

The One Who Sees Me: Finding Hagar through Literary Hermeneutics and Religious Interpretive Agency

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ABSTRACT

The figure of Hagar is a critical example of a marginalized woman of color whose actions and relationship to God models the course of theological liberation for the oppressed; but her story must first be her own. Examining the under-explored details of Hagar's story and voice renders them (scripturally and diasporically) significant to broadly understanding the marginalized lives of women of color. Placing the Hagaritic findings and interpretive moves of Delores Williams in dialogue with Arabic, African, and Africandescended literature and religious scholarship allows for a broader understanding of Hagar's experience to inform the lives of those who draw connection to her story.

FINDING HAGAR: THE SCOPE OF THIS PAPER

The multidimensional aspects of Hagar's story are critical for many overlooked women to be able to see themselves. Hagar's life events speak to the life events of many.

Reading the narrative of Hagar in the book of Genesis from a Christian womanist theological perspective, one is introduced to the dimensions of racial and economic trauma, issues with maternity, protest against the status quo and pre-determination of one's body and life, imagining escape as a mode of liberation, and comprising a "theology of the wilderness." Hagar's story includes these dimensions and more, but in relying so heavily on her (con)figuration within a particular arm of Christian theological analysis and hermeneutics, her own voice can become muffled or lost.

Through engaging the creative and interpretive work of women whose lives align with and emerge from a life like Hagar's this paper privileges the immediate contextuality of Hagar's story aiming to paint as clear a picture as possible what her concerns and hermeneutical lens into her own situation might be. This paper extends a theo-cultural analysis of Hagar's narrative and agency through places that attempt to hold her voice – namely, Middle Eastern literary and religious readings of her story. I offer dialogical space to think alongside Delores Williams' classic analysis of Hagar's life within *Sisters in the Wilderness* by considering the ontological and experiential parameters of Hagar's narrative as asserted within Arabic literature, most specifically Syrian-American academic, poet, and activist Mohja Kahf's *Hagar Poems* in order to better hear the sound and direction of Hagar's story. I find three interlocking themes through which to imagine and hear Hagar's legacy: water, abandonment, and wandering.

To be upfront, my work and wonderings here are not a historical retrieval project of any sort or a claim to expertise of Middle Eastern poetry, Islamic literature, or religious scholarship. This paper is, instead, a constructive theological exercise in recognition and imagination. Once key details of Hagar's identity and life are illuminated, this paper pushes us to consider what new forms *our* hermeneutical responses might take through holding the story that another tells *of themselves* (through ulterior textualities). Hagar is, according to Muslim feminist scholar Aysha Hidayatullah, "a strong exemplary symbol of female struggle in *Islam*, a woman who endured her trials in the wilderness...with Ishmael with unrelenting conviction and devotion to God."ⁱ She *can* be a place-

point for numerous stories—first being, her own.

What does Hagar say to us? In thinking about “saying” as voice and experience, the irony of Hagar’s life—her actual living—serves as the site from which we can answer this question and understand her significance. We hear her timbre not only at the register of her words, but mainly through her resilient and multidimensional existence.

A brief clarifying note before moving forward: in using communal language of “our,” “we,” and “us” within this paper I am speaking primarily to black women of African descent with either continental or diasporic identity as well as to minoritized Arabic women whose stories and identities are included and implicated in this paper’s explorations; overall, I hope that this paper inspires complex, constructive conversations amongst woman of color who hold the story of Hagar so closely to their own lives.

CONNECTING OPPRESSIONS: WILLIAMS’ CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

What does Hagar’s trauma mean to and within her culture,ⁱⁱ to and within her people? For many of us, our theological interest in the person of Hagar was hermeneutically born through the analytical and comparative work in Delores Williams’ timeless text, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*.

