

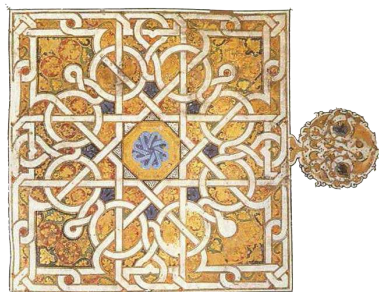
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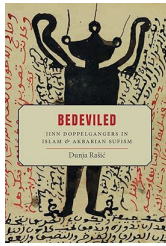
on page 11 which in subsequent editions should be excised.

To conclude: This new edition of the beloved prayers of the week is indispensable for those who wish to delve further into the mysteries and beauties of this remarkably complex text. While the first edition will, no doubt, continue to be of great value for those content to recite the prayers in English, it is this reviewer's recommendation that those who already possess the first edition, but would like to appreciate these prayers as they were composed by a master of the Arabic language, acquire the second one and the Arabic recording that accompanies it. The revisions to the translation are, for the most part, welcome improvements, and the additional notes, Arabic text, and transliteration essential for the appreciation of these unmatched prayers of the heart.

Angela Jaffray



***Bedeveled: Jinn Doppelgangers in Islam & Akbarian Sufism* by Dunja Rašić. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2024, 206 pages.**



‘Everything exists in pairs, one set against the other, and He made nothing that is incomplete’ (Sirach 42:24). This quote opens Dunja Rašić’s impressive study, and indeed serves as an apt introduction to what unfolds within the covers of *Bedeveled*.¹ The three clauses of Dr. Rašić’s chosen epigraph map nicely onto her aims in this book: (a) to provide

1. The quote is from the Book of Sirach, an apocryphal Jewish book of wisdom dated to the 2nd century BCE. It therefore more firmly belongs to the biblical tradition (belonging to Catholic and Orthodox Old Testament canons, though not included in the Hebrew Bible canon); however, broad ties between biblical and Qur’anic traditions might support its use in an Islamic context (see Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur’an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford, 2019) and Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx, eds., *The Qur’an in Context* (Brill, 2009)). More specifically, its particularly relevant theme of divine oppositional pairing as part of the completeness of creation makes it especially fitting for a work on doppelgangers, even in the Islamic tradition.

an account of jinn doppelgangers ('everything exists in pairs'); (b) to examine their relationships with human beings ('one set against the other'); and (c) to place these paired relationships in the context of a complete, ultimately good creation ('He made nothing that is incomplete'). Rašić's study thus focuses on the pairing of jinn doppelgangers and their human counterparts and demonstrates the divinely created cosmic role these antagonistic relationships play, through a discussion of their place in the problem of evil. *Bedeviled* succeeds in meeting (and even surpassing) all three of these aims. It is a pioneering work of jinnealogy from a prolific and promising scholar of Akbarian Sufism.

The book is divided into four chapters. Rašić writes that she was inspired by the Akbarian model of the three great books of reality (the Qur'an, the world, and human beings) in the structure of her work (24). Chapter 1 ('Neither of the East, nor of the West') provides a background of jinn doppelgangers in Muslim traditional sources, including the Qur'an. Chapter 2 ('Signs on the Horizons') moves to the macrocosm and discusses doppelgangers in their cosmic context, as one subset of the species of jinn in our world. Chapter 3 ('The Devil Within') focuses on the microcosm, moving toward a study of jinn and their place within or relationship with human beings. Finally, Chapter 4 ('The Red Death') moves beyond the tripartite understandings of reality, building upon the theoretical knowledge already established to examine practical spiritual practices to subdue jinn doppelgangers.

Chapters 1 and 2 align best with the first aim identified above (to provide an account of jinn doppelgangers). Although Rašić explains that she originally set out to write 'an in-depth study of the widespread notions of jinn in Muslim cultures and societies' (9), she wisely narrowed her scope of study to one type of jinn in particular: the jinn doppelganger (*qarīn*, pl. *quranā*). Even so, Rašić's book uncovers a wealth of information about the *quranā*, providing a virtual encyclopedia of knowledge about jinn doppelgangers in particular but encompassing a wide range of other jinn subspecies in her attempt to differentiate *quranā* from other forms of jinn.²

2. Another English-language scholarly source of information on the jinn (more broadly) is Amira El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and the Intelligent World of the Jinn*

