

UNDERSTANDING AS THE EMBODIMENT OF MYSTERY:  
APPROACHING DISCIPLESHP IN MARK  
ON A POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST KEY

BY

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Josephus, Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>BDAG</i>	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
<i>BI</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>Bib. Sac.</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CTC</i>	Christian Conference of Asia Commission on Theological Concerns
<i>ER</i>	<i>Ecumenical Review</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>Nic. Eth.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>FS</i>	<i>French Studies</i>
<i>Inst. Orat.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JTAS</i>	<i>Journal of Transnational American Studies</i>
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint (Greek translation of Hebrew Bible)
<i>Mel. Th.</i>	<i>Melita Theologica</i>
<i>MT</i>	<i>Modern Theology</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Postcolonial Text</i>
<i>RC</i>	<i>Religion Compass</i>
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>

*USQR*      *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*  
*WW*      *Word & World*

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Question of Markan Discipleship

For Western scholarship, christology and discipleship have been central in interpreting the Gospel of Mark. Christology is closely connected to discipleship, as interpreters regard knowledge of Jesus' identity as crucial to discipleship.<sup>1</sup> To the

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<sup>1</sup> Boring understands Mark as a theological document, whose theology is “principally a christology.” Eugene Boring, “The Christology of Mark: Hermeneutical Issues for Systematic Theology,” *Semeia* 30 (1984), 125-51. According to Trainor, “It is evident that apart from Mark’s preoccupation with christology and presentation of Jesus, the second most important theme concerns discipleship.” Michael F. Trainor, *The Quest for Home: The Household in Mark’s Community* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001), 9. Donahue and Harrington also state, “Mark’s total narrative is not only about the identity of Jesus but also about the challenges inherent in following him.” John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002; 2005), 121. Telford also regards the combination of christology and discipleship as significant in Markan theology. William R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999). There is a volume that deals with these inseparable topics: Suzanne Watts Henderson, *Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Cook introduces scholars who form their outlines of the Gospel according to the main themes of christology (Rudolf Grob, M. J. Lagrabe, Dieter Lührmann, Léonard Ramaroson, David J. Hawkin, Gottfried Rau, Petr Polorný, Maurice Goguel) and of Jesus’ relationship with the disciples (Robert Butterworth, Gustav Wohlenberg, Jean Delorme, Joachim Gnilka, Alfred Kuby, Hugh Anderson, David Blatherwick, Étienne Trocmé). These references show that scholars have regarded both themes as dominant in Mark. Particularly, Cook contends that the christological outlines all illuminate “the power and richness of the portrait of Jesus’ identity” in Mark. John G. Cook, *The Structure and Persuasive Power of Mark: A Linguistic Approach* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 25-26; 30-33. Johansson surveys Markan scholarship’s christological investigation from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present date. Daniel Johansson, “The Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark: Past and Present Proposals,” *CBR* 9, no. 3 (2011): 364-92.

interpreters, the disciples as depicted in Mark do not properly understand who Jesus is and thereby fail to follow him.<sup>2</sup> Such understanding of Markan discipleship is imbued with Western thought insofar as it emphasizes rationality and autonomy by describing an individualistic quest for knowledge. Since the Enlightenment, the Western tradition has fostered faith in reason and progress, as represented by a Cartesian conception of the knowing subject and a Kantian notion of the rationally autonomous subject.<sup>3</sup> Thus, among Western interpreters such misunderstanding is viewed as hampering discipleship in Mark and is considered a failure.

Yet, the ideological implications and consequences of this dominant line of interpretation are more serious than presumed. While scholars allege that “those outside” may hear and see but cannot understand, they themselves take the position of insiders in the kingdom and true disciples as distinguished from the disciples as Mark describes them (4:10-12).<sup>4</sup> These scholars are able to unveil the secret and thus possess proper knowledge of the historical Jesus or the theological Christ. Their epistemological certainty and superiority exclude the outsiders’ knowing by assuming that outsiders lack comprehension or sufficient knowledge. In other words, such a critical position, the

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<sup>2</sup> Keck maintains that each story of the Gospel consists of the work of Jesus and the failure of the disciples in understanding. Leander Keck, “The Introduction to Mark’s Gospel,” *NTS* 12 (1965/66): 352-70.

<sup>3</sup> David Couzens Hoy, *Critical Resistance: From Poststructuralism to Post-critique*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), 165.

<sup>4</sup> When I argue that the critics’ possession of proper knowledge qualifies them as proper disciples in the sense of Mark, I do not mean that they claim their religious identity as Christian disciples, but instead am pointing out that the way they interpret makes them insiders who construct the system of knowledge and discourse. The term “insider,” therefore, does not denote their own religious-theological claim, but has ideological implications.

product of a contextualized scholarly construction, results in the exclusion from discipleship of those who do not possess the knowledge that the scholars themselves have created.

While I do not wish to construct a strict binomial between Western rationality and Asian embodiment, I do find it imperative to situate my reading of Mark within a specific context—a combined Asian and Asian American context, just as Western interpretations of Mark are similarly situated in nature—the context of the Enlightenment.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, therefore, my context is one where the religious dispositions and practices of the Korean people—based on spiritual experience, embodiment, and relationality—have been fused into the Christian faith, as believers have cried out under colonial and

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<sup>5</sup> I am conscious of the potential dangers of such a distinction. First, it may repeat and thereby reinscribe the essentialism set by Western Orientalism: while the Oriental is emotional, spiritual, and experiential, the West is cerebral, rational, and scientific. I do not intend to fix these stereotypes but to locate such construction in historical contexts while criticizing ideologies embedded in such construction. Another danger may be “affirmative Orientalism,” as Richard Fox points out, for the characteristics that are denigrated in Orientalism are reevaluated from a positive perspective as seen in the nationalist discourse. Richard G. Fox, “East of Said,” in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 144-56, cited by R. S. Sugirtharajah, “Orientalism, Ethnonationalism, and Transnationalism,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark Brett (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 425. However, even when Asian spirituality is rediscovered, it does not imply that Asians lack rationality whereas Westerners are devoid of spirituality. The reason I refute is “the naturalized, universalized reason” advocated by Western modern rationalists. I agree with Adam that everyone has his or her intellectual position regarding reason. A. K. M. Adam, *What is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 14. I argue that reason should be not only demystified but also contextualized. When I highlight Asian characteristics such as embodiment, spirituality, and relationality, it is not to re-create the Asian Self but to affirm differences, reclaiming the position of the Othered self without claiming counter-hegemony. Eventually, I aim to dismantle boundaries at various levels between West and East while disempowering the knowledge of the powerful by way of using it to reorganize power relations in knowledge construction.

patriarchal oppressions.<sup>6</sup> For all believers, and especially for women, the central question in the midst of such suffering is not who Jesus is but rather whether Jesus, Son of God, is with us.

On the other hand, in addition to this history of suffering, shared with many peoples of other colonized Asian countries, Korean immigrants and their descendants in the United States (U.S.) have, like all Asian immigrants, found themselves in a situation of oppression within the country—facing cultural violence, like racialization and ethnicization, as well as economic exploitation and social injustice. The process of racialization and ethnicization in particular has involved two distinctive dimensions of “othering”—paganization and feminization. Thus, Koreans and Korean Americans have become both a religious Other, despite their profound religious experiences and practices, and a feminine Other, despite their gender-distinct roles in their own communities. As a result, they remain invisible, silent and absent, within the imperial context of the U.S. It is this context of mine, therefore, as a woman outsider to and in the West that I reconsider Markan discipleship, arguing for a knowing that is based in the embodied experience of mystery.

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<sup>6</sup> While my socio-cultural location does not become the direct object of analysis in such work, this location instead is “made the instrument for illuminating the biblical text.” Stephen D. Moore, “A Modest Manifesto for New Testament Literary Criticism: How to Interface with a Literary Studies Field that is Post-Literary, Post-Theoretical, and Post-Methodological,” *BI* 15 (2007), 18.

## Markan Scholarship on Discipleship

While Markan scholarship's concerns with christology are extensive, the primary object of my inquiry is how discipleship has been approached in Markan studies. In so doing, however, I will also examine christological questions, insofar as they are explicitly related to discipleship. I shall begin by dealing with the theological statement of Jesus' identity as found in William Wrede's *The Messianic Secret*, for it initiated the modern debates surrounding Mark's christology, from which the question of discipleship has arisen.<sup>7</sup> Then, I shall introduce the historical-theological construction of such christologies, which are accompanied by negative appraisals of the disciples' failure to understand Jesus' identity. It will be followed by a discussion of how literary interpreters represent the mixed portrayals of the disciples as a literary device.

I will then address socio-political interpretations, which are distinguished from the previous studies in that they are not concerned with christological questions but rather highlight disciples' participation in the ongoing work of God. Similarly, feminist interpretations attempt to restore the role of women disciples as ideal.

However, these two engaging interpretations have to consider the challenge of postmodern interpretations that deconstruct the insider/outsider opposition on which the judgment of true disciples is based. Finally, I will discuss postcolonial understandings of discipleship, which politicize deconstruction and construct disciples as postcolonial subjects who assimilate and/or abrogate the empire. This chapter's review of the

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<sup>7</sup> William Wrede, trans. J. C. G. Greig, *The Messianic Secret* (Cambridge, Mass.: J. Clarke, 1971).

literature will function as a springboard for developing a more comprehensive and critical understanding of discipleship.

### *Wrede's "Messianic Secret"*

Before William Wrede proposed the messianic secret as a central motif in Mark's theology, Markan studies had been invested in the quest for the historical Jesus. This quest presumed that the Gospel of Mark was an original source for the historical Jesus, based on the theory of Markan priority. Such scholars argued that the secrecy texts present Jesus as revealing his identity only gradually, as the messianic consciousness of Jesus himself develops. According to this interpretation, the disciples should come to attain a deeper understanding of Jesus' identity as the secret is revealed.<sup>8</sup>

Yet what Wrede discovered was opposite to the popular opinion of historical Jesus scholarship. According to Wrede, Mark intentionally presents Jesus as concealing his messiahship. Jesus commands demons (1:25, 34:3:11-12), those healed and the crowd around them (1:43-44; 5:43; 7:36), and the disciples (8:30; 9:9) not to disclose his identity or to publicize his miracles. Jesus also keeps himself apart (7:24; 9:30). He gives private teaching to the disciples (7:17; 10:10) and speaks in parables, lest those outside can understand (4:10-13, 33). However, the disciples remain uncomprehending (6:52; 8:17-21).<sup>9</sup> Wrede argues that Jesus lived a non-messianic life and that the early Christian

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<sup>8</sup> C. M. Tuckett, "Messianic Secret," *ABD*, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 797-800.

<sup>9</sup> Despite these prominent secrecy motifs, Wrede admits that there is another group of materials showing that the secret is precluded: people recognize the Messiah and understands parables (3:23ff; 12:12) and spread the fame of Jesus (1:45, 7:36ff.; 7:24;

community after Easter realized that Jesus was the Messiah.<sup>10</sup> This realization resulted in Mark's creation of the theological idea that the secret of Jesus' messiahship would not be revealed until the resurrection.<sup>11</sup>

More recently, we find variations on Wrede's messianic secret. Ulrich Luz and Heikki Räisänen have distinguished the injunction to silence related to the healing miracles from the true messianic secret, which is pertinent to Jesus' identity.<sup>12</sup> For these critics, such an explanation is a way to resolve textual conflicts insofar as those healed appear to proclaim Jesus' deeds rather than contribute to concealing Jesus' identity. The difference between the two scholars revolves around the when of the disclosure of Jesus' identity. While Luz contends that the messianic secret is revealed to the disciples after Caesarea Philippi, for Räisänen it is only after Jesus' crucifixion that Jesus' identity is made known. As seen in the latter case, the scholarly consensus on the secrecy motif concerning Jesus' identity cannot be considered apart from the cross.<sup>13</sup>

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chap. 11). Also, Jesus acknowledges his identity before the high priest (14:62). Wrede attributes these accounts to tradition. Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 125-29, 145, 227.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>11</sup> Although scholarship's confidence in the historical Jesus declines toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the scholars after Wrede did not cease to explore the messianic consciousness of the historical Jesus. Schweitzer presupposed Jesus' eschatological consciousness and criticized Wrede, questioning how the Christian community could suddenly realize Jesus' messiahship after his resurrection. Christopher Tuckett, ed., *The Messianic Secret* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 7; Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959), 335-39.

<sup>12</sup> Ulrich Luz, "The Secrecy Motif and the Marcan Christology," in *The Messianic Secret*, ed. Tuckett. 79, 85; and Heikki Räisänen, "The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel," in *The Messianic Secret*, ed. Tuckett. 132, 135.

<sup>13</sup> Frank J. Matera, *What are They Saying about Mark?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 23.

Wrede contributed to Markan scholarship by asserting that the secrecy motif reflects the early Christians' post-Easter experience of Jesus as the Messiah rather than deriving from the historical Jesus' own messianic consciousness. In this interpretation, the disciples' incomprehension results from the concealment of the messianic secret. Thus, the disciples are "bearers of a secret knowledge," and the resurrection brings a "new understanding of the teaching and person of Jesus."<sup>14</sup> While this interpretation provides a positive view of the disciples, the secret is a matter of knowledge and is resolved by the revelation.

### *Christology and Discipleship in Historical Reconstruction*

One can see how Wrede and followers have tried to resolve conflicting witnesses to the secrecy of Jesus' identity. One such way is to separate Mark's redaction from tradition; another is to distinguish among materials. Wrede's literary approach to the secrecy theme anticipated the later arrival of redaction criticism, which was pioneered with respect to Mark by Willi Marxsen.<sup>15</sup> While employing analytical and constructive

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<sup>14</sup> Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 231-32. Also see 114.

<sup>15</sup> Marxsen's *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956) was translated (by J. Boyce et al.) as *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on Redaction History of the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969). Form criticism prevailed in Markan scholarship in Germany up to the early 1950s. Redaction criticism in the 1960s regarded the author of Mark as a collector, transmitter, or editor of the traditions that he inherited. While Dibelius views Mark as a conservative redactor stressing the "history" in the kerygmatic history, Bultmann regards Mark as a theologian highlighting the "kerygmatic" gospel. See Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. Bertram Lee Woolf et al. (New York: Scribner, 1935); Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). Standing in a line with Bultmann, Marxsen inauguates contemporary redaction critical study of Mark's Gospel. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, eds.,

methodologies, which distinguish the evangelist's framework materials from traditional materials inherited, Marxsen argues for the need to "inquire into the situation of the community" in which the Gospel of Mark was written.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, and with further emphasis on Mark as an imaginative theologian, Norman Perrin pointed out that christology, discipleship, and historical situation constitute the dominant concerns of Markan scholarship.<sup>17</sup> Theological constructions of christology and discipleship are linked with the historical situation in which the Gospel was written.<sup>18</sup> For instance, interpreters arguing for a corrective christology reconstruct a situation in which the disciples represents historical figures such as Mark's own opponents or the leaders of the Jerusalem church.

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*Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> Marxen, *Mark the Evangelist*, 24-29. For Marxsen, Mark was a "gospel" addressing the earthly Jesus as the risen Lord to the Christians of his community, which ardently awaited the imminent return of the Lord. Marxsen argues, "Mark writes a 'Galilean Gospel.' ... Galilee is not primarily of historical but rather of theological significance as the locale of the imminent Parousia." *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>17</sup> Duling and Perrin maintain, "Mark seeks to instruct his readers in a correct understanding of Christology and a true understanding of Christian Discipleship." Dennis C. Duling and Norman Perrin, *The New Testament: Proclamation and Parenthesis, Myth and History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 332.