Williams’ groundbreaking scholarship frames Hagar as a figure-type reflective of the ontological reality of many marginalized women of color. *Sisters in the Wilderness* has done something that few Christian theological texts have done – it has become an artifact in liberative, contextual, and constructive theological scholarship. It has taken the story of the marginalized and revolutionized the way sound and just theological study must be done. Williams has placed the story of a minor character into major conversations and ideologies and within doctrinal elucidations such as those concerning election, providence, and theodicy.ⁱⁱⁱ

In particularizing Hagar’s story to the plight of the ante-bellum slave woman and postbellum mammy and black woman laborer, Williams does not narrow Hagar’s use, but broadens and illumines connection. She extends Hagar’s reach—expands her story, globalizes it. Her reading the life-events of Hagar as a parallel to the historical status of African-American women is a critical move that makes Hagar’s story applicable to the *entire* African diaspora. Williams’ hermeneutical intention is undeniable: Hagar is a global figure of women of color’s oppression.

In *Sisters in the Wilderness* she carefully and culturally explains *from where* and *from whence* Hagar comes. What I want to excavate further is how the Hagar’s of the world would describe from where and from whence they come in their own tongue. What does the story sound like from the perspective of a poor, young servant/slave girl from Egypt?^{iv} v Even with hermeneutical similitudes we might employ, Hagar’s narrative makes greatest contact with the experiences of her own (people).

THE HERMENEUTICS OF WATER, ABANDONMENT, AND WANDERING

What does Hagar sound like? How does she tell herself? How do her daughters tell their mother—their ancestors—tell themselves? Though sacred texts tend to posture Abraham and his actions favorably at best and neutrally at worst^{vi} within Hagar’s narrative, this will not be the focus of the remainder of this paper^{vii}—the shape and form of Hagar’s resilience, her struggle to survive and better her quality of life, to invoke Williams, will be centered instead, for this reality transforms the entire story.

Interrupting the genealogical narrative of the status quo, ontological and narrative reversal, inversion of subjecthood – *these* intersecting ideas are my primary interests within Hagar’s narrative. Being the one from whom new life and new people emerges signals Hagar’s staying power within our sacred texts and hermeneutical imaginations – the story of a slave *breaks into and alters* the story of her master’s, reverses the narratives, grants her space to be the subject.

Water: And (Divine) Will to Live

The first poem in Mohja Kahf's work, *Hagar Poems* gives an account of the fluidity of escape as physical prospect, mental wrestling, and spiritual consequence.^{viii} We hear about Hagar's relationship with those whom she escaped and the God whose goodness seems to escape her. The first stanza of the poem reads:

After the searing light
After abandonment
After the blow
that brings the head to the ground
and breaks the teeth
After the unrelenting vision
After the god who requires blood and obedience,
how do you find water?

The entanglement of revelation, brokenness, pursuit, and sacrifice culminates in the flesh, in the body – a marginal body.

How does one find water? Though a type of holy marginalization is at work in the life of Hagar, her objective is clear: How might my son and I live? How do I keep this body alive? We can hear this in physical and genealogical registers.

One keeps the body alive by seeking an invisible elusive and good thing, a good thing that springs forth from maternal body. The earth's body holds something that Hagar's body needs, and in this, revelation bombards bodily contact. Between woman who needs water and water spilling out of the dust, is God - Hagar's/Hajar's God.

God opened her eyes to see that which would ensure her and her son's survival. Using what some read as Abraham's filicidal parting gift, a water skin, Hagar is given eyes to see what will allow her to live in spite of Abraham's (in)actions. Once attentive to the water source, she uses Abraham's charitable weapon to keep her and her son alive. Though Abraham had no problem sacrificing *this* son, the God who saw Hagar allowed her to see another way, another means of life. Her survival, in spite of the odds, is an important detail.

In *living*, Hagar will become the matriarch of faith, and in this, refuse invisibility. She helps illustrate a principle turn in religious thought: a story of water and thirst illumines the God who provides and sustains. She thirsts, God sees.

Hagar's narrative also shows us that it is just as important to know the story of the one who thirsted as the one who rationed water, the one who was abandoned as the one who walked away, the one who journeyed away from what was once "home" from the one who deliberately returned home.

In other words, we must think the events of Hagar's life *with* those of Abraham; Textual scholar S. Nikaido asserts that Hagar's story parallels Abraham's in certain textual moments.^{ix} Divine intervention, such as the Angel Gabriel's appearance, notates not only a similar textual source, but also the interpretive implications of such a textual arrangement: in Hagar *receiving the same textual treatment* as the patriarch, Abraham, her story is positioned as a crucial one to hear in order to know *Abraham's* story, well. Nikaido states, "Hagar's story must be viewed on the same level as Abraham's."^x xi Hagar fighting to live becomes the "matriarchal interruption" of Abraham's story.