In Chapter 1, Rašić outlines the state of the field of jinn studies ('jinnealogy'), using both medieval sources from Islamic normative tradition and modern scholarship on the jinn. Although Rašić notes that oral traditions have received more scholarly attention, her own study 'give[s] precedence to jinn doppelgangers, written traditions, and Ibn 'Arabī's works in particular [as] the role of jinn in Ibn 'Arabī's teachings remains one of the last studied aspects of Akbarian Sufism until today' (15). However, even with this focus on Ibn 'Arabī, one particular strength of the book is its integration of Akbarian and other Muslim voices, which provides a rich background within which Akbarian traditions may be placed. Thus, Chapter 2 provides a substantial foundation of jinn studies, types, and characteristics from a number of Islamic sources; these include Ibn Sina, Ibn Barrajān, al-Ghazālī, 'Aṭṭār, al-Jāhīz, al-Qazwīnī, al-Qushayrī, and the Brethren of Purity, among others (throughout). She also incorporates concepts and practices from Palestinian, Maghribī, and other traditions (for example: 53, 61, 126). In so doing, Rašić succeeds in her first aim: to present an in-depth study of jinn doppelgangers, within their jinnealogy and within Akbarian tradition. Though at times dense due to the abundant materials Rašić has successfully collected for the reader, this book will serve as a foundational text for any future studies of jinn – *qarīn* or otherwise, in both Akbarian and other schools of thought – through her extensive research, analysis, footnotes, and bibliography pointing toward other resources.

The first two chapters also substantiate Rašić's Akbarian definition of a *qarīn*. She effectively problematises the 'scholarly equivalence of "jinn" and "demons"', pointing out that this translation 'creates a false sense of familiarity with the notion of jinn in classical Islam' (28). Rather than using equivalencies from other traditions to understand the jinn, Rašić provides a working definition rooted in Islamic

(Syracuse, 2009). Rarely referenced in Rašić's work, El-Zein's book focuses on the jinn as intermediary creatures 'constantly moving' between the visible and invisible worlds (xviii), their differentiation from angels and demons, and (especially) their relationships with human beings (in pre-Islamic thought, classical Islamic sources, in occult practices, and through jinn actions such as possession, deception, and poetic inspiration). El-Zein's main study does not always differentiate among jinn species, but her appendix provides a brief introduction to the different classes of jinn (139–47). Unlike Rašić's study, El-Zein's work does not specifically engage with the *quranā'*.

traditions (and Akbarian Sufism in particular). Jinn are considered to be one of the six species of the universe, often considered to be constituted (primarily) from the essence of fire. They are both subtle and corporeal, being able to take on physical forms at times.

In the end, Rašić's attempt to define *quranā'* becomes an examination of the ways in which different subspecies of jinn may be differentiated from one another. Jinn doppelgangers are 'generally understood to be a *jinni* companion and a doppelganger of human beings' (9). Doppelgangers are distinguished from other types of jinn through 'their diet' (finding sustenance through their human's evil deeds, 32), 'their place of residence (the bloodstream [and heart] of the human)', 51), and their behavior (tied to one particular human being – to whom their eternal, moral fate is tied as well, 606–1). A *qarīn* is conceived at the same moment as its human counterpart (9). *Quranā'* are often understood to be a mirror of their particular human being, tied to them in attributes of age, health, and even physical characteristics such as dominant handedness (61). Although several of the example stories Rašić includes of the *quranā'* indicate that a *qarīn* may be the same sex as its human counterpart (e.g., 61), she also notes that 'it was mostly assumed that a male *jinni* will serve as a doppelganger to a human female and vice versa' (38). An exploration of this question – why would *quranā'* mirror their human counterparts in every attribute except sex or gender? – would have been an interesting addition to Rašić's characterisation of jinn doppelgangers.

Chapter 3 takes up the second aim above, 'one set against the other,' exploring the particular relationship between *quranā'* and humans in Akbarian thought. Ibn 'Arabī 'explicitly referred to a *qarīn* as the devil in the heart,' although later Akbarians (such as al-Qayṣarī) argue jinn cannot touch the heart directly (96). However, the placement of the *qarīn* within the human being was associated with its behavior: a *qarīn*'s main temptations to its human are through 'sneaking whispers' (*al-waswās al-khannās*, Q.114:4; p.95). A *qarīn* attacks its human in accordance with its human's own particular weaknesses (propensity toward worldly pleasures, doubt, arrogance, etc., 97–101). Due to jinn temptations and because the fates of a jinn doppelganger and its human counterpart are intertwined, it is imperative that human beings wrestle with and overcome their *qarīn*; thus, this is the topic of Chapter 4.

In this final chapter, Rašić engages with both practical and theoretical knowledge, bringing together Ibn ‘Arabī’s discussion of the problem of evil with his advice on one’s own relationship with their jinn. A subtext to this chapter (and to the project more generally) is the question of why a study of jinn is necessary at all when studying Akbarian Sufism. The book earlier established that Ibn ‘Arabī understands God’s names to be ‘embodied in the world He created’ (4); more specifically, the jinn (including *quranā*) may be seen as embodiments of the divine name *al-Mudhill*, or the One who Leads Astray (16). Chapter 4 takes up this line of thought, reiterating that Ibn ‘Arabī believes that no created being is beyond redemption, and that God loves ‘all His creatures – including those He described as “evil”’ (104, 106). Rašić therefore suggests that a treatment of jinn cannot be separated from a discussion of the problem of evil (corresponding with the third and final aim outlined above, ‘He made nothing that is incomplete’). If, indeed, God has created a ‘good’ world and asks human beings to follow His will through the path of Islam, why has He created the jinn to tempt humans away from Islam?