<sup>18</sup> For theologically oriented redaction-critical studies on Markan discipleship, see C. Clifton Black, *The Disciples according to Mark: Markan Redaction in Current Debate* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989). Such historical-theological work attempts to reconstruct the historical situation focusing on the Markan community. For instance, Kee argues that the Markan community, located in southern Syria, was "apocalyptic" and that the Markan Christians were charismatic itinerant prophets who forsook family and possessions and preached the imminent day of eschatological judgment. Howard Kee, *The Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1983), 43-44; 87-88, 100-110. Marcus pays attention to parallels between Mark and Qumran documents in light of Jewish apocalyptic. Joel Marcus, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

Theodore J. Weeden represents one of these positions. According to him, the disciples stand for Mark's adversaries, who considered Jesus to be a miracle-working "divine man" and who advocated a *theios-anēr* theology, the theology of glory.<sup>19</sup> Those who held this christological view also maintained the idea of discipleship based on a spiritual experience of the risen Lord. Mark refutes the divine man christology with a theology of the cross based on the suffering Son of Man.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Mark depicts the state of the disciples as deteriorating in their understanding of Jesus from imperception to misconception and eventually to rejection.<sup>21</sup> For Weeden, therefore, the disciples'

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<sup>19</sup> Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). In the 1960s-70s, scholarly works on Markan christology, particularly *theios-anēr* christology prevailed. See Keck, "The Introduction," 352-70; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970); Paul J. Achtemeier, *Mark*, ed. Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975); John Donahue, *Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973). Perrin is also concerned with correcting false christology and the consequences of such christology for Christian discipleship. Norman Perrin, *A Modern Pilgrimage in New Testament Christology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 84-93; Norman Perrin, "The Christology of Mark: A Study in Methodology," in *The Interpretation of Mark*, ed. William Telford (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 99. This trend of *theios-aner* christology, drawn from the analysis of the Markan miracle stories, underwent a revival in Edwin K. Broadhead's work in 1990s. *Teaching with Authority: Miracles and Christology in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Matera, *What are They Saying*, 24.

<sup>21</sup> Weeden argues that Mark's use of the imperceptive disciples in Mark corresponds to techniques developed from analysis of character portrayal in first-century Mediterranean literature. Weeden and the proponents of a corrective christology presuppose the influence of Hellenistic ideas of "divine man" on Mark's community and Mark's correction of the wrong use of the Son-of-God title with the-Son-of-Man christology. In contrast, other scholars support the idea that Jesus, Son of God in Mark is the royal, Davidic Messiah. Matera introduces the works of scholars who hold this royal christology, mainly rooted in the Hebrew Bible tradition such as Philipp Vielhauer (1964), Joseph Fitzmyer (1974), John Donahue (1976), Carl R. Kazmierski (1979), Donald Juel (1977), and Jack Dean Kingsbury (1983). Recent researches of Joel Marcus

misunderstanding of Jesus' identity does not derive from the concealment of his messiahship, as Wrede had argued. Instead, their failure to understand represents their obstinate allegiance to a false christology.<sup>22</sup>

Kelber also follows this polemic interpretation by reconstructing Mark's situation as one in which Mark opposes the Jerusalem theology—the theology of power, in contrast to his theology of the cross.<sup>23</sup> The negative portrayal of the disciples reflects the Jewish-Christian community of Jerusalem, which awaited the *parousia* of Jesus Son of Man before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The disciples fail to understand not only that the kingdom of God is not tied to a place or nation but also that the kingdom comes only through suffering and death. For Mark, faith means taking up the cross, and discipleship means following Jesus on his way of ministry and service in spite of the cost.

While these interpretations relate the disciples in the Gospel to those who buttressed false christologies, Ernest Best suggests a pastoral interpretation of discipleship, reconstructing a different historical situation in which Mark's community could be placed.<sup>24</sup> Mark's community faced persecution. In this situation, the death of

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(1992), Richard Schneck (1994) and Rikki E. Watts (1997; 2000) also discuss Mark's christology in relation to the Hebrew Bible. Matera, *What are They Saying*, 30-32.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>23</sup> Werner H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 63-65, 85, 137.

<sup>24</sup> Scholars distinguish two different ways of interpreting Mark's presentation of Jesus' disciples. First, as shown in Weeden and Kelber's "polemical" interpretations, they see disciples as representatives of the Jerusalem church opposed to the Gentile mission and as supporters of "false" theological positions about christology, ecclesiology, or eschatology. Second, the "pastoral" approach, as Best represents, interprets the disciples as aimed at building up his readers as Christians and showing them what true discipleship is. Matera, *What are They Saying*, 42-51.

Jesus was understood as bearing the judgment of God for others. For this community, Jesus' miracles should be viewed as Jesus' care for the ongoing Christian community's journey rather than as representing an erroneous christology. He claims that the role the disciples play in the Gospel is that of being the examples—"not examples by which their own worth or failure is shown, but examples through whom teaching is given to the community and the love and power of God made known."<sup>25</sup> Best contends that Mark devised this figure of the disciples to encourage the Christians in persecution and to teach them what true discipleship is.<sup>26</sup>

In these historical-theological studies, the disciples' misunderstanding is devised to correct false theology or to instruct the reader through the disciples' failure. These studies have analyzed Mark's peculiar epistemology through the combination of the preeminent themes of christology and discipleship. One cannot deny that these historical reconstructions, while seemingly objective, produce subjective theological representations. Thus, George Aichele argues, "Despite (and yet because of) their pretense to scientific objectivity, these reconstructions are thoroughly and profoundly theological."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in Gospel according to Mark* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), 130.

<sup>26</sup> Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 12.

<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, such historical-theological (re)construction is ideological. Aichele critiques both fundamentalism's and academic liberalism's "illusions of naturalness for their inevitably ideological interpretations of the Bible." George Aichele, *Jesus Framed* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 2.

### *Discipleship as Literary Device*

Literary-rhetorical studies suggest that the negative portrayals of the disciples do not point to historical figures like Mark's opponents but rather represent a literary or rhetorical device to teach the early Christians. In this sense, Best's studies on Markan discipleship are a historical-literary work in that the character of the disciples are employed to give a message to the real audience.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, these studies approach the theme of discipleship by regarding the Gospel as a narrative and the disciples as characters in the narrative. These approaches depend on two kinds of theoretical frameworks: a) comparison with ancient Greco-Roman literature such as rhetoric, tragedies, and biographies; b) appropriation of modern literary criticism, which considers how Mark's story is told (rhetorical devices) and what his narrative is about (setting, plot, characters, and so forth).

Whitney T. Shiner's study on discipleship may be included in the first category. He demonstrates how Jesus' disciples function rhetorically in Mark's Gospel by exploring how Greek philosophical biographies, as well as Jewish wisdom teaching of Ben Sira, use flawed disciples to highlight their philosophical heroes as authoritative figures and the founders of communities.<sup>29</sup> Shiner argues, "The incomprehension of the

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<sup>28</sup> According to Horsley, literary critics seek to explain that "the disciples function in the interaction between the individual (modern) reader and the author to communicate a message of discipleship." "The negative behavior of the disciples forces the reader into critical distancing from their [the disciples'] failure." Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 81-82.

<sup>29</sup> Whitney Taylor Shiner, *Follow Me!: Disciples in Markan Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 32-34; 186-91.

disciples represents the inability of the world to penetrate the mask of the mundane to comprehend the reality of Jesus.”<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, Mary Ann Tolbert employs the theoretical framework of narrative levels developed by Susan Lanser.<sup>31</sup> By merging the levels of the implied author-reader and the narrator-narratee into one level, the reader is informed about who Jesus is from the beginning.<sup>32</sup> On the level of the characters of the story, Jesus as the private narrator of parables shares a significant amount of omniscience with the implied author/narrator. This coalition of the implied author, the narrator, and Jesus creates a sturdy framework for the reader’s evaluation of the speech and action of the characters in the narrative. While omniscience, specifically regarding Jesus’ identity, is displayed at the various narrative levels, only the disciples remain in the disadvantageous position of playing misunderstanding characters. Thus, Tolbert’s study reinforces the views that the disciples fail in their discipleship because of their misunderstanding.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark’s World in Literary-Historical Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989, 1996); Susan S. Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>32</sup> Mark’s narrator makes the point that Jesus is Christ, Son of God (1:1). Thus, from the outset the implied reader is informed about Jesus’ identity. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 93-103. According to Malbon, “A real author writes a text for a real reader. An implied author, a creation of the real author that is implied in his or her text, presents a narrative to an implied reader, a parallel creation of the real author that is embedded in the text, and a narrator tells a story to a narratee. Of course, within a story a character may narrate another story to another character.” Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Narrative Criticism,” in *Mark & Method*, ed. Anderson and Moore, 32-33.

However, other literary studies, particularly from a narrative critical perspective, illuminate the portrayal of the disciples as ambivalent.<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, for example, concentrates on the overall rhetorical effects of reading Mark.<sup>34</sup> She groups Markan characters into the disciples, Jewish leaders, and minor characters, all of whom interact.<sup>35</sup> She argues that the disciples are just fallible learners, not those who ultimately fail. Malbon reads the Gospel in a pastoral sense, like Best, but she views the disciples of Jesus as “portrayed with both strong points and weak points in order to serve as realistic and encouraging models for hearers/readers who experience both strength and weakness

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<sup>33</sup> Kingsbury is representative of narrative criticism on the Gospel of Mark employing character studies. In this book he demonstrates Jesus' struggles with Israel and disciples. Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Paying full attention to minor characters and relating them to the theme of discipleship, Williams argues that in Mark's narrative minor characters—particularly Bartimaeus in 10:46-52—are both supplicants and exemplars, who respond to the “call to follow Jesus through self-denial and a willingness to suffer.” While arguing that Mark encourages the reader to identify with those characters, Williams highlights the women's disobedience and failure at the end of the Gospel, which makes the reader keep distance from them. For Williams, the women are among minor characters, but not exemplary like the disciples. Joel F. Williams, *Other Followers of Jesus: Minor Characters as Major Figures in Mark's Gospel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 171, 202-203. Also, see another article of his, “Discipleship and Minor Characters in Mark's Gospel.” *Bib. Sac.* 153 (1996): 332-43. Iverson particularly deals with Gentiles among minor characters. Kelly R. Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007). She makes her start from the works of minor characters in Williams and geopolitical references concerning Gentiles in Malbon, and addresses characteristics of Gentiles in Mark and their theological implications. Yet the argument that the gentile characters show both positive aspects (desperate; faith; understanding) and negative ones (disobedience; disbelief; opposition) is not quite persuasive.

in their Christian discipleship.”<sup>36</sup> In another earlier volume, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning*, Malbon addresses discipleship based on a structuralist analysis of the text. She suggests that “the way” ( $\delta\circ\delta\omega\varsigma$ ) is the final mediation of the fundamental opposition—the opposition of order and chaos.<sup>37</sup> Despite the recognition of the mixed portrayals of the disciples, these studies emphasize resolution of conflicts and seek a coherent meaning.

Some scholars using literary criticism, however, draw different consequences from investigating the theme of discipleship. John Riches and Burton Mack open the possibility of seeing multiple or conflicting ideologies embedded in the text.<sup>38</sup> Riches grasps the co-existence of forensic myth and cosmological myth. These different mythologies illuminate not only the nature of Jesus’ ministry but also the causes of the

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<sup>36</sup> Particularly, the women followers are also portrayed as fallible in that the women at the empty tomb did not tell the general public (“anyone”), but did tell Peter. Malbon, *Company of Jesus*, xii.

<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986). 68-71. Many scholars have recognized that Mark’s use of “the way” ( $\delta\circ\delta\omega\varsigma$ ) is a metaphorical expression of discipleship (1:2, 3; 4:4, 15; 6:8; 9:33-34; 10:17, 32, 46, 52:11:8; 12:14). See Werner Kelber, *Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 17. In contrast, Marcus emphasizes “Lord’s own creation of a way” with a “secondary emphasis of the human walk along that way.” Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 29-45.

<sup>38</sup> John K. Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies: Identity Formation in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000). Mack argues that “the followers of Jesus formed movements of exceptionally diverse configuration,” and that “group identities were rationalized in the production of surprisingly different kind of myths” (124). Parables, pronouncement stories, and miracle stories in Mark’s Gospel represent different sectarians within early Christianity. These new groups encountered social conflicts in relationship with Judaism. Mark integrated multiple traditions about Jesus and the Christ into a single narrative of the obedient martyr, which was “incorporated into an apocalyptic view of history” (356). Mack contends that the Markan legacy is a myth of innocence, and relates it to the American myth that has taken “the form of the desire to be ‘the innocent redeemer of the world’” (371-72). Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

disciples' failure. From the view of the cosmological mythology, the disciples' failure is caused by Satan—Jesus struggles with this satanic power. On the other hand, from the forensic mythological perspective, their failure is caused by moral temptation—Jesus struggles to restore the hearts of people to the divine will through his teaching and healing. Thus, Riches' interpretation sees two possibilities: the disciples' own moral failure and an alternative view of the disciples' epistemological and vocational failure, which is caused by satanic power.<sup>39</sup> In this apocalyptic view of human failure, if there is something that the disciples can do, it is to endure the rule of Satan until the stronger power of Jesus who died on the cross finally defeats Satan.

Whereas the earlier redaction criticism stresses the negative portrayal of the disciples, some of literary and narrative studies demonstrate that the disciples do not ultimately fail.<sup>40</sup> In literary studies the disciples are illustrative of those who can fail and be restored—at least from the reader's perspective. However, literary studies, along with historical interpretations, presuppose that discipleship becomes possible on the basis of proper knowledge of Jesus Christ or the follower's autonomous will and ability to follow.

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<sup>39</sup> Riches, *Conflicting Mythologies*, 145-79. John K. Riches, "Conflicting Mythologies: Mythical Narrative in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 84 (2001): 29-50.

<sup>40</sup> Along with Malbon, Williams, and Iverson, Sweetland argues that despite Mark's negative presentation of the disciples, their misunderstanding is not "absolute or permanent" failure, because disciples, who are not identical with the Twelve, are those who "follow" Jesus (50, 84). In this following both a vertical relationship with God and Jesus and a horizontal relationship with other disciples are important. More specifically, the issues of discipleship include both religious practices such as Eucharist, baptism, prayer and social practices like marriage, children, and possessions (106-37). Despite his emphases on integrative relationships and practices, the key point of discipleship is still to find out who Jesus really is and to follow him up to Jerusalem. Dennis M. Sweetland, *Our Journey with Jesus: Discipleship according to Mark* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1987).

Such an interpretation does not allow ambiguity or incongruity in understanding discipleship.<sup>41</sup> In this respect, Riches and Mack give way to a more complex view of competing ideologies in early Christianity, which is related to their awareness of ideological fractures in modern society. Yet neither of them deals with such conflicts in the specific context of the Roman Empire or discusses both the agency of the interpreter and of the marginalized that they discuss.

#### *Discipleship of Socio-Political Engagement<sup>42</sup>*

Ched Myers picks up his book title, *Binding the Strong Man*, from the parable of the strong man's house in which he observes Jesus' apocalyptic struggle with the satanic order (3:23-27).<sup>43</sup> Yet, unlike some scholars who interpret apocalyptic symbolism in Mark as pessimistic and escapist, Myers rather argues that Mark employs apocalyptic

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<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Tolbert pursues coherent meaning within the text through a “consistent” interpretation. She understands the task of the reader as filling in the narrative “gap” in the story and making sense of the whole. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 3, 7. See Horsley’s different position on Mark’s story as “full not only of ambiguity, but of incongruity and double meaning” because of the metaphor, irony, and paradox used in the story. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Rhoads employs not only narrative analysis but also social science models to demonstrate the different attitudes toward purity and boundaries evident in the Gospel. While this social scientific approach is helpful to explore the social structure and value in Mark’s time, his social criticism focuses on a countercultural value system that was formed by Mark’s theological vision of the kingdom of God. David Rhoads, *Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004). However, I will not introduce his work in this section, which discusses only the work of scholars who stresses social locations of both the implied and the present readers.

