 (2012): 432–454; Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

investigated the central importance of mourning and the public performance of grief within the soundscape of ancient Roman society.³⁰ She described the use of speech, groaning, shouting, screaming, howling, crying and music in both scripted performance and natural expression of grief in ancient Roman society. For Hope, the soundscapes of mourning are not merely important cultural sites, but are invested with social conventions and expectations which granted more visibility at weeping and mourning sites to women than to men.³¹ Consequently, women both serve as “midwives” to children at birth, but also “midwives” for the dead, thus embodying in themselves the grief of ancient Roman families and communities.³² Similarly, Timothy Power has reiterated the significance of soundscape in the sacred construct of Greco-Roman religions, with the special attention to the loud character of their sonic personalities, iconic soundmarks, women cultic soundmaking, and performative soundmarks.³³ For example, Power engages the dirge of Greek women who imitate the weeping of Aphrodite over the death of Adonis in funeral performance.³⁴

In addition, Paul Westermeyer approaches the book of Revelation underscoring the significance of its soundscape in connection to the construct of lament. Westermeyer’s interest lies in the appropriation of the liturgies in Revelation in subsequent music and liturgy of the church.³⁵ He recognises both the jubilant character of liturgies in Revelation (4:8, 11; 5:9–13; 7:10, 12, 15–17; 11:15, 17; 15:3–4; 16:5–7; 19:1–7) and the centrality of “lament” in these liturgies. However, he does not pursue the importance of lament in the mapping of its soundscape.³⁶ Deconstructing the book of Revelation in passing, Stephen Moore acknowledges the use of “ghost-martyrs crying for vengeance” and the “strange angels” who were sent to execute justice on earth through “global terror and mass death.”³⁷ Ironically, these divine emissaries are commissioned to stop the tears of injustice on earth with more conditions of tears and suf-

³⁰ See Valerie Hope, “Vocal Expression in Roman Mourning,” in *Sounds and the Ancient Senses*, eds. Shane Butler and Sarah Nooter. *The Senses in Antiquity* (Oxford: Routledge, 2019), 61–76.

³¹ Hope, “Vocal Expression in Roman Mourning,” 75.

³² Hope, “Vocal Expression in Roman Mourning,” 75.

³³ Timothy Power, “Sound of the Sacred,” in *Sounds and the Ancient Senses*, eds. Shane Butler and Sarah Nooter. *The Senses in Antiquity* (Oxford: Routledge, 2019), 15–30. See pages 26–27.

³⁴ Power, “Sound of the Sacred,” 15–30.

³⁵ See Paul Westermeyer, “The Book of Revelation in Music and Liturgy,” in *Oxford Handbook on the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 431–446.

³⁶ Westermeyer, “The Book of Revelation in Music and Liturgy,” 431–432.

³⁷ Stephen D. Moore, *Untold Tales from the Book of Revelation: Sex and Gender, Empire and Ecology* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2014), 193.

fering.³⁸ From Moore's perspective, the scenes of weeping/mourning in the book of Revelation become problematic sites that generate pain and suffering for "John's ecclesia" and the rest of humanity.³⁹ On the other hand, Katherine Moloney has appropriated the laments in Revelation to address the injustice against textile factory workers in the Global South who are exploited by the unjust multinational companies and their local collaborators.⁴⁰

Framed within our present discourse, weeping scenes also occupy a strategic place in the acoustic mapping of the book of Revelation because they provide heightened sites of expressed emotions, and rhetorical arena of subtle contestations.⁴¹ These contestations feature directly in the four scenes of laments in Revelation (8:13; 9:12; 11:14; 12:12 and 18:10, 16, 19) where the literary marker of mourning (οὐαὶ "woe") is used.⁴² However, there are other weeping scenes in Revelation where other literary markers, mainly κλαίω ("weeping"), κράζω ("crying out"), κόπτω ("lament") and πενθέω ("mourning") are used without οὐαὶ.⁴³ An example of these weeping scenes are the crying of martyrs

³⁸ Concerning the perspective of evil in Revelation see Gregory Stevenson, "Perspectives on Evil in the Book of Revelation," in *Oxford Handbook on the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 275–289.

³⁹ Moore, *Untold Tales from the Book of Revelation*, 191.