Ibn ‘Arabī answers this question by affirming that ‘the world would *not* be a better place without *quranā*’ (108). Instead, he sees jinn doppelgangers as potential benefits to humankind. If piety is proven by struggling with (*jihad*) and ‘overcoming temptations,’ then the temptations of the jinn provide opportunities for human beings to practice their devotion (111). The jinn, then, play an important spiritual role in Akbarian cosmology, allowing the spiritual seeker to see God more clearly (through His self-disclosures in *all* of creation) and overcome temptations that draw one away from God in order to ascend toward Him (129). Although Chapter 4 includes several discussions on the practical ways in which individuals might conjure their *qarīn* or engage with them directly through spiritual retreat or invocations (113–25), Ibn ‘Arabī warns of the dangers of these direct practices. Instead, he suggests that the best way to confront one’s *qarīn* is through one’s own purity of character. Ultimately, then, Ibn ‘Arabī’s concern with the jinn is a practical one: he engages in jinnealogy not for the sake of speculation, but due to his practical concern with the spiritual salvation of his Sufi followers. Remaining steadfast in one’s faith will also convert one’s *qarīn* to Islam, thus securing spiritual ascension for both jinn and human partners.

Bedeveled offers two core contributions to Akbarian and Islamic studies. First, it provides a detailed jinnealogy: information about jinn, their subspecies, their behaviors, and their hierarchical place in the Akbarian cosmos – as well as a comprehensive study of jinn doppelgangers in particular. As an extensively researched monograph, Rašić's work will provide a good starting point for future studies on the jinn from a range of fields, including occultic, religious, cultural, historical, or literary studies. Contextual analysis of particular narratives (medieval or modern) about human interactions with their jinn doppelgangers or anthropological explorations of contemporary concepts of jinn would also benefit from Rašić's book to inform the background of modern jinn interactions.

Second, Rašić's book implicitly – but importantly – pushes back on the notion that Islam (or even Akbarian Sufism) is a monolith by incorporating many voices into her discussion and analysis. As mentioned above, Rašić integrates sources from a variety of Muslim thinkers (both Akbarian and not) in order to contextualise her discussion of Ibn 'Arabī and Akbarian thought, and to show where Ibn 'Arabī aligns with or diverges from other lines of thought (about the jinn in particular) in Islamic traditions. Much of this source-work is also provided in the endnotes, where the reader can find further descriptions from various Muslim voices. The illustrations given throughout the book (both narrative and pictorial) are especially relevant and helpful in presenting multiple interpretations and frameworks for the reader. Vivid stories are presented throughout in order to engage the reader and broaden one's understanding; see, for example, the story of Abū Madyan and Iblis (125), Sahl al-Tustarī and Iblis (106), or a descriptive tradition from Upper Egypt (61). The 17 artistic illustrations included are also much appreciated. One might have liked to see more artistic analysis of the images. Such artistic examination was a strength of Rašić's first monograph (*The Written World of God*), in which she provided detailed analysis of Ibn 'Arabī's own diagrams of the Arabic letters.³ Most pictures incorporated in *Bedeveled*, however, are glossed with a brief summary description, leaving the reader to their own exploration of its visual intricacies and interpretive artistic choices. Nonetheless, the included images are beautiful, engaging,

3. Dunya Rašić, *The Written World of God* (Oxford, 2021).

and illuminating. Rašić's narrative and artistic examples serve to showcase the rich diversity of Muslim interpretations of jinn and jinn doppelgangers. By so doing, Rašić makes an important case for a heterogeneous understanding of Islam, of Akbarian Sufism, and even of the jinn.⁴

This book makes a unique contribution as a foundational source on jinn and jinnealogy and as an encyclopedic reference on jinn doppelgangers (*quranā'*) in particular. It succeeds in the author's aim to discuss *quranā'* in the context of their jinn species, their human relationships, and their place in Akbarian spiritual cosmology. Furthermore, *Bedeviled* provides a rich, engaging work that illuminates the diversity of thought and practices surrounding jinn within and beyond Akbarian Sufism in the medieval Islamicate world. I would recommend it to graduate students and scholars interested in jinn, Akbarian Sufism, or mysticism and occult studies more broadly, and to those curious about supernatural beings in Islamic imagination. It will also be of interest to those who seek to better understand Ibn 'Arabī's works and teachings. *Bedeviled* is thus a valuable contribution to fields of Islamic Studies and Sufi Studies, as well as to the (niche) study of jinn in Ibn 'Arabī's writings.

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4. See, too, Rašić's discussion on varied definitions of the term 'jinn' among Muslim cultures and thinkers (27).