<sup>43</sup> Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1992), 102.

discourse to subvert the dominant cultural codes of both Rome and Jews.<sup>44</sup> The announcement of the good news about Jesus the Messiah in Mark challenges Roman propaganda that acclaims the emperor as a “divine man” or god. On the other hand, Mark advocates the ending of the temple’s exploitative economy and building of an egalitarian community.<sup>45</sup> For Myers, Mark is apocalyptic in that it looks for “the end of the old world and the inauguration of the new,” but it is discipleship that will “inaugurate this transformation.”<sup>46</sup> Since the time of Jesus’ death, the kingdom of God has been in patient growth rather than imminent arrival. The cross breaks the vicious circle of domination and violence. Discipleship, therefore, involves a specific social practice and costly political engagement that Myers calls “nonviolent revolution.”<sup>47</sup> Myers argues that Mark advocates “the activist ideology of discipleship” as essential to the Gospel story.<sup>48</sup> While

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 416. While Albert Schweitzer’s “thoroughgoing eschatology” is representative of the former view of apocalyptic interpretation of Mark, Myers introduces a similar kind of updated interpretation. Kee’s view of the Markan Jesus as passivist is one of them. Kee, *The Community of the New Age*, 146. Also, Myers includes Wilde’s study of Mark as a millennial community. James A. Wilde, “A Social Description of the Community Reflected in the Gospel of Mark,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1974), 61f.

<sup>45</sup> According to Myers, Jesus’ declaration of ideological war is “with the scribal establishment,” which the demon of 1:24 and “the strong man” represent. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 166-67.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 438.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 416. Waetjen’s socio-political reading of Mark is similar to Myers’ in that Waetjen highlights not only potential social locations of the present reader but also the socio-historical site in which Mark’s Gospel was written. The context of Roman-occupied Palestine in which Jesus conducted his ministry and that of Roman-occupied Syria in which the text originated merge into the Gospel (4). Despite the differences in time and space, both contexts belong to the same socio-cultural system, the Roman imperial order (5). Nevertheless, for Waetjen, the Gospel is not a documentary record of the past or the literary genre of biography but an aesthetic literary creation. Thus, it

the historical reality of a community under persecution produced a basically tragic narrative depicting the disciples' failure, such negative portrait of the disciples functions to "reduce the distance between the reader and these characters."<sup>49</sup> Thus, introducing a "center-periphery" model, Myers brings social locations of both the present reader and the authorial or implied reader to the fore. From the center of twentieth-century North America's "metropolis," he reads the Gospel written in the Palestinian periphery that was dominated by the rule of imperial Rome.<sup>50</sup>

Brian Blount also examines the socio-historical setting of the Gospel of Mark in the context of the African-American church and society, but the scope of his interpretation becomes broader than the socio-political interpretations of Myers and Waetjen in that he utilizes a sociolinguistic model.<sup>51</sup> According to sociolinguistic theory, language consists of signs. These signs convey meaning only in the system of culture. What language conveys is meaning potential, not meaning. This potential was and is accessed contextually.<sup>52</sup> Hence, in order to understand the meaning potential of the

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authenticates itself in the process of reading and the attendant production of meaning (2). Waetjen's understanding of discipleship is, therefore, similar to Myers'. The depiction of disciples is an ideological depiction not historical (17). Also, Waetjen stresses the kingdom as undergoing slow growth, but, unlike Myers, conceives of the resurrection as key to reordering power relations. Herman C. Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power: A Socio-political Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>50</sup> Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 4-8. Myers specifically notes that "White North American Christians, especially those of us from the privileged stratus of society, must come to terms with the fact that our reading site for the Gospel of Mark is empire, *locus Imperium*." Ibid., 5.

<sup>51</sup> Brian K. Blount, *Go Preach!: Mark's Kingdom Message and the Black Church Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 35. This methodology is more specified in Blount's another volume, *Cultural*

kingdom of God—the most significant sign in Mark, one needs to investigate Mark’s social location and cultural context. A believing community of Jews and Gentiles in northern Palestine and southern Syria lived through hardship. Conflicts between Jews and Gentiles had been exacerbated by the war in 66-70 C.E. Nationalist Jews fought Gentiles and persecuted fellow Jews for their engagement in a Gentile mission. Jesus’ preaching beyond geographical and ethnic boundaries must have encouraged this community.<sup>53</sup>

In this concrete context, the kingdom of God based on its symbolic image in Jewish tradition is understood in terms of apocalyptic intervention. The kingdom of God is an apocalyptic “pocket of resistance.” Blount states, “Messiah figures claimed a loyal discipleship corps. Those who believed in a man’s claim to represent the kingdom power and plan of God would follow the mission plan he laid out as *the* tactical way to participate in God’s strategic kingdom design.”<sup>54</sup> Although human performance never accomplishes the kingdom of God, it can “tactically *re-present[s]* the strategic reality of that kingdom.”<sup>55</sup> In this regard, Jesus’ preaching as an act of boundary-breaking, which leads him directly to the cross, is the tactical representation of God’s future kingdom.

Accordingly, discipleship is regarded as a ministry that preaches the kingdom with Jesus’ transformative and boundary-breaking intent. For Blount, the disciples are “Jesus’ followers who are able to manipulate the transformative power of the future

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*Interpretation: Reorienting New Testament Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). This volume introduced M. A. G. Halliday’s sociolinguistic model and Enrique Dussel’s sociological model (philosophy of liberation).

<sup>53</sup> Blount, *Go Preach*, 59, 98.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 8.

kingdom into the present through their healing and exorcism preaching manifestations.”<sup>56</sup>

This call to discipleship is extended to Blount’s own context. His apocalyptic and iconoclastic interpretation of the kingdom message has a powerful impact on the Black church’s struggle to exorcise demonic forces like racism and sexism in the culture.<sup>57</sup> In sum, in Blount’s interpretation of the Gospel the political role of the disciples in representing the strategic reality of the kingdom of God is pivotal in both Mark’s and the present cultural contexts.

Richard Horsley also reads Mark from a sociopolitical perspective as narrative rather than theology or, more particularly, christology, which is a scholarly construct.<sup>58</sup> While he reckons that the prominent plot is “Jesus’ renewal of Israel in Galilean villages” in opposition to economic exploitation by Roman rulers and Judean elites, he recognizes discipleship as a subplot.<sup>59</sup> Although the twelve disciples are commissioned by Jesus to

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 10-12. Blount argues, “Their preaching transformatively to people everywhere represents in a tactical way what God is doing strategically at the mythological level. Preaching is ‘the power of God’s kingdom intervention, which transgresses the boundaries, *particularly those of geography and ethnicity* that separate humans from God and one another’” (98). But from another minority perspective, he ignores the possibility that the language of “God’s intervention transgressing the boundaries” could be heard as imperialistic by some minorities or indigenous people. He seems to identify African-American people as Gentiles and may not have been attempting to justify global mission by advocating boundary-crossing preaching. Nevertheless, he needs to recognize that his argument for universalism and equality can contribute to legitimating a global mission of preaching everywhere, especially to the “Gentiles,” and demanding Christian faith of people in other religions as a proper response to the gospel.

<sup>58</sup> Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, x.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., xiv, 91. Horsley asserts that because of the negative portrayals of the disciples as presenting “unmitigated faithlessness and failure,” Mark’s Gospel must be about something other than discipleship (97). For Horsley, the apocalyptic materials in Mark are viewed as belonging to the prophetic traditions of Israel, exhibiting the political

expand Jesus' program of renewal in village communities, they appear to be negative examples of leaders who persistently resist the egalitarian agenda of societal renewal.<sup>60</sup> In contrast, women in Mark's story represent the paradigms of faithful ministry in the renewal movement.<sup>61</sup> Thus, Horsley considers that discipleship is communal and participates in Jesus' movement of "revitalized, autonomous, egalitarian community life over against the Roman and Roman appointed rulers."<sup>62</sup>

In summary, socio-political and cultural interpretations go beyond a pure literary approach to the text, because these interpretive strategies presuppose that meaning is produced when a reader situated in a particular socio-historical circumstance engages with the text. They stress the social locations of both the implied readers and the present readers, underscoring the power relations in politics of the Roman Empire and/or of the present imperial context. These studies are not preoccupied with the quest for Jesus' identity or christology, but instead regard the disciples' role as significant because the kingdom of God grows through their participation in the ongoing work of God. In these socio-political interpretations, discipleship entails communal or political praxis that brings the force of kingdom of God into the present. While Horsley counts the role of

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struggle against Roman oppressors and their Jewish collaborators. Accordingly, Mark's story of Jesus focuses on the presence and imminence of God's kingdom rather than reflecting the Jewish apocalyptic view of the future renewal of Israel. *Ibid.*, 121-48.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 203-30. For example, while the hemorrhaging woman and Jairus' daughter are featured as representatives of Israel responding to Jesus' power of renewal, the Syrophoenician woman plays a role in expanding Jesus' movement outside the Jewish territories. The presence of the women at the crucifixion and the empty tomb implies the continuation of the movement in Galilee and beyond.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

women disciples as outstanding in Mark's story, these socio-political interpreters often miss the important issues of gender/sexuality and display a limited concepts of race/ethnicity and class.

### *Women Characters as Ideal or Potential Disciples*

Feminist interpretations bring the gender issue to the fore in discussing Markan discipleship. As Janice Capel Anderson demonstrates, the general tasks of feminist criticism are not only to critique the androcentric and patriarchal character of the Bible and biblical scholarship but also to do feminist construction.<sup>63</sup> In this construction, feminist interpreters of the Gospel of Mark attempt to reconstruct the historical background in which women disciples played a significant role in Jesus' movement. For the most part, however, they focus on the character of women in Mark's narrative as ideal or potential disciples.<sup>64</sup> Malbon maintains that the women disciples do not fail at the end of the story, but are fallible learners.<sup>65</sup> Joan L. Mitchell also argues that their fear and

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<sup>63</sup> Janice Capel Anderson, "Feminist Criticism: Dancing Daughter," in *Mark & Method*, ed. Anderson and Moore, 111-44.

<sup>64</sup> Mary Ann Beavis, "Women as Models of Faith in Mark," *BTB* 18 (1988): 3-9; Marla Jean Selvidge, *Woman, Cult, and Miracle Recital: A Redactional Critical Investigation on Mark 5:24-34* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1990), 107; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983, 1994), 320; Mary Ann Tolbert, "Mark," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 350-62; Susan Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, JSNT Sup. (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 259; Joanna Dewey, "Women in the Gospel of Mark," *WW* 26 (2006): 22-29; Joel F. Williams, "Discipleship and Minor Characters in Mark's Gospel," *Bib. Sac.* 153 (1996): 332-43. Winsome Munro, "Women Disciples in Mark?", *CBQ* 44 (1982), 232.

<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of

silence as in 16:8 is devised for rhetorical purpose, rather than denoting the historical failure.<sup>66</sup> While exploring mainly women characters, however, these feminist interpretations attempt to restore the ideal woman and thereby essentialize woman's experiences.

Hisako Kinukawa interprets women characters in Mark's stories in light of her social location in Japan in which a divisive honor and shame framework is valued along with the patriarchal social structure. Her main concern is to elucidate the reciprocal relationship between women and Jesus and to determine the positions of women in the circles of Jesus' followers. She maintains that following means "taking on shame" and that serving is life-giving praxis.<sup>67</sup> Such life-giving discipleship necessitates suffering in a patriarchal society, but it is "not the condition but the outcome of following Jesus."<sup>68</sup> Although her contextual reading contributes to discovering the agency of women in both ancient society and Japan's sharing of the same social values of honor and shame, her interpretations can be challenged from both postcolonial and womanist perspectives. Kinukawa contends that the interpreters of modern-day Japan have an advantage in understanding the people of the early Christian age because both of them share the same

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Mark," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 29-48.

<sup>66</sup> Joan L. Mitchell, *Beyond Fear and Silence: A Feminist-Literary Reading of Mark* (New York: Continuum, 2001). According to her, the role of the women disciples as characters is to invite hearers to step across the threshold of faith—the limit of words to speak the unspeakable, the limit of story to make the absent present—into the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. Thus, they are midwives of the birth of Jesus' word into story.

<sup>67</sup> Hisako Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark: A Japanese Feminist Perspective* (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 98-102.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 99, 101; Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 317.

social scenarios. Yet, for postcolonial critic Sugirtharajah drawing a parallel between the modern Japanese and ancient Mediterranean cultures can be viewed as the “internal Orientalism” of Third World scholars in that it repeats the Western view that the world of the Eastern Other is “static and incapable of any change.”<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, for Raquel Annette St. Clair, Kinukawa’s “taking on shame” and positing the necessity of suffering for discipleship may be a dangerous claim because of African American women’s experience. Their suffering, shame and surrogacy have mutually buttressed one another and have had an impact upon the maintenance of subordination to European descents.<sup>70</sup> For this reason, she distinguishes between pain and suffering, counting on Audre Lorde’s argument of pain as “an event, an experience that must be recognized, named and then used in some way in order for the experience to change, to be transformed into something else.”<sup>71</sup> Through this distinct idea of pain, St. Clair provides a corrective to the traditional African American affirmations of Jesus as the divine co-sufferer and the cross as self-denial. Similar to Kinukawa, St. Clair maintains that suffering is a consequence (inevitability) of discipleship, not a condition (divine necessity).<sup>72</sup> Yet, in womanist hermeneutics, suffering is transformed into pain. She sees pain/suffering and honor/shame as essential values in the social system of the first century’s Eastern Mediterranean world. These values also undergirded those of the

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<sup>69</sup> Sugirtharajah, “Orientalism,” 423-25. Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus*, 22.

<sup>70</sup> Raquel Annette St. Clair, *Call and Consequences: A Womanist Reading of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 96.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 28. Quoted from Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Berkeley: Crossing, 1984), 171.

<sup>72</sup> St. Clair, *Call and Consequences*, 67-68.

New Testament.<sup>73</sup> She finds a correspondent relationship between pain/suffering and honor/shame in that both pain and honor are the consequences of discipleship, while suffering and surrogacy are considered shameful. Thus, given the womanist values of wholeness and honor, along with the eradication of suffering, shame and surrogacy, St. Clair's womanist understanding of discipleship promotes the wholeness of a people while enduring the pain that serves to bring about transformation in every realm of life.<sup>74</sup>

Although many feminist critics try to either promote the role of women in Jesus' movement or recount the characters of women as ideal disciples in the narrative, such interpretations, which reinforce gender opposition, impose the ideal upon all women and exclude some males who do not fit into gender stereotypes.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, the ideal portraits of women disciples may reinforce the suffering of women who have already suffered. As we see in Kinukawa's and St. Clair's interpretations, the same topics of discipleship and suffering are interpreted differently, according to their social locations and political perspectives. Postmodern interpretation can be a companion of feminist criticism because the role of the reader is emphasized in both approaches. Moreover, feminist/womanist interpretations can further benefit from a postmodern deconstructive

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>75</sup> Thus, Anderson furthers the reconstructive task of feminist biblical criticism by adding the question of how gender shapes biblical interpretation. She advances a provocative feminist reader-response criticism of Mark 6:14-29, which "evokes images of woman as deceiver and killer and as source of food and salvation alive in cultural tradition through intertextuality." To the contrary, Anderson asserts, "Jesus and John are female. They are sources of food who bleed and feed just as women bleed and feed. This upsets Western gender conventions." Anderson, "Feminist Criticism," 135-36, 140.

methodology in that deconstructive criticism seeks to dismantle the hierarchical oppositions—in this case, that of male/female and masculine/feminine.<sup>76</sup>

### *Postmodern (Deconstruction of) Discipleship*

Postmodern interpreters highlight the reading strategies of readers. Along with the role of the reader, postmodern interpretations stress the possibility of multiple meanings. For Robert M. Fowler, who employs reader-response and poststructuralist criticism, meanings are found “in front of” the text.<sup>77</sup> He distinguishes “the *story level* of the narrative—the characters, events, and settings within the narrative—from the *discourse level* or the *rhetoric* of the narrative,” that is, the way in which the text presents the story.<sup>78</sup> The primary goal of the Gospel is not to provide information to the reader but to bring the reader into the “experience” of reading the Gospel. In this reading experience, the role of the disciples is essential, particularly in the discourse level.