⁴⁰ See Katherine Moloney, "Weeping, Warning, and Woe in Revelation 18: The Role of Lament in Establishing Collective Responsibility and Enabling Collective Repentance," *The Expository Times* 127, no. 7 (2016): 313–328.

⁴¹ There is also here an intense display of the emotions of pain, loss, fear of God's wrath and persecution. Concerning the emotional character of chapter 17 to 19 see Peter S. Perry, "Relevance Theory in the Performance of Revelation 17–19," *The Bible Translator* 66, no. 3 (2016): 246–257 especially pages 253–254.

⁴² Barbara Rossing has engaged the four scenes of woe in Revelation (8:13; 9:12; 11:14; 12:12 and 18:10, 16, 19) which she interprets from the perspective of God's lament over the earth (See Barbara R. Rossing, "Woe, Horror, Disaster or Lament? Revisiting the Translation of οὐαὶ in Revelation 8:13," *The Bible Translator* 70, no. 3 [2019]: 297–305. See also Rossing, "Alas for the Earth! Lament and Resistance in Revelation 12," in *The Earth Story in the New Testament*, eds. Norman Habel and Shirley Wurst. The Earth Bible 5 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 180–192). She notes the inconsistency among translators in interpreting "οὐαὶ" as "horror," "disaster," "trouble," and "alas" in the four occurrences of this word in Revelation (Rossing, "Woe, Horror, Disaster or Lament," 299). She opts for "alas" in all the occurrences of οὐαὶ in Revelation because it describes God's mourning over the earth and the additional sense of lament and horror at the ecological catastrophe (Rossing, "Woe, Horror, Disaster or Lament," 299). For Rossing, the four woe passages in Revelation should be rendered as "God's sorrow and mourning" over the earth, thereby foregrounding the apocalyptic significance of the weeping scenes in the rhetoric of the book. Rossing further suggests the use of the words, "watch out" or "oh no" as important replacement for woe in 8:3, 9:12; 11:14; 12:12 but not in 18:10, 16, 19. (See Rossing, "Woe, Horror, Disaster or Lament," 299–302).

⁴³ For example, in describing the cries of the martyrs under the altar (6:10), the text used ἐκραζαν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ("they cried/screamed in loud voice") and in 5:4 the seer "wept greatly" (ἐκλατον πολὺ). While these particular scenes of weeping do not have the presence

seeking vengeance (6:10), the painful cry of a pregnant woman (12:2), the intense weeping of the seer himself (5:4–5), the mourning of earth’s inhabitants at the Parousia (1:7) and the joyful cries of multitudes in heaven (7:9–10). In addition, the soundscape of these weeping scenes presents different layers of intertextual relationship between them, thus foregrounding their further significance in the larger rhetorical agenda of the book of Revelation.⁴⁴

Studies in this field show weeping scenes assuming specific functions in the book of Revelation; five such functions are worth noting here. Firstly, weeping scenes are deployed in the book of Revelation to convey characterising function. In Revelation 5 for example, the seer himself weeps profusely because there is nobody on earth or in heaven who can open the sealed scrolls from the hands of the One who sits on the throne. This scene of weeping at the opening of the book of Revelation is positioned there largely to characterise Jesus. In this scene of weeping, Jesus is projected as the Lord of the physical and cosmic order, who fulfils the task of taking up, and opening the sealed scrolls from the hands of God. The intense weeping of John underscores the helplessness of the created and the cosmic order, in the absence and inability of anyone to open the sealed scrolls. Through the device of the weeping scene, the Lamb is given supremacy over all human and spiritual entities, thus placing the Lamb over all. This same characterising function of the weeping scene is also seen in the representation of the mourners who will weep at the Parousia (1:7).⁴⁵ This group of mourners is the first mentioned in the book of Revelation. They are people who mourned at Jesus’ return because they had also pierced him.

of οὐαί, they describe acts of weeping done by the individual or community. In Chapter 18, however, οὐαί is present, but the text has additional markers that further enriched this weeping scene. For example, it uses κλαίω (“weep”) and κόπτω (“lament”) in verse 9, κλαίω (“weep”) and πενθέω (“mourn”) in verse 11, βασανισμός (“torment”), κλαίω (“weep”), and πενθέω (“mourn”) in 15, and (κράζω), (“crying out”), κλαίω, (“weep”) and πενθέω (“mourn”) in verse 19.