Hagar becomes matriarch alongside Abraham becoming patriarch - this signals a critical break in the dynamics of power and presence. This is a critical detail to keep in front of us: though a story of deep marginalization, Hagar's story is significant enough to determine parts of the text, directions of critical narratives.

Like the water, Hagar's story emerges seemingly out of nowhere, seemingly out of nothing,

and funds the continuation of life. Her story *is* the well, the spring that only divine guidance can illumine. She is not supposed to be there, and yet she is. She is the means by and through which life can be preserved, desertion can lead to civilizations, and drifting can found spiritual paths. She is the rightful interjection in a story we think we know. She is divine interpolation. God breaks apart the certain path of death by bringing forth water – in Hagar’s story breaking into Abraham’s, sustaining and creative new interpretive strands of life, perhaps this divine interruption can be read as a hermeneutical breaking in in order to break apart certain paths of death much like Islamic feminist scholars such as Riffit Hassan and Aysa Hidayatullah demonstrate in their being interlocutors of stories such as this within sacred texts.

Abandonment: And New Creations

In the poem, “Hajar’s Ram,” Kahf writes,

Maybe Hajar’s ram was the miracle
of the rest of her life. First finding
the will to live, cut off and alone,
then foraging in the desert
for a new sort of family,
one not based on ownership
or an identity foisted on you like a mask.

Abandonment - this is the narrative beginning of Hagar the desert matriarch,^{xii} the agentia force whose (social) abandonment leads to divine encounter. A distressed woman, a mother abandoned Hagar is stripped of options. She has no family to lean upon, only former masters—the Abrahams and Sarah’s to answer to who assume her role to be stand-in, her life to be given to this theo-social arrangement of kinship. She has been a slave for a while, a “part of the family” only when her body could hold the perception of a promise. She knows her life alongside theirs.

Hassan introduces the idea that Hagar might have been referenced earlier in the story of Abram and Sarai. Within the Qur’an, in the account where Abram and Sarai flee to Egypt—due to a famine—and upon resolving the issue of Sarai’s false naming as Abram’s sister—both Abram and Sarai are told to leave having accumulated many possessions, including slaves. It has been argued that one of these slaves gifted them might have been Hajar.^{xiii} A woman given over to slavery to a couple who later abandons her and her child does not fit well in a story that appears to be so tightly interlocked. The story of Abraham is connected to Hagar’s, yet Hagar’s story is one emphatic with narrative reversals, reversals that signal commitment not from Abraham, but from Abraham’s God.

Hagar’s thriving *through* aloneness and further constructing life out of nothing illumine her contradictory circumstances to be divinely influenced. A new covenantal commune, albeit an unconventional one, is the space from which her spiritual life blossoms: a weary woman, a young child, a God who sees her, who sees them – female and male, survives them and instills foundational narratives of faith into their story of abandonment.

Hagar’s story recalls the possibilities of genesis. Out of her poverty and suffering comes the possibility for new communal life, new instantiations and versions of faith-life. She is exiled for the sake of God; this exile, her “hijrah,” Hassan argues, eliminates any option outside of the saving grace of God. Hagar knows without a doubt, through her body that God saves, that God will not abandon. The one who was left alone, left behind becomes the one who God, through divine messenger, has sought out – so that she might live. Though Abraham’s story is interlocked with God’s action in the world, God fully seeing Hagar when Abraham does not signals a reversal, reminds us that desertion can birth new identities, identities spoken into being by God’s self.

Hagar’s abandonment is the condition from which new understandings of liberation can be born. Her story continues to be one of contrasts: Liberation is a desert experience, understanding one’s abandonment as the seeds from which new life, new family, true kinship will emerge. Her

story is still tied to Abraham's, but her liberation does not require Abraham's presence or action; it requires his desertion.