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<sup>76</sup> Stephen D. Moore, “Deconstructive Criticism: Turning Mark Inside-Out,” in *Mark & Method*, ed. Anderson and Moore, 104.

<sup>77</sup> Fowler states, “The world I explore in this book is the world that lies in front of the biblical texts—the world I live in and the world in which readers have always lived, the world of the reception of the Gospels—rather than the world of their production.” Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 2. Robert M. Fowler, “Reader-Response Criticism: Figuring Mark’s Reader,” in *Mark & Method*, ed. Anderson and Moore, 59-93.

<sup>78</sup> Fowler explains that the “perennial puzzle such as the messianic secret” derives from the reader’s encounter with a “fundamental incongruity between story and discourse.” The puzzle is not that found in the story but that “encountered in the reading of the story.” *Let the Reader Understand*, 20. Also see 174-75 for his argument about the messianic secret as irony. In terms of the reader, this distinction is extended to that between the reader focusing on the story and the critic paying attention to the effect of the discourse.

Fowler observes that in the first half of the Gospel the distance between Jesus and his disciples turns into distance between the disciples and the reader in terms of their perceptual points of view.<sup>79</sup> From the midpoint of the Gospel onward, however, the narrator's emphasis is deftly shifted away from the presentation of the disciples' perceptual point of view to "the inadequacy and even the danger of their conceptual or ideological point of view."<sup>80</sup> Thus, at the level of discourse, Fowler contends, "the burden of discipleship now falls squarely upon the shoulders of the only remaining candidate for discipleship—the recipient of the narrator's discourse, the reader of the Gospel."<sup>81</sup>

In sum, the discourse of Mark's Gospel exhibits uncertainty, mystery, and doubt by employing the rhetoric of indirection as is demonstrated in metaphor, paradox, and irony, which often set story and discourse at odds.<sup>82</sup> However, Fowler's reader-response criticism tends to privilege the critic's reading process and limit the ordinary reader's experience of reading to the story level. Moreover, if the reader is distinguished from the

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 70-71. Examples are seen in the sea stories in Mark 4 and 6 and the feeding stories in Mark 6 and 8. In the first of the each of these pairs of stories, the reader is sympathetic with the disciples, but in the second stories the reader can no longer stand along with them because of their twice-repeated failure.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 72-73. This is exemplified in the two child-welcoming episodes in 9:33-37 and 10:13-16.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>82</sup> Camery-Hoggatt's study deals with irony in the Gospel of Mark, which is found both within the text and in the response of the reader. Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

disciples in the story and guided to the discourse level by the authoritative and omniscient narrator, the reader can rarely remain uncertain.<sup>83</sup>

In this respect, Aichele is more consistent in arguing for his ambiguous position as a reader. Suggesting “reading from outside,” Aichele challenges the “theology of the insiders” which has been exercised from ancient and medieval allegory to modern historical-critical reconstructions and other methodological analyses of the biblical text.<sup>84</sup> Since those insiders—whether they stand for fundamentalism or academic liberalism—know the secret of the kingdom, they are the alleged legal owners of the text and, thus, genuine disciples (4:11-12). However, Aichele contends that no one can be the legitimate insider of the text because it suggests that the values of outside and inside are relative (2:17; 8:35).<sup>85</sup> The insiders can be outsiders. The outsiders are insiders. This obscurity prohibits any desire of attaining complete mastery of the text and instead leads to the possibility and the desirability of reading the Gospel of Mark from the outside. This is why Aichele bluntly speaks of the disciples as “stupid” but at the same time identifies the implied reader of Mark with the disciples.<sup>86</sup> This emphasis on ambiguity, indeterminacy, and confusion is a characteristic of postmodern interpretations of Mark.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, Fowler contends that the secret of the kingdom of God might be given to characters in the story but is not given to the narratee through the discourse. “For the reader of the Gospel, the giving of this secret lies behind an opaque veil.” Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 91.

<sup>84</sup> Aichele, *Jesus Framed*, 2. According to Aichele, historical reconstructions based on scientific objectivity are substantially theological and inevitably ideological.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 3, 85.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>87</sup> Moore, “Deconstructive Criticism,” 104.

Aichele as a self-reflective reader refuses to take the inside position in interpreting Mark.<sup>88</sup> He denies that there is no secret that is not revealed.<sup>89</sup> He accepts the ultimate failure of reading the text because the text is always incomplete and even expresses reading as violence done to the text because the text resists interpretation.<sup>90</sup> Yet, if the reader should return to the story's beginning and re-read the book because of its abrupt and paradoxical ending of Mark at 16:8, what does this reading strategy mean?<sup>91</sup> This act of "violent" reading "only further deepens the uncertainties of its meaning."<sup>92</sup> Some readers cannot afford to buy such reading "experience." Further his postmodern idea of a "text without meaning, without ideology" is challenged when the text is considered to be a cultural and ideological production.<sup>93</sup>

In contrast, for Stephen D. Moore, the text is not completely innocent. He adapts deconstructive strategies of reading from "early" Derrida, whose primary goal is to destabilize binary oppositions, and discusses the issue of insider/outsider.<sup>94</sup> In dealing with this issue, his political and ethical deconstructive reading leads him to focus on the

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<sup>88</sup> Aichele states, "The strategy of reading from the outside entails a discourse excluded from, or any rate marginalized by, the Western theological tradition," but his reading from outside is confined to heavily using Western postmodern theories. Aichele, *Jesus Framed*, 3.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 5; Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 91.

<sup>92</sup> Aichele, *Jesus Framed*, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Moore, "Deconstructive Criticism," 95-110.

central ethnic opposition of Gentile/Jew and, consequently, that of Christian/Jew in Mark.<sup>95</sup> Moore's deconstructive reading strategy is not to reverse the positions of Jews as the insider and Gentiles as the outsider, but to obscure the boundary.<sup>96</sup> For Moore, it is the parables that "unexpectedly begin to threaten *everyone* with exclusion in Mark."<sup>97</sup> He explains the parables' two-fold function:

*Parabolai* (parables) in Mark are a partition, screen, or membrane designed to keep insiders on one side, outsiders on the other. Outsiders are those for whom "everything comes in parables," parables that they find incomprehensible (4:11-12). At the same time, *parabolai* rupture that membrane, make it permeable, infect the opposition with contradiction: those who should be on the inside find themselves repeatedly put out by Jesus' parabolic words and deeds.<sup>98</sup>

Although he acknowledges that parables are vehicles of mystery, for Moore mystery remains the "mystery of Jesus' identity" and thus the most significant mark of being an insider is knowing or confessing who Jesus is.<sup>99</sup> Despite his use of "embodied"

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 106. According to Moore, through the centuries, anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism have pervaded in the interpretation of Mark. These interpretations turn out to be a systematic exclusion of Jews from the "inside." One representative example among others is to see the centurion at the foot of the cross as a prototype of Christian Gentiles because of his confession of Jesus as Son of God (15:39). Yet, Moore suggests an alternative interpretation in which the centurion's words are regarded as mockery. So, the centurion remains a Gentile, not a Christian.

<sup>96</sup> Thus, Moore considers the centurion's words to oscillate irreconcilably between crypto-Christian christological confession and derision and dismissal by a Gentile against a Jew. Ibid., 107-108.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 98, 102, 104. See his other book, *Mark and Luke in Poststructuralist*

language and his recognition of the nature of the permeable boundary, knowing and mystery are considered in terms of the subject-object relation.

We need to deconstruct that hierarchical opposition more effectively, and the Gentile/Jew and Christian/Jew oppositions that depend on it. On the face of it, Gentile-Christian insight into the mystery (*mystērion*, 4:11) of the kingdom of God in Mark would indeed seem to be elevated above Jewish blindness to the mystery. On the face of it, too, the mystery would seem to be embodied in Mark's paradoxical protagonist Jesus, the insight embodied in Mark's proto-Christian Gentile centurion, and the blindness embodied in both the Jewish religious leadership and Jesus' own Jewish disciples. Yet the membrane simultaneously separating and joining insight and blindness in Mark, insider and outsider, is extremely porous...<sup>100</sup>

Despite Moore's emphasis on deconstructing the Gentile/Jew and Christian/Jew oppositions in traditional interpretations, he still holds an essentialized conception of the Gentile/Jew opposition in Mark by discussing only the issue of Jew/Gentile in relation to the polemics of Christianity. It should be noted, however, oppositions are entangled in the intersections of gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, and geopolitics.

To summarize, where in Fowler's "reading experience" ambiguity or failure does not apply to the reader, Aichele elevates the text's autonomy over subjective or "violent" reading. Although Fowler and Aichele extend the deconstruction of the insider/outsider binary in the text to reading experience, the reader is either the insider ("disciples") or the

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*Perspectives: Jesus Begins to Write* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). Moore criticizes modern biblical interpretation's subjection of biblical texts to imperial "reason." Hence, he suggests interpreting Mark's language as that of the eye and images rather than that of the ear and reason.

<sup>100</sup> Moore, "Deconstructive Criticism," 106.

perennial outsider, respectively. Also, Moore's emphasis on indeterminacy or undecidability in the function of parable or mystery is limited to the epistemological sphere and lacks implications of subjectivity or agency. For this reason, Tat-siong Benny Liew criticizes Moore's poststructuralist interpretation as elitist, modernist in that it maintains the autonomy of literary texts, and impractical in that it emphasizes indeterminacy.<sup>101</sup>

### *Disciples and Postcolonial Subjects*

Despite his critique of postmodern interpretations, Liew holds a postmodern sensibility as resisting universal truth. He also politicizes deconstruction by bringing socio-political struggles for liberation to the fore in criticism.<sup>102</sup> He explores an inter(con)textual relationship between ancient Jewish apocalyptic and colonial politics and thereby constructs the politics of Mark's apocalyptic.<sup>103</sup> He reads Mark as a

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<sup>101</sup> For Liew, deconstruction is a new form of formalism. Specific problems of the postmodern are: a) the postmodern discourse is overly concerned with epistemology and the cognitivist aspect; thus what is needed is to search for "the subaltern history of the margins of modernity"; b) their attention to synchronous and spatial needs to be supplemented by temporalization; enunciation does not only mean the agency to destabilize colonial authority but also signifies the possibility of an open future; c) postmodern "multiple selves" should acknowledge postcolonial resistance and the (neo)colonial past and present and thus critics' responsibility for the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present. Thus the history of colonialism must become an integral part of the postmodern, and race and ethnicity must be an important consideration in social production and cultural representation. Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually* (Leiden; Brill, 1999), 7-16.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 1, 6-7. Also see Liew's article, "The Gospel of Mark," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 105-32.

<sup>103</sup> An inter(con)textual reading focuses on "a web of relationships" between literary texts and socio-political forces (26). Whereas contexts are always textualized and constructed,

production, as well as a product, of colonial politics.<sup>104</sup> In other words, this apocalyptic literature is considered not only to be produced within the (con)text of Roman colonization but also to construct colonial subjects through the discourse of *parousia*. Hence, these subjects are both the product of socio-cultural discourse and the producers of such discourse. Liew argues that in this subject construction Mark duplicates Roman colonial ideology in the form of colonial mimicry. Here three kinds of problematics emerge as significant: authority, agency, and gender.

Above all, Mark's colonial replication, along with its dissatisfaction with the present political power, culminates in presenting Jesus' absolute authority. Jesus is presented to have power to annihilate all opponents and all other authorities.<sup>105</sup> Jesus' apocalyptic vision reorganizes power structure in the way that a new criterion of the insider-outsider binary is created based on one's response to Jesus and it is sustained by the violent destruction of those outside.<sup>106</sup> In Liew's reading, however, Jesus also lacks

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literary texts produce non-literary effects (33). His contribution to Markan scholarship by introducing this reading strategy is to bridge scholarship divided in stressing the socio-political or apocalyptic dimensions of Mark. While the former (represented by Kelber, Belo, Meyer, Waetjen, and Hamerton-Kelly) emphasize non-apocalyptic and colonial features of Mark, scholars in the latter category (Perrin-Duling, Kee, Mack, Tolbert, and Collins) regard non-colonial apocalyptic characteristics as dominant in Mark. Ibid., 46-54.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>105</sup> Particularly, Jesus' all-defeating power is shown in the *parousia* in which the vindication turns into the vindictive represents the “might-is-right” ideology of colonialism and imperialism, and it causes various forms of suffering and oppression. For example, Mark makes the Jewish authorities, rather than the Roman imperialists, the “scapegoat” for his own self-preservation. Ibid., 107.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 108.

agency in his suffering and death.<sup>107</sup> Likewise, human beings have no agency but are only objects who are saved or destroyed by God's violent intervention.<sup>108</sup> Thus, in Liew's reading, discipleship never entails agency, because autonomy cannot be found in one's choice to serve God, which results in suffering and martyrdom. He contends that in Mark's depiction apprenticeship is nothing but slavery and infantilization and patronization of the disciples is no more than victimization.<sup>109</sup> Women's agency is more limited in that the mobility of female subjects is confined to home and family matters.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> If there are any who have agency in Mark, they are the supernatural beings, Satan and God. For Liew, while the former is the most significant factor working against Jesus and human agency, the latter appears to be the single constructive actor in history. Horsley puts his critique of Liew's argument on agency in footnotes: "It is worth noting that the 'son of man' in Mark 13:26-27 does not 'annihilate' anyone... And what can we make of the 'agency' of a protagonist who pursues his program of renewing Israel and attacking the local and imperial rulers in full awareness that it will lead to his death—a confidence in the purposes and possibilities of agency that clearly does not take its cue from politics as the programmatic art of the possible. In this connection we would have to explore the relationship between vision, contingency, and agency." Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 262, n. 19.

<sup>108</sup> Liew, "Gospel of Mark," 108. Agency is defined as "the ability of the colonized to act and speak in resistance to or subversion of imperial power" in Liew's other version of interpretation of Mark, "Postcolonial Criticism: Echoes of a Subaltern's Contribution and Exclusion," in *Mark & Method*, ed. Anderson and Moore, 218-19. In postcolonial discourse, agency is inseparable from "ambivalence." Despite his definition, in *Politics of Parousia*, he emphasizes the replication of colonial politics rather than resistance.

<sup>109</sup> Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel." *JSNT* 73 (1999), 19-20.

<sup>110</sup> If some of the women seem independent, it turns out that they do not have men in their lives. Without a man, they are all targets of male harassment or exploitation. Patriarchy persists in Mark. Even in those cases where women can be seen as ideal disciples, it is when the men are unavailable. They are given room for what they do outside the home, but without a name and a voice as men's replacement. Women's role as the model minority has them remain at margins. Although Liew is a male scholar, his feminist approach to the Gospel is distinguished from other Western feminist scholars, who mostly employ character approaches. He shows how the powerful use the category of gender and how it is applied to the Gospel writing and the reading of the Gospel.