⁴⁴ For example, in the weeping scene of the pregnant woman in chapter 12, the word κράζει (“crying out”) describes the “crying” of this woman (v.2). Since κράζει is placed in close proximity to βασανισμένη (“torment”), some translators have rendered the phrase together with κράζει as, “she cried out in pain.” Consequently, the agonising cry of this pregnant woman in this scene of torment is connected intertextually to the eerie cries of angels (7:2, 10; 10:3; 14:15; 18:2), the crying of the martyrs (6:10) and the weeping of the sea captains (18:19) because κράζει is also used to describe these different cries. Similarly, the torment of this pregnant woman is also comparable to the painful ordeals of the inhabitants of the earth who took the mark of the beast (14:10) and the torment of the prostitute (18:17). See Marla J. Selvidge, “Powerful and Powerless Women in the Apocalypse,” *Neotestamentica* 26, no. 1 (1992): 162.

⁴⁵ The phrase, “all the people of the earth” “introduced the first multiethnic and universalistic language in the book of Revelation.” See Mikael Tellbe, “The Relationship among Christ-Believers and the Jewish Communities in First-Century Asia Minor,” in *Oxford Handbook on the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 153–167: 163.

While the short passage provides no detailed description of these individuals, both those who pierced him and the rebellious earth mourn at his coming. The mourning here largely characterises people identified by this very act of mourning. Strikingly, the characterising function of the weeping scene also recurs in the weeping by a multitude of beheaded souls whose identities are generally defined by their weeping under the altar in heaven – waiting and pleading for divine vengeance (6:9–10 cf. 20:4).⁴⁶

Similarly, the weeping scenes in Revelation often trigger the plots or direction of the apocalyptic materials. For example, the cameo appearance of Jesus in the first scene of mourning in 1:7 has immediate bearing on the subsequent messages of Jesus to the seven churches, especially in the context of the immediacy of his return, and the need for the churches to prepare themselves for his coming.⁴⁷ One could even say that the expectant longing for Jesus' return which was reflected in the mourning scene of 1:7 provides the tune and content for the message of John to the seven churches.⁴⁸ Similarly, the weeping scene involving John in Chapter 5 also lays the important foundation for the subsequent opening of the seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets, and the entirety of the visionary contents of the book of Revelation.

Furthermore, the weeping scenes function as important tools of polemic and subversive agenda. For example, the placement of the imperial government of Rome and its collaborators in Chapter 18 within a space of intense mourning clearly reverses the roles by this subtle change or exchange of positions, with the oppressors in the scene of weeping and the victims at the space of celebration.⁴⁹ Consequently, while the Christians in Revelation are happy with harps

⁴⁶ In contrast to this reading, David M. May suggests that this altar in 6:9 should be understood as an earthly imperial altar and not a heavenly one, based on numismatic evidence from Roman altars on coins, i.e. the Roman altar where Christians are waiting to be slaughtered. See May, "Interpreting Revelation with Roman Coins: A Test Case, Revelation 6:9–11," *Review & Expositor* 106 (2009): 445–465.

⁴⁷ David A. DeSilva describes the close relationship between key elements of this prologue to the epilogue of the book, thus suggesting that the prologue with its motif of mourning has direct bearing to the major parts of the book. See DeSilva, "X Marks the Spot? A Critique of the Use of Chiasmus in Macro-structural Analysis of Revelation," *JSNT* 30, no. 3 (2008), 253.

⁴⁸ John frequently used "ἰδοὺ" ("see") as form of direct address (1:7; 4:1, 2, etc.); it would seem that the purpose is "to show" (δείκνυμι) something (1:1; 22:6), underscoring the importance of the visual aspect. While the immediate context of this use of ἰδοὺ in 1:7 is to underscore the visual description of the coming of Jesus and the mourning component, it could also have direct implications and a connection to the subsequent graphic message of John to the seven churches. See Konrad Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," in *Oxford Handbook on the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 53–67: 54.

⁴⁹ Revelation juxtaposes the oppositional character of two communities, namely the followers of the Lamb and the followers of the beast (see 13:1–18; 14:9–11; 15:2; 16:2, 12–14; 17:3, 7–14, 16–17; 19:19–20; 20:4, 10). The community of the beast violently persecuted

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