Wandering: And Stumbling. Forward

Kahf offers the following in the poem, "Hajar's Sandals":

We call the earth that mounds
around her sandals
Safa and Marwa.
Holy, these, God says:
Honor your mother's feet.

Over the lava-rock land,
people settle, hardening
into tribes and loyalties—
walking in the grooves of Hajar's sandals
and forgetting Hajar's ordeal.

Safa and Marwa mark sites of ritual travel during pilgrimages to Mecca. The world cannot forget this wandering. Looking for help for her and her son Hagar runs "frantically between Safa and Marwa" as she "searches desperately for a sign of hope."^{xiv} It is this "running and looking and praying," this fight for her and her child's life, Hassan explains, that gets the attention of the Archangel Gabriel who eventually guides her to a life-spring. For Hagar, wandering sets off divine (re)action. Wandering establishes something new, grants Hagar appearance and visibility. What greater subjecthood is there than to meet an agent of God in one's wandering?

A new civilization springs forth from under Hagar's feet, the ones which helped her pace her way towards hope, marking the ground as fertile for new life. Her dessert wanderings gesture towards God's saving power.^{xv}

Williams offers that religious experience "helped her [Hagar] and her child survive when survival seemed doomed,"^{xvi} but to be specific, it was wandering about, fashioning ways that were not ways *before* that brought about divine encounter, that contributed to her survival – a survival marked by eyes opened beyond the physical realm, beyond seeing wells, and towards a sort of internal understanding.

In her wandering Hagar learns that she is one *worth* seeking. She is worth God's search, God's speech, God's salvific acts. She is worthy of dialogue with divinity, of being known by God in this way.

Hagar authors nomadic spirituality, *creates a self* worth responding to. Her wandering call forth a God who not only sees, but who also finds her. Her found-ness is her subjecthood. Her found-ness finds its way into Abraham's story - his water ran out, his abandonment stung deep, and his leaving Hagar to wander around and fend for herself birthed opportunity for her to *remain* in his story. Her survival, her living *in spite of all* that conspired against her and her child's life, grants her ironic power.

This woman intent on surviving mothers the man through which Arab identity would emerge.^{xvii} Her social status did not deny her significance but enhanced it. Her slight presence in sacred texts illumines most her importance to and within religious narrative. She is, as historian Elizabeth Urban notes, "one of the pillars of Islamic consciousness" and "a symbol of Islamic identity."^{xviii}

CONCLUSION

In a story of perceived limit and lack, tremendous power is present, even if couched in irony. A God seemingly content with contradictions gives an old couple new life, a slave woman matron status, and the same thirsty, abandoned, wandering woman a son who will become a great nation. We are reminded that God's presence and power will not look as it should, therefore *our* stories can take different shapes, have greater meanings, as well.

Kahf's poetry and Arabic women's literature and religious scholarship center Hagar's being in the midst of impossibility, impossible being. Her resilience despite others' violent actions, neglect, or abuse of her story renders her actual voice incredibly poignant and powerful.

Hagar is every marginalized woman. She is a reminder of class divides, ethnocentric schemes, and sexual violations. She is women who refuse to be rendered invisible, to be violated, abused, scorned and forgotten by purveyors of, but also by, the text itself. She finds water, creates life anew, forges sacred paths as a testament to her power, as a reminder of her importance.

Delores Williams is right: Hagar's survival and quality of life are crucial lenses through which we should engage her story within our sacred texts, for in this, the experiences of the minoritized break into the stories of the majority—Abraham's story cannot be without Hagar's. Hagar's power is in her living *in spite of* abandonment. Her desperate search and will to live *is* her power. She not only survives the circumstances thrown at and done to her, but she builds life anew within them. Her wanderings don't kill her but serve as a generative aspect of new communal and ethnic life. New life is born from the edge of such hardships, hardships pressed upon *her own* body and leveled at her son's life.^{xix} Her power is in making dire circumstances the seeds of her legacy.

i Aysha Hidayatullah and Judith Plaskow's "Beyond Sarah and Hagar: Jewish and Muslim Reflections on Feminist Theology" from *Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities* Edited by Reza Aslan and Aaron J. Hahn Tapper (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 163. (Emphasis, mine)

ii In referencing the term "culture," I am thinking broadly about Middle Eastern culture as Hagar's experiences would fit within the social modalities of certain forms of culture life as ascribed to and lived out by Middle Eastern women.