In sum, as incapacity and suffering become essential components of colonial subjectivity, Liew’s “colonial politics” imply the politics of “postponement and passivity.” The agency of colonial subjects is restricted, for what they can do is to hope for “a different tomorrow,” that is, the *parousia* as “God’s ultimate show of force (and authority) through Jesus.”<sup>111</sup> Such passivist politics results in colonial mimicry, a replication of colonial domination. However, his argument regarding the determined binarism of boundary may be questioned by postmodern interpreters, while his emphasis on duplication of imperial authority as power is challenged by other postcolonial critics who find more agency and more resistance in reading Mark.<sup>112</sup>

In contrast to Liew, thus, Simon Samuel maintains that Mark has an ambivalent attitude toward both the Roman colonial and the native Jewish nationalist and collaborative discourses of power.<sup>113</sup> Samuel argues that as the Roman *imperium* displays the beginning of the theo-political order of the Empire, Mark’s ideas of beginning (*ἀρχὴ*), good news (*εὐαγγέλιον*), son of God (*υἱός θεοῦ*), and Christ in the superscript of Mark (1:1) show a minority community’s simultaneous assimilation and abrogation of the imperial ideology. Moreover, these concepts exhibit both accommodation and disruption of the Jewish dominant nationalist discourses. Ultimately, such political ambivalence and

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<sup>111</sup> Liew, *Politics of Parousia*, 132; “Tyranny,” 26.

<sup>112</sup> See Liew’s emphasis on “more cultural replication than resistance” in “Re-Mark-able Masculinities? Jesus, the Son of Man, or the (sad) Sum of Manhood,” in *New Testament Masculinities*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen Moore (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 94.

<sup>113</sup> Simon Samuel, “The Beginning of Mark: A Colonial/Postcolonial Conundrum,” *BI* 10 (2002), 405-19. Also see Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007).

cultural hybridity function to decenter the dominant discourses and to be “a potential for disruption.” This study is concerned mainly with the role of Jesus as the Son of Humanity, who both exerts his power and suffers, in Mark’s mimetic design, but it does not include discussions of the disciples and other characters in Mark’s story.<sup>114</sup>

David Joy holds a somewhat different position from Samuel in exploring Markan characters, and from Liew in conferring agency to those characters.<sup>115</sup> Joy argues that the author of Mark intended to include the subalterns in his writing and thus the existence of the subalterns in Mark is a “deliberate and theologically-loaded one.”<sup>116</sup> For Joy, Mark presents (post)colonial reality in which the issues of gender, race/ethnicity and hybridity are complicated. This leads him to engage the text as an anti-colonial narrative from a subordinated social group, specifically represented by subaltern women like the hemorrhaging woman, the Syrophoenician woman, and the poor widow. Although his employment of Indian hermeneutics might have distinguished his interpretation from other postcolonial studies on Mark, his strong historicist angle confuses his postcolonial reading strategy.<sup>117</sup> As a consequence, the postcolonial hybridity of the subaltern women

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 103. This aspect is criticized by Seong Hee Kim because Samuel’s study is limited to the center of the author and the main character, Jesus, without engaging the marginal characters, especially women, and their hidden voices. Seong Hee Kim, *Mark, Women and Empire: A Korean Postcolonial Perspective* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 48.

<sup>115</sup> David Joy, *Mark and its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context* (London: Equinox Pub. Ltd., 2008).

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 3. Such intentionality of the author of Mark is stressed elsewhere. Joy states, “the author intends to present the sociopolitical and religiocultural contexts of his time” (4). The passages, which he uses for his research, are chosen because they “reflect the ideological and theological intention of Mark and his milieu” (7).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 2. For example, Joy’s attempt to reconstruct past colonial history often brings

is suffocated by the identity politics of the male authors, ancient and modern. Moreover, in terms of discipleship, these subaltern women are separate from the twelve disciples who are the crowd's true representative. Therefore, Joy's appropriation of Spivak's question "Can the subaltern speak" misses the mark by assuming the subaltern as the autonomous subject and speaking for them.

Seong Hee Kim also investigates women in the Markan community as Other and subaltern. These women are viewed as hybrid subjects in the "third space."<sup>118</sup> Kim attempts to reconstruct the Markan community and restore women in the community. According to her, the women live in tension between the Roman Empire and God's empire, and in this third or hybrid space they create an alternative way of life.<sup>119</sup> The way postcolonial subjects live comes into sight when Kim uses the method of dialogical imagination and hermeneutics of *Salim*, which means "making things alive" or "giving life."<sup>120</sup> This way of life ruptures the empire as seen in the poor widow's act to radically choose God's empire by returning everything she got from Caesar to Caesar.<sup>121</sup> Also, the woman's anointing of Jesus as a prophet is interpreted as an act which is subversive and

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different historical moments of Jesus' time, Jesus' movement, and Mark's own time to the one focal point of emergence of the subalterns. In my opinion, such historical reconstruction should be distinguished from what the historiography of Subaltern Studies pursues. Another example of his methodological problems is his frequent dependence on Theissen's functional approach, which is not helpful to explicate the subaltern under the Roman imperial rule.

<sup>118</sup> Kim, *Mark, Women and Empire*, 75-77.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 92-96.

resistant to the empire.<sup>122</sup> This woman shows true discipleship, while the male disciples fail to follow Jesus due to their individual and nationalist motivations.<sup>123</sup> In two other stories of the women at the cross and at the burial and the women at the tomb, Kim calls these subaltern characters disciples. Based on Korean women's postcolonial experience and religious traditions such as Taoism and Buddhism, she reinterprets women as disciples who bring about transformation in the hope of God's empire while living in the "third space."<sup>124</sup>

Kim's "third space" is similar to the traditional understanding of the kingdom of God in the eschatological frame of "already-but-not-yet," as seen in this statement, "[the woman who anoints Jesus] secret experience of another world which is God's kingdom makes her finally stand in between the spaces. In this space, she does not completely belong to the worldly empire, nor does she belong to God's empire."<sup>125</sup> For Kim, the postcolonial subjects, particularly, subaltern women, live in "the transitional time between two empires."<sup>126</sup> Since she does not specifically discuss how Mark represents God's empire, an unclear understanding of living in the third space between God's empire and the worldly empire results.<sup>127</sup> The function of hybridity is limited to

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 117-55.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>127</sup> It seems to me that God's empire and "the breakthrough of God's empire into the present" as the third space are almost identical in terms of representation and thus living in the hybrid space means living in God's realm, its present and/or future while being

disruption of the Roman Empire, and does not include mimicking the imperial order and practices.

Except Liew, the last three postcolonial interpreters are inclined to a “resistance” reading, whether they consider Mark’s assimilative attitude toward the empire or not. What is common in postcolonial readings is that they are more self-conscious of their own construction of the text, its context and the interpreters’ own contexts. Postcolonial critics are concerned with the language and representation of power relations in the colonial, anti-colonial or postcolonial text and contexts, but not all of them agree that discipleship is a significant topic in a postcolonial interpretation of Mark. Issues of imperial-colonial relations, resistance and assimilation, and gender and subalternity can be further discussed in terms of discipleship.

### *Summary*

I have examined the sustained investment of Western Markan scholarship with regard to the theme of discipleship in conjunction with christology. My reading of discipleship in Mark is built upon a critical review of this scholarship’s various approaches which have both strengths and weaknesses. I group these approaches into three categories—traditional, engaging, and emerging approaches, which bring to light a complex of issues regarding discipleship such as understanding, body/embodiment, and mystery.

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alienated from the influence of the worldly empire. See her argument, “While they lived in this overlapping world, they became hybrid figures who were experiencing a new and different world over against the Roman Empire while still remaining within the Roman empire.” Ibid., 77.

First, in historical-theological and literary studies the question of discipleship is closely connected to proper knowledge of Jesus' identity. Such an argument is possible because the text itself highlights this epistemological aspect. In these interpretations, failure in discipleship is caused by lack of or false christological knowledge. Although some of literary and narrative interpretations overcome the negative portrayal of the disciples by claiming that they are "fallible learners" and can be restored, or that some minor characters are represented as ideal disciples, autonomous reason still plays a critical role in determining true discipleship. The focus of this previous scholarship leads me to pose a question regarding the nature of knowing as a notion of discipleship: What is "understanding" for the disciples in relationship to Jesus, who is not represented merely as the object of knowing? I shall argue that Mark suggests embodiment as an alternative way of knowing or understanding.

Next, socio-political and cultural interpretations dismiss christological questions, instead understanding discipleship as having political implications in both Roman and present imperial contexts. In recovering the women's role in the history of Jesus' movement, in the narrative, or in interpretations, a majority of feminist studies treat the issue of gender as separate from the broader cultural milieu. In addition, they are also rarely aware of a potential danger of characterizing women disciples as ideal and of thereby essentializing women's experience and/or reinforcing suffering. However, imperial-critical and gender-critical perspectives together produce a reading that finds disciples, as well as Jesus in interaction with them, in the margins of the culture and society. Considering such marginality and relationality as important aspects in reading

discipleship, I will explore the question: How does Jesus interact and engage with such marginalized subjects?

Last, poststructuralist readings of Mark deconstruct the insider/outsider boundary and thus affirm the ambiguity and paradox present in Mark. Postcolonial critics note that such postmodern indeterminacy ignores the unrepresented past or the subaltern history that colonial subjects are inevitably involved in the imperial-colonial context of Mark. In response, postcolonial interpretations construct either colonial subjects, who are devoid of agency, or the agency of subalterns, who resist the empire. My interpretation reorients the issues, which these “post” approaches pose, in relation to mystery and subjectivity: How do the mystery of presence in absence on the part of Jesus and the agency of the invisible and the voiceless on the part of the disciples operate against the imperial presence and power? In the rest of this chapter I shall outline the themes of understanding as related to body/embodiment; the marginalized as subjects; and the mystery of presence in absence.

### Critical Terms

Due to the intricacy of themes and approaches regarding discipleship I should like to begin by providing general observations of critical themes found in Mark. This overview will explain the need for new methodological, theoretical, and hermeneutical paradigms, which I see as required for a new understanding of discipleship. It will also provide a sketch for capturing a holistic picture of Mark.

### *Understanding in Mark*

Any serious reader of the Gospel of Mark can readily discover its peculiar epistemological dimension by observing the frequent use of such terms as “know,” “understand,” “perceive,” “see,” and “hear.” With regard to this epistemological dimension, the quest for Jesus’ identity has engrossed studies of this Gospel. A representative example is the thesis of the “messianic secret” formulated by William Wrede. As mentioned earlier, Wrede, observing the contrast between the popular nature of Jesus’ miracles and his injunction to silence in the Gospel, argues that the messianic secret as Mark’s own creation reflects his community’s post-Easter understanding of Jesus’ non-messianic life. Here the secret is something that is made known. The preceding and following scholarly discussions of historical Jesus or christology have followed this path, so that there is no more secret about Jesus. Joel Marcus’ statement supports this predominant idea observed in most Markan studies: “Knowledge of the most vital truth of all is the secret of Jesus’ identity.”<sup>128</sup>

However, I would argue for different reading. I see Mark rather as challenging the concept of such knowledge or the known. Understanding in Mark does not pertain to intellectual faculty or the activity of reasoning. Jesus’ identity is neither the subject of the secret nor the object of knowledge. Additionally, this way of knowing is not the mark of discipleship, because even the unclean spirits know who Jesus is (*οἶδα σε τίς εἰ*, 1:24; 3:11; 5:7; cf. 12:24, 34). Despite the demons’ inside information on Jesus, knowing or

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<sup>128</sup> Joel Marcus, “Mark 4:10-12 and Marcan Epistemology,” *JBL* 103, no. 4 (1984), 558-59.

knowledge does not make them insiders.<sup>129</sup> The question confronting the disciples is whether they perceive (*νοεῖν*, 7:18; 8:17; 13:14) or understand (*συνιέναι*, 4:12; 6:52; 7:14; 8:17, 21), not whether they know—*γινώσκειν* and *εἰδέναι*, which are often associated with the so-called messianic secret. Mark’s rhetoric also makes the meaning of seeing and hearing ambiguous. While not denying certain knowledge gained by reading the Gospel, Fowler emphasizes indirection such as doubleness, incongruity, and uncertainty, which “seeing as” causes rather than “seeing that.”<sup>130</sup> The seat of this epistemological capability in Mark is the heart (*νοῦς*), an equivalent of mind (*διάνοια*), which does not imply the rational understanding familiar to Western readers. Thus, hardness of heart arises as a critical issue in Mark’s narrative.

The hardened heart is primarily ascribed to the Jewish leaders whenever they question or discuss (*διαλογίζονται*) Jesus’ authority in their heart (2:6, 8; 11:31). However, the disciples are not an exception to questioning in their heart. Their questions about lack of bread after the feeding miracle and about who is the greatest reveal their lack of understanding and hardened heart (8:16-17; 9:33). Like the leaders, the disciples are not free from Satan’s influence on the heart (8:33). In contrast, minor characters appear to

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<sup>129</sup> Moore, “Deconstructive Criticism,” 102.

<sup>130</sup> Fowler’s definition of blindness is different from its general understanding, that is, “not seeing” or “failure to see.” He argues, “Seeing single, as in seeing one side only of an opaque curtain, is blindness. Seeing double is seeing indeed. If in dealing with Mark’s indirection, however, we learn how to see double or hear an utterance in two ways at once, then we may develop the knack of exercising double vision or stereophonic hearing when dealing not only with indirection but with direction as well... Mark’s Gospel not only teaches us how to solve the mysteries that can be solved and live with those that cannot but also teaches us thereby to be suspicious of straightforwardness and clarity... Should we not suspect that singleness, certainty, and congruity is actually blindness, deafness, and muteness?” Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 224-25.

understand in implicit or symbolic ways. Just as the boundary between insider and outsider is ambiguous, so is the nature of faith fluid (9:24). Faith is an event unexpected, mysterious, and indeterminate in Mark’s narrative. What is given to the disciples is not the secret as a knowable unknown thing but as a “mystery” ( $\tauὸ\ \mu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\o\n$ ), which is not necessarily uncovered and often remains hidden (4:11-13). The mystery of the kingdom remains alive and fearful, beyond the follower’s comprehension—or the reader’s ambition to master the mystery. Jesus is the mystery, given not to know, but only to see, hear, touch, and eat.<sup>131</sup> Thus, incomprehension may not be a failure to be entirely attributed to Jesus’ disciples but rather one that pertains to the nature of mystery.

#### *Jesus’ Body—Presence in Absence*

As implied above, certain dimensions of knowing in the Gospel of Mark are somatic and visceral. On the surface level of reading, proper understanding of Jesus’ identity seems to be a prerequisite for discipleship and to determine the boundary between insider and outsider. On a deeper level, however, the boundary is blurred by the mystery of Jesus’ body, which is both physically and metaphorically broken and shared by others.

The word body ( $\sigmaῶμα$ ) appears only four times in the Gospel (5:29; 14:8, 22; 15:43). Three of these uses refer to the body of Jesus. To be specific, Jesus’ body is related to his death in these passages.<sup>132</sup> In 14:8, Jesus describes a woman’s act of

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<sup>131</sup> See Matthew 13:11.

<sup>132</sup> In 5:29, “body” is used for the hemorrhaging woman, who felt in her body that she was healed when she touched Jesus’ clothes.

pouring ointment over his head as preparing for his burial by anointing his body. 14:22 illustrates the scene of the Last Supper in which Jesus takes bread, blesses and breaks it, and gives it to the disciples, saying “Take, this is my body.” In 15:43, this body appears to be the dead body. As Jesus’ body is symbolically broken as bread in the Supper, it is broken on the cross. Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for the dead body of Jesus.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, the body of Jesus disappears in the final scene of the Gospel. The body is absent in the tomb and eventually in the Gospel (16:6).

Yet, despite these descriptions of the broken, dead, and absent body, the body of Jesus is mysteriously present by being partaken by others. The representation of this shared body occurs on both a physical and a metaphorical level. The ideas about the permeability of the body and bodily boundary that cultural anthropology provides are helpful in understanding not only that Jesus’ physical touch with other bodies through his healing makes bodies fluid but also that such contact, which is regarded as defilement, implies crossing social and cosmic boundaries.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, his body as bread is metaphorically shared by being eaten or consumed. Although detailed explanations will be given in the following chapters, what I would argue is that the notion of the body transgressing bodily, geographical, ethnic, and symbolic boundaries contests the imperial construction of the body.

Roman Empire Studies informs us that the empire used the strategy of controlling the subject people by punishing their body, displaying the naked body, and thereby

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<sup>133</sup> Mark uses the word  $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$  here. Also, when Mark says that Pilate grants the body to Joseph,  $\pi\tau\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$  is used as an equivalent to dead body (15:45).

<sup>134</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London; New York: Loutledge, 1966), 195; Rhoads, *Reading Mark*, 161, 164.

humiliating it. The legal system facilitated the social inscription of differentiated bodies between *honestiore* and *humiliore*. *Humiliore* is the body, which can be beaten, crucified, burnt and eaten by animals.<sup>135</sup> The othering of certain bodies was a way of constructing the trans-imperial identity of Rome. Then, the body of Jesus is exactly one of a *humiliore*. His body is beaten, broken, and bleeding. Jesus embodies humiliation and disgust.

Early Christians in the time of Mark struggled with Jesus' absence—haunted by the repressed past of Jesus' death on a cross at the hands of the Roman imperial authorities as well as overwhelmed by the presence of the empire. In this situation, Mark presents the body of Jesus as fluid when it touches other bodies and is consumed by others. While Mark may accommodate the way that the empire exercises power in representing Jesus as Son of God, who teaches people with authority and does miracles, his body, which lives in death and is present in absence, disrupts the power and presence of the imperial body. Constructing the world of the text as a rhetorical reality largely influenced by the imperial presence and power, Mark writes the Gospel fashioning life and faith, as well as self and other, in the imperial-colonial situation. The body emerges as the core in making sense of life and in forming identity.

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<sup>135</sup> Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 2009), 100-101. Perkins understands Christian texts as social statements resisting the Roman inscription of differentiated bodies. For her, the argument of the resurrection of the flesh and the emphasis on the Last Judgment represent this resistance (94, 96, 101).

### *Embodiment—A Being towards the Thing*

The conception of embodiment is useful to explore aspects that Markan studies have failed to notice.<sup>136</sup> Above all, it helps us see how meaning is instilled into the body in a historically situated condition. Embodiment conveys more than metaphorical meaning given by our bodily experience. It is the realization of interaction between the body and the sensual world, which is facilitated by experiencing the world's forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches.<sup>137</sup> Here consciousness plays a critical role in making the body be connected to the world as well as to the other.<sup>138</sup> While resisting the Cartesian distinction between mind and body, embodiment does not deny consciousness, because consciousness is not an abstract product of intellect or mind but “a being-

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<sup>136</sup> Thomas Ots, “The Silenced Body—the Expressive *Leib*: on the Dialectic of Mind and Life in Chinese Cathartic Healing,” in *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, ed. Thomas J. Csordas (Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 117. I acknowledge the limitation of the term embodiment because it can be viewed as maintaining the subject-object duality of mind and body or culture and nature. When I use the word “embodiment,” I am conscious of “interrelated conceptual dualities” such as mind and body, from which other forms of distinction derive such as culture and biology, the mental and the material, subject and object, gender and sex, and so on. The body/mind distinction is often imputed to the so-called Cartesian dualism. Yet, for Descartes, this distinction was significant primarily as a methodological aid to guard scientific thought from theological or ecclesial intervention. As this distinction becomes lodged in the Western thought and tradition, however, the body has become “the source of epistemological errors, moral errors, and mortality.” Ots, “The Silenced Body,” 7-8.

<sup>137</sup> Phenomenology offers such an idea of embodied rationality, which lends one’s body to the world. Paul Stoller, “Rationality,” in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 252, citing Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & K. Paul; Humanities Press, 1962; 1981), 137.

<sup>138</sup> Thus, Liew highlights the “historical forms of consciousness” constituting subjectivity. Liew, *Politics of Parousia*, 34. Although there are a multitude of discussions of subject and subjectivity, and intertextuality and intersubjectivity, Liew provides accessible explanations of those terms and their relations for New Testament students.

towards-the-thing through the intermediary of the body.”<sup>139</sup> If Mark’s terminology of “understanding” were to be expressed in our contemporary terms, it might be as “embodied perception of an encounter” that is always historically, socially, and politically situated and that leads to intersubjectivity and interrelationality.<sup>140</sup> Just as signs interweave in a text and across texts and produce meanings, which we call intertextuality, embodiment connotes connected bodies and intersubjectivity.<sup>141</sup>

One can sense and even participate in these relational bodies and this intersubjectivity present in the Gospel of Mark. As Drew Leder argues, it is our general conception that the body is absent as far as we are unaware of it in our daily experience. In this regard, the body is the *disappearance*.<sup>142</sup> On the other hand, when the body faces disease, defect, or disorder, this “unwanted consciousness” becomes “a bodily alienation

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<sup>139</sup> Stoller, “Rationality,” 251.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 252. Csordas’ analogy between text and body is helpful to connect between body, embodiment and intersubjectivity. Many authors have referred to the body as a readable “text upon which social reality is ‘inscribed.’” Examples are Foucault’s body as a creature of representation and an object of domination; Merleau-Ponty’s body as a function of being-in-the-world and embodiment as the existential condition of possibility for culture and self. Csordas, *Embodiment*, 12. I would add Certeau’s intextuation of the body as the incarnation of the law. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 149.

<sup>141</sup> Csordas, *Embodiment*, 12. Csordas goes on to use the paradigmatic relationship between text and textuality, which can be applied to that between body and embodiment. According to him, whereas the body is a biological, material entity, embodiment is “an indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience and mode of presence and engagement in the world.” This comparison can be extended to the relation between the semiotic notion of intertextuality and the phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 8; Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 91.

or absence of a distinct kind.” The body is then the *dys-appearance*.<sup>143</sup> Leder’s notions of disappearance and dys-appearance shed light on the conception of Jesus’ body, as well as of the bodies of subject people—the othered body—represented by Mark. The crucified body of Jesus is an extreme type of the dys-appearing body and finally becomes the disappearance. The body of Jesus is absent not ontologically in the text but in our unawareness. Also, bodies as *dys-appearance*—such as starving, sick, handicapped, bleeding, defiled, possessed, dying, and dead bodies—are present in the text, but they are not properly treated as the real body. For instance, when the demon-possessed body cries out, the body is abnormal or abject; it seems dangerous or is in danger (1:23-26; 5:2-12; 9:20, 26). When this body is silenced, it slips into the disappearance as in the case of the unnamed Greek woman’s daughter (7:25-30). Through the body of Jesus, however, bodies—the dys-appearance and the disappearance—are connected and touched by the mystery. This is the point at which we can discuss embodiment. After a brief discussion of mystery as present in Mark, I shall argue that it is this fluidity and interconnectedness of bodies that is essential for discipleship.

### *Mystery—Incomprehensible but Touchable*

In 4:11 Jesus says, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God (ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ).” While Matthew 13:11 presents what has been given as “to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (ὑμῖν δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν), Mark describes what has been given to the

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

disciples as *the mystery itself*, not the ability to know the mysteries. Luke Timothy Johnson maintains that the mystery is Jesus himself, who is the personification of the kingdom. Johnson states,

This [μυστήριον] may well be the key word in Mark's narrative... Jesus himself is the singular "mystery of the kingdom," and he is so as the Holy One. He is recognized fully only by God and other spiritual forces. He radiates an intense and fearful power. It is a power, furthermore, that at once attracts and repels, so that some are drawn to him and some reject him. Most of all, the *mystērion* resists understanding. It cannot be deciphered, controlled, or reduced to a formula. The mystery of the holy, *even when revealed*, remains beyond reach.<sup>144</sup>

Johnson's argument is splendid, particularly with regard to the incomprehensibility of the μυστήριον, which is what I see as vital in interpreting the Gospel.<sup>145</sup> Moore's understanding of parable in Mark as the vehicle of the mystery supplements this line of thought on the mystery. Jesus' parables function as the boundary between insiders and outsiders by making outsiders uncomprehending. At the same time, parables break the boundary by making those who should be on the inside find themselves to be on the outside. Thus, Moore contends,

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<sup>144</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 168-69. The second italics mine.

<sup>145</sup> He contends that the key to understanding the mystery of Jesus is the commitment of faith—commitment of heart. Yet the disciples lack loyalty when they question, “Who is this then, that even the wind and sea obey him?” (4:41). He concludes, “The readers already know, and by now the disciples should know.” Ironically, in this claim the revealed *mystērion* becomes the object of knowledge. Ibid., 172-73.

Appointed to allow insiders in and to keep outsiders out, parables unexpectedly begin to threaten everyone with *exclusion* in Mark, even disciples seeking entry...

*Parabolē* turns language inside out like a pocket, threatening to empty it of its content(s). *Parabolē* takes a voice that issues from intimacy of an inside, from the interiority of speaker, and turns it into an unincorporable exteriority.<sup>146</sup>

Along with Johnson's "mystery beyond reach," Moore's "a voice turning into an unincorporable exteriority" appropriately describes the transcendence of the mystery. However, I further argue, borrowing Mayra Rivera Rivera's words that the mystery of Jesus is "always beyond our grasp, but not beyond our touch."<sup>147</sup> This implies that one cannot fully understand the mystery of Jesus but can perceive its presence through our embodiment of the mystery.

The mystery touches human bodies and leaves its trace on human histories, while always transcending bodies and places. The way the mystery operates is to cross boundaries, the boundaries of bodies and territories. In short, mystery manifests in and through the trans-corporeality and trans-spatiality of Jesus' body. Then, if his body as presented by Mark functions to rupture the Roman imperial body, the mystery exacerbates the presence of the empire. The mystery of his body is not something to be grasped but to be embodied by those who share his life.

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<sup>146</sup> Moore, "Deconstructive Criticism," 101-102.

<sup>147</sup> Mayra Rivera Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 2. Another expression of the mystery in Mark can be found in Keller's description of transcendence as "an other or an alterity that moves beyond thus characterizes an event that exceeds or eludes discourse itself, even as it attracts linguistic attention." Catherine Keller, "Rumors of Transcendence: The Movement, State, and Sex of 'Beyond,'" in *Transcendence and Beyond: A Postmodern Inquiry*, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 129.

### *Discipleship—Transcorporeal and Interrelational*

In this regard, discipleship is neither the intellectual quest for Jesus' identity nor the solitary venture of pursuing his life and values; it is related, rather, to the embodiment of mystery. Nevertheless, discipleship has been studied in line with christological discussions primarily focused on the christological titles or on the person of Jesus as presented in Mark's narrative.<sup>148</sup> One may further argue that following Jesus on the way to the cross is what discipleship requires. This following of Jesus' way can be interpreted in a couple of ways. Since the "way" points primarily to suffering and death, such an interpretation may function to represent or legitimate oppression of women, slaves, and other marginalized people. Or such discipleship can be transformed into costly socio-political engagement or struggle for liberation, as we have seen in socio-political and feminist/womanist interpretations. Yet in many cases a scholarly discussion of the discipleship of following the "way" often becomes inseparable from christological-epistemological issues. Highlighting the scholarly consensus on "a profound christology centered on the cross," Matera states, "Mark argues that no one can *comprehend the mystery of Jesus' identity* apart from his crucifixion and death on the cross."<sup>149</sup> This is followed by an argument that "the risen Lord can only be met by those who follow the way of discipleship marked out by the crucified one during his earthly ministry."<sup>150</sup> The implication of this reading is that, while the disciples remain uncomprehending, it is the individual reader to whom Jesus' identity is revealed. Whereas this Gospel lacks the

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<sup>148</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>149</sup> Matera, *What are They Saying*, 18. Emphasis added.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

witness to the disciples' encounter of the risen Lord, the reader is privileged to meet the risen Lord in his or her christological construction. This post-crucifixion reading in relation to the discrepancy between the text and the reading overcomes ambiguity and indeterminacy, anxiety and fear, silence and absence. As a consequence, reading and the subsequent knowing replace real following.

Yet an alternative reading suggests that Jesus' identity is evasive and that discipleship embraces this incomprehensibility. Questions about Jesus' identity in Mark do not necessarily denote Mark's own christological questions in need of answer. Rather, they remain only questions.<sup>151</sup> A multiplicity of designations of Jesus in the Gospel resists defining Jesus with a single title. The Markan Jesus refuses to be identified with a certain name (8:27). Moreover, Jesus calls himself just “Ἐγώ εἰμι” without a predicate (6:50; 14:62). In short, a proper understanding of Jesus' identity is not a requisite for discipleship.

In addition to the indescribable nature of Jesus' identity, the movement of Jesus is nomadic. The trajectory of his body shows his dynamic relation to the land and his intersubjective relationship with people.<sup>152</sup> Jesus appears to resist occupying any place. His body is not found at the empty tomb and his resurrected body does not appear in any place. On the other hand, Jesus' body is shared by others and connects other bodies.

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<sup>151</sup> Myers contends that Jesus is not presented as the answer but the question to the church. Jesus' question, “Who do you say that I am?” in 8:29 brings out a confessional crisis. This shows that Mark resists the church's domestication of Jesus to its own ends. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 106.

<sup>152</sup> Michael Nausner, “Homeland as Borderland: Territories of Christian Subjectivity,” in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Katherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Rivera Mayra (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 131.

Jesus' absent body is present in this way, which I call a trans-corporeal and inter-relational reality. Understanding that the disciples need to embody is to perceive and live this reality of mystery. Discipleship can be understood and realized in the way in which the immanence of body and the transcendence of mystery are encountered across boundaries of people, lands and cultures.

### *Conclusion*

My examination of the themes discussed above evinces a new approach to discipleship, which is drawn upon the critical review of the literature. Apart from the christological inquiry central to traditional interpretation, I see that the somatic dimension of knowing is essential to understand Markan discipleship. Jesus' presence in absence through his transcorporeality brings out interconnectedness and interrelationality among disappearing and dys-appearing bodies in the colonized land. It is the mystery of his body that is embodied by those who share his life; that makes discipleship possible.

I would not argue that these themes point to meaning in the text but rather "meaning potential." As Blount argues, the context in which I interpret the text directs me "towards particular slices of that meaning potential."<sup>153</sup> To put it another way, a different understanding of Markan discipleship and special attention to the body/embodiment in the imperial context come from my own social location, which is different from that of the dominant interpreters. This perspectival position influences not only interpretation but also the way of interpretation. The methodological complex based in theoretical and hermeneutical frameworks is intentional so as to show that I do not depend on one or a

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<sup>153</sup> Blount, *Cultural Interpretation*, viii.

couple of authoritative methods, which could prove the validity of my interpretation. Instead, I borrow and utilize critical theories and theories of interpretation, which also have been developed in Western academy, in order to: 1) deconstruct scientific methodology and its promise of a normative interpretation; 2) articulate my argument in communicative ways; 3) show how I embody what I interpret; 4) and contribute, eventually, to the transformation of the structure that dominating knowledge produces. In the next chapter, therefore, drawing upon the frameworks of Postcolonial Studies, Feminist Studies, and Postcolonial Feminist Biblical Criticism, I shall propose an Asian and Asian American feminist biblical hermeneutics, which I call the hermeneutics of *phronesis*. In the later chapters, I shall explore understanding as the embodiment of mystery and as a notion of discipleship by more closely interpreting the selected passages from Mark 6-7.