iii To be clear, some still do normalize and justify her violent oppression primarily because it comes from a text some deem infallible, thus despite the nature and sometimes stubbornness of the field into which her ideas broke Williams' work has alerted many to the injustice of this hermeneutical complacency and revolutionized Christian theological and ethical vision towards the invisibilized voices in the texts many Christians assert as their spiritual lifeblood. Through her work, Williams alerts all of us to the dangers of tainted blood.

iv This master-servant relationship is also a practice with which Egyptian-American Islamic scholar Leila Ahmed also admits discomfort.

For me, one such point of contact within modern African social realities is the experience of African housemaids (house girls and house boys) in West African culture. See endnote 5.

v West Africa is not far from the mind of Delores Williams in her thinking about Hagar. Hagar's account has a transcendental element within it. Williams writes, "The theme of dark skin translates from Hagar's African heritage in Egypt to African American women's heritage from West Africa." (See Delores Williams, "Hagar in African American Biblical Appropriation" in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell, Editors (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 173).

The trajectory, again, highlights Hagar's global dimensionality: the Hagar of North Africa is connected to the stories of West African women who are, in turn, connected to African American women in the West. Hagar does not have to be solely considered North African for her appeal to reach into other

women's experiences. She does not have to be West African either for her story to echo across the continent.

I want to briefly stay in West Africa and sit with some cultural commonalities between Hagar's story and West African practices of sociality, namely the phenomenon of housemaid or domestic servant culture. The details of domestic servant identity—identity primarily applicable to poor young girls and women—are described best in the poetic work of Nigerian poet Ijeoma Umebinyuo's poetic work, *Questions for Ada*.

In her poem "The Concubine" Hagaritic parallels are put in front of us. A few relevant stanzas read as follows:

She [Chinelo] brought a housemaid
so on days when she returns late from work
she can shower and only have to wait
on him to return.
He came home two nights ago
on their second wedding anniversary
she made love to him
and patiently
waited for him to shake inside her,
however,
nothing prepared Chinelo
for the name he called out
while he slept.
The next morning, she gathered her clothes quietly,
bought a bus ticket for the housemaid
everyone knows a concubine
cannot compete with a wife
under the same roof.

(See Ijeoma Umebinyuo, *Questions for Ada*, 42).

The spirit of this poem, "The Concubine" seems to be written in the same "tone" as the poem on pg. 102 telling the story of the "little girl" presumably a housegirl, who kills the husband who has been raping her.

This is the reality of housemaid culture in places in West Africa, such as Nigeria. Usually the children, predominantly daughters of impoverished families from rural areas, are sent to work for well-to-do families in wealthier areas. Part of what anthropologist Olatunde B. Lawuyi calls the "informal economy" of Nigeria, these girls, women, and sometimes boys work 14-18 hours per day taking care of the household duties as well as children of the house while being paid primarily through food and lodging, but sometimes in educational opportunities (See Olatunde B. Lawuyi, "Education, Mobility, and Gender within the Nigerian Formal Economy," *Sociologus, Neue Folge / New Series*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (1990), pp. 39-53, esp. 41) & <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/nigeria-house-girls-trafficking-beatenabused-servants-modern-slavery-titi-14-case-study-a7856861.html>).

The women of the households, or madam's as they are called, seek these servants to help lighten their burden of being expected to work both outside and inside the home.

One's housemaid position can be dangerous. The abuse that some of these housemaids, the young girls especially, experience range from physical to sexual, from punishment rooted in jealousy of the wife towards her to sexual abuse from the male head of the household. Though the male head of the house or the "master" likely pays for the housemaid, Lawuyi asserts, "the control of the servant is vested in the madam. The master then acts as an arbiter when there is conflict between the servant and the madam." (Lawuyi, 42).

The woman of the house controls the fate of the young, female housemaid.