## CHAPTER II

### APPROACHING MARK: MATTERS OF METHOD AND THEORY

In taking up the theme of discipleship in Mark—along with the set of related themes identified earlier, such as understanding, body/embodiment, and mystery—from a fresh perspective, I will not use a single approach but employ instead a combination of approaches. I contend that methodology alone does not determine biblical interpretation and, particularly, that historical criticism does not assure a supposedly impartial interpreter of the supposedly objective meaning of the text as the reservoir of the truth. Rather, I see the interpreter as of critical importance in interpretation; in effect, how and from what perspective s/he utilizes interpretive tools has great impact upon interpretation.

My position does not lack theoretical support from the discipline. I find three discussions of biblical criticism or method helpful here: Dale B. Martin’s stress on human agency in the act of interpretation<sup>154</sup>; Stephen D. Moore’s proposal of “post-methodology”<sup>155</sup>; and Fernando F. Segovia’s argument regarding “modes of discourse.”<sup>156</sup> Whether these critics’ emphases are placed upon post-methodology or

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<sup>154</sup> Dale B. Martin, *Pedagogy of the Bible: An Analysis and Proposal* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).

<sup>155</sup> Stephen D. Moore, “A Modest Manifesto for New Testament Literary Criticism: How to Interface with a Literary Studies Field that is Post-Literary, Post-Theoretical, and Post-Methodological,” *BI* 15 (2007), 1-25.

<sup>156</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, “‘And They Began to Speak in Other Tongues’: Competing Modes of Discourse in Contemporary Biblical Criticism,” in *Reading from This Place*, vol. 1, *Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, ed. Fernando F.

post-historicism, they agree in pointing out the ideological implications and practical limitations of historical criticism.

Concurring with these critics, I seek to move beyond the primacy of method by adopting a postcolonial optic from contexts outside the West. This interpretation, grounded in situatedness and embodiedness, is executed within three theoretical frameworks: Postcolonial Studies, Feminist Studies, and Postcolonial Feminist Biblical Criticism. While eclectically using these theories, I shall develop each of these frameworks with regard to the topics of knowledge, body and subjectivity, which are problematized in imperial-colonial and postcolonial conditions. Then, I shall show how such frameworks will contribute to my own approach to Mark.

Finally, I will attempt to develop the Asian and Asian American hermeneutics of *phronesis*. This proposal begins with the review of both Asian and Asian American hermeneutics and feminist hermeneutics to shape an integrative hermeneutics of embodiment. Then, this hermeneutics will be performed through telling my embodied experience as an Asian woman simultaneously abiding in and outside the U.S.; utilizing Western hermeneutics theories of *phronesis*; and enacting both my embodied knowing and the theories of knowing in reading Mark's text. Accordingly, this forming and performing of the hermeneutics of *phronesis* will prepare to interpret Mark's theme of understanding (*phronesis*) with my own *phronesis*.

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Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 1-32; Fernando F. Segovia, "Cultural Studies and Contemporary Biblical Criticism: Ideological Criticism as Mode of Discourse," in *Reading from This Place*, vol. 2, *Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 1-17. See also Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 55-86.

## Critique of Primacy of Method: Historical Criticism and Beyond

Historical criticism had a long dominance in biblical studies and thus became the “natural” method for interpreting the Bible.<sup>157</sup> However, the origins and uses of historical criticism are also contextual in nature and ideological in effect. Its origins can be traced to the rise of historical consciousness in Europe in the nineteenth century.<sup>158</sup> The Enlightenment led to a maximizing of the use of reason and a dividing of the subject and the object. This modern rationality facilitated the recognition of distance between the past and the present, and thus the primary task of an interpreter became that of seeking the original author’s intention behind the text.<sup>159</sup> Accordingly, what should be pivotal in interpretation is to preclude the interpreter’s prejudice as much as possible. This means that the text becomes an object that is to be detached from the interpreter’s context and

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<sup>157</sup> George Aichele, Peter Miscall, and Richard Walsh, “An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible,” *JBL* 128, no. 2 (2009), 396. Fernando F. Segovia, “Methods for Studying the New Testament,” in *The New Testament Today*, ed. Mark Allan Powell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 1-3. The awareness that neither historical-critical methodology itself nor its consequences are universal or objective has arisen even inside Western biblical scholarship, where using and teaching historical-critical methodology have been regarded as the traditional and primary role of scholars. Standing in the tradition of the hermeneutics of liberation, Schüssler Fiorenza has argued that value-free objectivist historiography is a scholarly fiction. According to her, all interpretations of texts are reliant on “the presuppositions, intellectual concepts, politics, or prejudices of the interpreter and historian.” Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 62.

<sup>158</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2000), 308. Also see Martin, *Pedagogy of the Bible*, 4-5.

<sup>159</sup> Martin contends that the notion of such a gap between the past and present is “a fundamental product of modern historical consciousness.” *Ibid.*, 8.

interests. Historical criticism confines the interpreter's agency to excavating the meaning of the text by distinguishing the historical facts from present assumptions. The authority of the Bible is secured by claiming that what the original author described is historical fact, and thus the truth.

### *Critiques: Going Beyond*

For Dale Martin, however, asserting the indispensability of historical criticism for interpreting the Bible is “modernist imperialism.”<sup>160</sup> While assessing biblical interpretation in the context of theological education, he contends that teaching the original author’s intention and historical meaning is not absolutely required. Instead, what makes an interpretation of the biblical text “Christianly true” is neither the text itself nor rigorous methodological tools, but critical-theological thinking regarding the text, its interpretation, and its use through that interpretation.<sup>161</sup> This “critical reflection on the language and practices of faith” should be included in the act of interpretation.<sup>162</sup> One can only carefully and self-consciously “talk about talk about God,” because comprehending and thereby possessing God is fallible and even idolatrous.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, when one interprets the text, s/he should be conscious of what it is that s/he is doing and what s/he

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>161</sup> Thus, human agency in the act of interpretation is important, not the text’s agency in meaning-creation. Ibid., 38.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 19, 116-17.

should do.<sup>164</sup> It is self-reflective hermeneutics or interpretation theory that points to “how to think broadly and critically about the varied tasks of reading texts and using texts in society and the church.”<sup>165</sup> Nevertheless, according to Martin, biblical studies as a whole has been a fairly conservative discipline in terms of methodology because of its distinctive “uniformity in the training of ‘professionals’ for the field.”<sup>166</sup>

I would extend Martin’s assessment of interpretive practice in theological education, primarily focused on historical criticism, to a discussion of methodology itself, insofar as methodology is regarded as functioning to guarantee the objectivity and validity of one’s interpretation. Put differently, methodology is meant to keep interpretation from being subjective and biased by properly controlling the text, which is the object of analysis. Hence, methodology in biblical studies is thought to be indispensable and has fortified its determinative position beyond its function as a tool. As a consequence, the readings of those who do not employ established methodology or recognize such employment are considered to be misguided and inauthentic.<sup>167</sup> In short,

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 15. Although biblical studies, particularly as represented by historical criticism, has developed interpretive methodologies by adopting theories from other disciplines, it tends to resist employing inter- or cross-disciplinary approaches, arguing that exegetical data and scientific methods which seem to guard such facts or data are of foremost importance. For instance, homiletics is hardly ever embraced in biblical studies but rather is taught separately as another discipline.

<sup>167</sup> For example, popular readings are not considered to be proper ways of interpretation. An interpretation of a biblical passage should not be devotional or contextual, because that is just the way that lay people read the scripture and hence not professional. Biblical critics are encouraged to mainly use various exegetical and analytic tools for biblical interpretation, so that the interpreter can extract the essence of the message in the text.

methodology is that which makes biblical studies scientific, professional, and ultimately specialized as a distinct, and even fundamental, academic discipline.

Stephen Moore is aware that the major recent developments in literary studies—such as cultural studies, postcolonial studies, queer theory, masculinity studies, and autobiographical criticism—are post-methodological and that these sub-areas of literary studies have recently been appropriated in biblical studies as well.<sup>168</sup> This suggests that biblical studies can undergo transformation in terms of methodology. What Moore does not regard as post-methodological helps one understand what he means by that term.

While reader-response criticism may seem to be post-methodological, in fact it employs a variety of methodologies.<sup>169</sup> Also, deconstruction, which is one of the outstanding developments in U.S. literary studies of the 1970s and 1980s, can be regarded as a methodology because it is “an eminently *repeatable* strategy of reading.”<sup>170</sup> On the other hand, cultural studies is different from these methodologies or reading strategies in that it focuses more on the objects of analysis than on its analytical procedures.<sup>171</sup> Like feminist

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<sup>168</sup> Moore, “Modest Manifesto,” 1-25.

<sup>169</sup> Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 71-107.

<sup>170</sup> Moore, “Modest Manifesto,” 20 (Italics original). In contrast, Liew contends that deconstruction is applicable to postcolonial criticism because of its “non-methodological” characteristics. Quoting from Derrida, “Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one,” Liew argues that postcolonial criticism using deconstruction has not developed mechanical steps toward strategies to approach the text. Tat-siong Benny Liew, “Postcolonial Criticism,” in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 221.

<sup>171</sup> Moore, “Modest Manifesto,” 21. For example, what makes the appropriation of cultural studies useful in biblical studies is not distinctive methodologies but significant concepts, i.e., Bhabha’s ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity, which have fascinated a number of biblical scholars. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York:

studies, as “a radically eclectic enterprise” the recent engagement of literary studies in cultural studies values practical concerns, critical awareness, and ideological stance rather than adhering to a methodological framework.<sup>172</sup> Although one may think that Moore’s idea is impractical or ask if any post-methodology is not but another methodology, in his provocative proposal he criticizes this preoccupation of Western biblical studies as “a white European ideology.”<sup>173</sup>

Rather than positing a division between methodology and post-methodology, Fernando Segovia plots biblical criticism according to modes of discourse or paradigms of interpretation. The development has gone through three stages so far. The first umbrella model of interpretation involves historical criticism, which dominated from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the 1970s. Historical criticism is not merely a methodology, but a mode of discourse involving certain programs and agendas of biblical criticism as well as “a variety of reading strategies and theoretical frameworks.”<sup>174</sup> It

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Routledge, 1994).

<sup>172</sup> Moore, “Modest Manifesto,” 23. Barry explains that feminist criticism in the 1980s went through a change of mood, becoming much more *eclectic*, because “it began to draw upon the findings and approaches of other kinds of criticism.” Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester, NY: Manchester University Press, 2002), 122. Feminist biblical hermeneutics, as Schüssler Fiorenza proposes, necessarily suggests a critical political significance for women both in the biblical world and in Western modern societies. In this sense, feminist hermeneutics is itself not a method of reading, but rather “both a set of political positions and strategies and a contested intellectual terrain.” Elizabeth A. Castelli, Gary A. Phillips and Regina M. Schwartz, eds., *The Postmodern Bible: The Bible and Culture Collective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 234.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>174</sup> Segovia, “Methods,” 1-3. When I discussed scholars’ studies of Markan discipleship in the previous chapter, I did not specifically deal with methodologies that they use. An interpreter may use a couple of methodologies in interpretation but his or her interpretation can still be classified into one of the three interpretive paradigms or modes

aims for or results in “the construct of the scientific, objective, and impartial researcher—the universal and informed reader.” This type of reader construct continued through the second stage, from the 1980s and to the 1990s, in which literary criticism and cultural criticism emerged and shaped different modes of discourse, while beginning to switch the focus from the construction of an objective reader to the real reader of the text.<sup>175</sup> Lastly, the paradigm of cultural studies or ideological criticism, which represents the third stage, highlights flesh-and-blood readers as “variously positioned and engaged in their own respective social locations” in their own construction of the text and interpretation.<sup>176</sup>

Similar to Martin’s and Moore’s critiques of historical criticism in particular and methodology in general, Segovia too points out “the classic ideals of the Enlightenment,” which have been realized through the discourse of historical criticism as employed by Western male clerics fathering the discipline. These ideals are: “all knowledge as science; the scientific method as applicable to all areas of inquiry; nature or facts as neutral and knowable; research as a search for truth involving value-free observation and recovery of the facts; the researcher as a champion of reason who surveys the facts with disinterested eyes.”<sup>177</sup> These general characteristics of historical criticism as a mode of discourse are

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of discourse. For instance, David Rhoads’ *Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel*, which employs narrative analysis and social science models, can be viewed as an example of literary or cultural criticism. Although Brian Blount’s *Go Preach!: Mark’s Kingdom Message and the Black Church Today* deals with a variety levels of narratives and socio-historical settings, I would see his interpretation as in the mode of cultural criticism or even cultural studies, because it wrestles with the issue of the real reader or flesh-and-blood reader.

<sup>175</sup> Segovia, “Cultural Studies,” 3.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 4.

surprisingly coincident with not only the way Western scholarship has dealt with Markan themes but also with what they have discovered based on their assumptions and methodology.

### *Consequences for Interpreting Mark*

Jesus' consciousness of his own identity or the early Christians' christological questions have been approached with the modernist conviction that rational inquiry can fully access the history of the past regarding Jesus or Mark. For instance, any ambiguity or mystery in Mark is transformed into a revealed secret; similarly, conflicts in the narrative must be resolved. Additionally, this historical objectivist investigation understands discipleship primarily in terms of knowing Jesus' identity. Accordingly, the christological quest makes it possible to follow Jesus by self-determination. This implies that biblical critics become like hypothetical disciples who have overcome the original disciples' incomprehension. This scholarly project has functioned to exclude those who have not attained such christological knowledge. It is necessary, however, to admit the presence or possibility of other kinds of interpretative practices, particularly those conducted in non-Western or non-academic contexts.<sup>178</sup>

By presenting these critical positions on scientific methodology in general and historical criticism in particular, and by arguing for alternative practices of interpretation and knowledge outside the dominant tradition, it does not mean that I reject historicity in approaching Mark's Gospel. According to R. S. Sugirtharajah, it is the reinscription of

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<sup>178</sup> Other traditions of reading the Bible involve (1) the theological and churchly tradition; (2) the religious and devotional tradition; and (3) the cultural and popular tradition. *Ibid.*, 2.

Orientalism that makes Western biblical scholarship stereotype Third World interpretation as vague, spiritual, and practical in contrast to Western interpretation, which is seen as critical, intellectual, and historical. This underlying contrast appears even in Christopher Rowland's sympathetic comments on Third World interpretation: "The strength of the Third World exegesis does not lie in its ability to revitalize the historical critical method by supplying information hitherto unavailable. Rather, the insights it has to offer arise from the articulation of a way of reading in which the perspective of the marginal sheds fresh light on the texts and how they may contribute to our understanding of discipleship."<sup>179</sup>

The assumption that Western biblical scholars are committed to original historical investigation and rational analysis ignores, argues Sugirtharajah, "the possibility of culturally informed historical research."<sup>180</sup> Thus, he continues, the interpretive task on the side of Third World interpreters is to "read from our social and cultural locations, and interrogate the texts with our different historical questions, exploring insights about what the texts might have meant historically and what they mean today. The introduction of cultural data, both past and present, will help to expand the historical base of the narratives."<sup>181</sup>

Thus, experiences of people in twenty-first century postcolonial or neocolonial situations may culturally inform the reading of the Gospel written in the first century's

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<sup>179</sup> R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Orientalism, Ethnonationalism, and Transnationalism," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark Brett (Leiden; E. J. Brill, 1996), 422-23. Christopher Rowland, Review of *Voices from the Margin*, *Theology* 95 (1992): 45.