Hagar's story is not too far off from the West African house girl; there are parallels here between Hagar's narrative and West African domestic and economic practice.^v When I first encountered William's cultural exegesis of Hagar's story, my mind immediately went to this domestic Hagaritic location—though culturally distinct and geographically distant, their experiences are illustrative of common social mores.^v

Hagar as a poor Nigerian house girl is one person through which to imagine the biblical figure that, keeping William's trajectory in mind, brings her closer in regional and cultural contact to Western experiences of feminized servanthood and slavery. However, it would be hermeneutically best for us to first locate her ever closer to her culture. If we think of how this sacred figure, her message, and her impact transcend time and thus remains true to the ideological, social, and spiritual realities of women who lead similar lives, who share her experiential lineage we gain an even clearer picture of who Hagar should mean for us. In other words, what can we learn from what Arabic culture has to say about the figure of Hagar? I turn to poetry and religious interpretation of Hagar in order to sharpen this critical question in front of us.
^{vi} This is to the chagrin of some Muslim feminist scholars who would rather employ a critical reading of the text. Muslim feminist scholar Aysha Hidayatullah aptly notes, "patriarchal structures...are built into our [Muslim and Jewish women's] genealogy and interactions." See Aysha Hidayatullah and Judith Plaskow's "Beyond Sarah and Hagar: Jewish and Muslim Reflections on Feminist Theology" from *Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities* Edited by Reza Aslan and Aaron J. Hahn Tapper (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 163.

^{vii} Hidayatullah makes it clear that Muslim feminist scholars are tasked with reading the Qur'an as it is and wrestling with the interpretation of the text as it is believed to be "the intact word of God unaltered by human hands." See Aysha Hidayatullah and Judith Plaskow's "Beyond Sarah and Hagar: Jewish and Muslim Reflections on Feminist Theology" from *Muslims and Jews in America: Commonalities, Contentions, and Complexities* Edited by Reza Aslan and Aaron J. Hahn Tapper (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 168.

^{viii} Kahf has some interesting and potentially troubling content that imagines Hagar's searing anger leveled at a righteous-acting Sarah called "Page Found Crumpled in the Wastebasket by Hagar's Writing Desk" (12). The tone is one of upset, however, the anger of the poem is not bothersome, in fact it is quite appropriate. What is questionable is one of the "insults" that Hagar levels at Sarah. She states, "You mealy mouthed bitch/you House Negro of womankind." Within the U.S. context amongst those in the community against which such language and tone has been leveled as insult, the perceived denigration of Sarah's sense of self in being called a "House Negro of womankind" might land offensively. What can be read as implied in that language is a racialized overtone to the dialogue.

^{ix} In at least one moment, she precedes Abraham's story. Nikaido points us to the story of Ishmael versus Isaac's brushes with death. S. Nikaido notes the intertextual nature of divine intervention as the text within both narratives reads, "...an angel of the God called from heaven and said..."

^x S. Nikaido, "Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures: An Intertextual Study," *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 52 Fasc. 2 (April 2001): 222-223.

^{xi} Beer-lahai-roi is the site of Hagar's continued life as new life. Her sustained life interjects into Abram's genealogy.

To clarify, I am not offering a redemptive or apologetic reading of neither Hagar's enslavement, sexual violation, nor forced situation of escape into a harsh and unforgiving environment but aim instead to notate her constant presence and interjection into the monolithic story of Abram/Abraham as revolutionary and a potential point of (ironic) resistance.

^{xii} Savina J. Teubal, *Hagar the Egyptian: The Lost Tradition of the Matriarchs* (San Francisco, 1962), 39.

^{xiii} Riffat Hassan, "Islamic Hagar and Her Family," in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell, Editors (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 150-151.

^{xiv} *Ibid*, 154.

^{xv} *Ibid*, 153.

xvi Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 109.

xvii Elizabeth Urban, "Hagar and Mariya: Early Islamic Models of Slave Motherhood," in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History*, Edited by Matthew S. Gordon and Kathryn A. Hain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 233.

xviii Ibid, 227.

xix Riffat Hassan, "Islamic Hagar and Her Family," in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell, Editors (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 164.

Riffat Hassan claims as having "the faith and courage to venture out of the security of the known into the insecurity of the unknown and carve out, with their own hands, a new world from which the injustices and inequities that separate men from women, class from class, and race from race, have been eliminated."

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