<sup>180</sup> Sugirtharajah, "Orientalism," 423.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

imperial-colonial situation. More specifically, this ideological interpretive model investigates the realities of empire which affected the writing of the Gospel, rather than limiting the scope of historical research to issues within the Christian community or sects, Jewish-Christian relations, or interactions with the Greco-Roman culture.<sup>182</sup> After all, the Gospel author offers not historical data or *facta* but, more correctly, a representation of history.<sup>183</sup> This representation may not always explicitly depict the imperial reality, but may seem to display instead only religious ideas and concerns. As Segovia points out, however, such religious responses were developed from within “the imperial-colonial framework of Rome” and thus are related to imperial politics.<sup>184</sup> Thus, in exploring

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<sup>182</sup> The latter category of historical investigation is, supposedly, viewed as apolitical. Tat-siong Benny Liew deals with the issue of division between Jewish apocalyptic and colonial politics in Markan scholarship in the third chapter of his book, *Politics of Parousia*. See his summary of the scholarship, which interprets the apocalyptic nature of the Gospel as purely religious, while removing the socio-political dimension in its interpretations. Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 51-53.

<sup>183</sup> By representation I do not mean that language directly mediates the experience of either the real or implied author or of the implied reader. Rather, such representation through language gives access to a world of experience—in this case, the experience of the empire. According to Heidegger, language not only represents or refers to, but also “discloses,” our being-in-the-world. Furthermore, for Schüssler Fiorenza, interpreting the biblical text means having “critical understanding of language as a form of power.” That is why she proposes a rhetorical hermeneutic, which provides “a research framework not only for integrating historical, archeological, sociological, literary, and theological approaches as perspectival readings of texts but also for raising ethical-political and religious-theological questions as constitutive of the interpretive process.” Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), ix, 26.

<sup>184</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, “Mapping the Postcolonial Optic in Biblical Criticism: Meaning and Scope,” in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia (London: T & T Clark International, 2007), 75. An ideological optic is concerned with both the material matrix and the discursive productions of the empire, as a ubiquitous and devastating structural reality conceived

Mark's text, the context in which it was produced, and the contemporary context in which it is interpreted, historicity is not negated, but rather approached from the ideological mode of interpretation.

Particularly, I adopt a postcolonial optic because of its signification of both situatedness and embodiedness. On the one hand, this optic denotes a field of vision conscious of the reality of (neo)colonialism and postcolonialism, as argued above. Thus, such a vision helps the reader understand the language and rhetoric of early Christians at the time of Mark as struggling with a situation that is marked by Jesus' absence as well as overwhelmed by the presence of empire. On the other hand, this optic implies more than the critical consciousness that Martin and Moore highlight; it also entails a certain dimension of embodiment. As perceptual and conceptual points of view are pivotal in Mark's illustration of discipleship, the contextualized perception of the postcolonial optic will throw light on the understanding of embodied discipleship. Segovia argues that the goal of postcolonial criticism is not merely one of analysis and description but rather one of transformation, that is, transformation towards liberation and decolonization.<sup>185</sup> Thus, by bringing changes into the discourse of discipleship in particular and the discipline in general through a postcolonial optic in interpretation, I undertake both a hermeneutical and a political task.

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and constructed from the perspective of subject people. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies*, 126-27.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 122. Bhabha has pointed out that the “post” in postmodernity, postcoloniality, and postfeminism implies the “beyond,” which transforms the present. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 4. Dube insists that postcolonial is about “seeking transformation for liberation.” Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 16.

It may seem ironic that I am using theories developed in the Western academy to formulate interpretive frameworks in order to introduce a new understanding of discipleship based on a different kind of knowledge. It is my intention, however, to show that, in so doing, I carry out my interpretation of the Gospel by making use of a variety of approaches rather than by confining myself to a single or a couple of dominant methodologies. In this regard, the postcolonial optic is demanding, because it functions as a critical stance on the use of such methodologies and theories.

### Approaching Mark: Theoretical Frameworks

For my interpretation of Mark, I will draw on three different theoretical frameworks: Postcolonial Studies, Feminist Studies, and Postcolonial Feminist Biblical Criticism. I seek to develop a postcolonial feminist approach to interpreting the Gospel of Mark. In integrating these frameworks, I seek, as a reader, not to construct a complex theory-laden methodology but rather to make use of these theories to perform interpretation.

In his monumental book, *Orientalism*, Edward Said traced the West's desire for knowing the East, thus controlling and possessing this Other through its construction of knowledge.<sup>187</sup> The argument may be summarized as follows. In order to form its own stable identity, the Self needs the Other.<sup>188</sup> In the process, the Other becomes the object of intellectual exploration as well as economic exploitation and geopolitical expansion. This colonial attitude toward and practice regarding the Other prevail in discursive ways as well. Specifically, colonial knowledge constructs the colonized body, thereby exercising power through its cultural representations. Thus, knowledge and body are closely connected in colonial discourses. This I see as a transhistorical and crosscultural reality and, as such, applicable to both the text of Mark, which signifies a colonial subject's reaction to an imperial construction of the body, and the contemporary

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<sup>186</sup> It is not my aim to discuss extensively the definition and implication of postcolonialism; rather, I seek to focus on the construction of knowledge and body in colonial and postcolonial discourse. For the definition of postcolonial(ism), see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 2. Many postcolonial critics agree that the “post” in the term denotes the “connection and continuity between the past and the present, between the colonizer and the colonized.” Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation*, 15.

<sup>187</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

<sup>188</sup> Edward W. Said, “The Politics of Knowledge,” in *Race, Identity and Representation in Education*, ed. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow (New York: Routledge, 1993), 306-14. Said states, “Western and European intellectuals were arraigned for having their work constructed out of the suffering and deprivations of so many people of color.... It is still true that various Others were being represented unfairly, their reality distorted, and their truth either denied or twisted with malice (307). He argues that at the center of this imperial cultural enterprise is a politics of identity in that the representation of Others such as Orientals or Africans defines what Europeans are not (308).

postcolonial context, in which the colonized body is continuously constructed in various ways—through racialization, ethnicization, genderization, and so on.

In addition, postcolonial studies argue that the colonial construction of the body and its dominant discourse of colonial identity are disrupted by diasporic and pluralistic identities or hybrid identity, which destabilize the traditional binary opposition of Self and Other. Said resists reducing identities into two contradictory camps involving the East and the West. His focus is on a critical consciousness through which people can judge cultures dispassionately, as if from an exile's perspective. Like DuBois' double consciousness, diasporic or pluralistic identities are especially upheld by those who live in the margins or the in-between space.<sup>189</sup>

Moreover, Homi Bhabha similarly attempts to destabilize traditional binary oppositions such as West-East, center-margin, and self-other and regards hybridity or multivocality as having the potential to displace the process of colonization. Although hybridity as an aspect of cultural identity is often discussed in postcolonial biblical criticism, I regard Bhabha's application of hybridity to temporality as especially significant. As the hybrid subject inhabits "the rim of an 'in-between' reality" and becomes a borderline existence, an "in-between" temporality emerges as "an unhomely presence" in the way that "unrepresented pasts haunt the historical present."<sup>190</sup> That is, the colonial past returns in the form of haunting. Hybridity as cultural identity and haunting as a form of cultural memory of the colonial past serve to disrupt the postcolonial present.

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<sup>189</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Classic, 1989), 3.

<sup>190</sup> Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 18-19.

Thus, postcolonial studies' special attention to the imperial or colonial construction of knowledge and body in terms of geopolitics and its discussion of hybrid identity and cultural memory prove helpful in exploring various issues raised in Mark, such as understanding, body/embodiment, and (inter)subjectivity. Additionally, postcolonial studies contribute to reexamining the issue of boundary in Mark, which occurs around the following elements: bodily (clean-unclean); societal (insider-outsider); geopolitical (Jewish-Gentile territories in the empire); and symbolic (absence-presence as mystery). Finally, while mystery is commonly reckoned only in terms of transcendence or metaphysics, postcolonial studies provide an innovative conception of the Markan mystery by considering its cultural or socio-cultural factors.<sup>191</sup> Given the promise of such new approaches to these themes, I shall pursue discipleship in Mark from a postcolonial perspective and in a hermeneutical and practical fashion.

### *Feminist Studies*

#### Western Feminist Studies

Feminist studies specifically inform this project with its concept of embodiment as a way of knowing.<sup>192</sup> French feminist critics such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and

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<sup>191</sup> See particularly Mayra R. Rivera's work, *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007). Mayra R. Rivera, "Ghostly Encounters: Spirits, Memory, and the Holy Ghost," in *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 118-35.

<sup>192</sup> The formation of feminism dates from the movement in the early period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that led to the enfranchisement of women. This is called the "First Wave" of feminism. Despite political motivations in its origin, the women's movement in the late 1960s, which is known as the "Second Wave," is closely connected to literature. Feminist

Julia Kristeva explore whether the female body can be adequately represented in patriarchal symbolic systems, as, e.g., in language.<sup>193</sup> According to these critics, language is closely related to the representation of the female body, the location of the feminine, and the determination of subjectivity.<sup>194</sup>

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criticism of the 1970s tried to expose the fact that male writers' construction of typical images of women had secured gender inequality and the mechanisms of patriarchy. In the 1980s, however, feminist criticism paid attention to women's own experience rather than to male authors' representation of women, employing various kinds of criticism like Marxism, structuralism, and linguistics. Elaine Showalter applies "gynocriticism," which constructs a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to reading and the critique of women's literature in ways different from the reading and critique of male authors. Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 121-22. Also see Keith Green and Jill LeBihan, *Critical Theory & Practice: A Coursebook* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 230, 239.

<sup>193</sup> While Anglo-American feminist critics have explored the representation of women by male authors, women's experience represented by female authors, and women's readings and critiques of literature, French feminist critics have been distinctly theoretical and have been especially concerned with the nature of language and psychology, beyond literature. Hélène Cixous argues that woman is always excluded from the operation of language based on the symbol system of the phallus and thus that women need an alternative form of language in order to adequately express women's physical difference. In contrast, Luce Irigaray insists that women writers must work *within* the masculine symbolic system. While phallogocentrism implies the fixity of meaning because the phallus is restrictive, monolithic, and limitedly singular, Irigaray argues for the benefits of the multiple sexual organs of the female body. She subverts traditional rhetorical strategies by "putting a playful female body in the place of the serious male body" and thus writing "the feminine into the masculine texts." Julia Kristeva uses Lacan's term, the Symbolic, the order of language and representation, to designate phallogocentric language. While the Symbolic is associated with authority, order, fathers, repression and control, as well as with the conscious and the surface of language, the "semiotic" as the location of the feminine can disrupt or subvert the Symbolic while remaining as the repressed form in the Symbolic. Thus, the co-existence of the Symbolic and the semiotic makes identity instable, that is, a woman cannot "be" on a deeper level. Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 122, 125; Keith and LeBihan, *Critical Theory*, 245-49, 266.

<sup>194</sup> Concerning the terms feminist, female, and feminine, Barry brings forward Toril Moi's definitions of "feminist" as "a political position," of "female" as "a matter of biology," and of "feminine" as "a set of culturally defined characteristics." Toril Moi, "Feminist, Female, Feminine," in *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, ed. Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (Hounds Mills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Education, 1989), 104-16.

This idea provides a useful framework for interpreting Mark, through the question of how the female or colonized body is represented in and through the imperial and patriarchal language. Nevertheless, these theories tend to essentialize the female body, depending on biology to define the unique position of women.<sup>195</sup> Along with the biological female body, there are other types of gendered body that are excluded or not represented in the patriarchal symbolic system.

American post-structuralist feminist Judith Butler investigates how societal law constitutes these excluded or othered bodies. She argues that human subjects are formed while participating in larger social bodies.<sup>196</sup> For Butler, the societal “laws” make up our social bodies and in turn those bodies produce the laws.<sup>197</sup> Butler primarily focuses on the sex/gender category of identification, which is produced through repeated performance of

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<sup>195</sup> Some of these ideas even reinforce characteristics traditionally attributed to male and female. For example, Kristeva’s construction of semiotic female language and world renders the rational to men and reserves for women such traditional arenas as the emotive, the intuitive, the trans-rational and the privatized. Keith and LeBihan, *Critical Theory*, 250.

<sup>196</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 86. This perspective is similar to anthropological and sociological perspectives on the body. Particularly, it can be compared to Bourdieu’s definition of *habitus*. Citing the well-known definition is useful: *habitus* is the “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures.” Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72. The inculcation of a set of durable-but-transposable dispositions in individuals generates particular practices. In other words, individuals in society act in accordance with such internalized systems—what Bourdieu calls “the cultural unconscious obedience to rules.” Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 152. It seems to me that Butler’s idea of performativity or repeated performance corresponds to Bourdieu’s emphasis on practice as produced and producing.

the law, for example, of heterosexuality.<sup>198</sup> No gender is a representation of a certain sexual essence as a given of nature. Rather, each gender is a culturally constructed identity. On the other hand, the societal laws do not merely manifest what they demand of the body but also engender what Butler calls their “constituent outsides.” These are excluded, repressed, and invisible subjects. Through such laws, some bodies are constituted as the normal, but others as deviant.<sup>199</sup> Butler’s argument of constituent outsides provides a useful framework for analyzing how the abnormal body and identity formation are represented by Mark in the imperial context.<sup>200</sup>

### Postcolonial Feminist Studies

Although there is growing interest in the excluded “Other” in terms of culture, race, gender and sexuality, the so-called “Third World woman” faces the problem of representation.<sup>201</sup> Leela Gandhi criticizes the category of the Third World woman as

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<sup>198</sup> The laws are naturalized by repetition so that they may be called “ontological constructions of identity.” Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 5.

<sup>199</sup> Anne Daniell, “The Spiritual Body: Incarnations of Pauline and Butlerian Embodiment Themes for Constructive Theologizing toward the Parousia,” *JFSR* 16, no. 1 (2000): 5-22.

<sup>200</sup> However, it should be noted that the body is more than the product of constitutive culture or human discursivity. Constructivism reflects the Western dualistic view of mind and body in a different way in that it disregards the real body or the material body.

<sup>201</sup> Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 132-33. It is a post-feminist response that challenges the category of “woman” and the “oppression of women” as taken-for-granted subjects in feminist studies. In the 1990s, when cultural specificity in psychoanalysis was stressed, claiming any kind of universal validity for the issue of woman was avoided. There are two kinds of responses to this inclination toward such anti-essentialism. On the one hand, the reluctance toward any generalization makes it difficult to politicize women as a group. On the other hand, along with the unstable subjectivity of women, the diversity of viewpoints can be regarded as a strength of feminist approaches, rather than a lack of

having been “the object of the ideological tourism of Western liberal feminism.”<sup>202</sup> Western feminism assumes that the “third-world woman” cannot represent herself but should be represented. It is colonial discourse in that it comprises the “cultural privilege of representing the subjugated Other.”<sup>203</sup> Additionally, it is ethnocentric because it ignores differences among “real” Third World women. Just as Western feminism silences the native woman, so the anti-colonial nationalist also does not allow her to speak. This nationalist stance resists colonial authority, while approving patriarchal authority. Such anti-colonial discourse replicates “the invasive hegemony of colonial values” by keeping a cultural identity and superiority and simultaneously justifying women’s domesticity.<sup>204</sup>

In this regard, Spivak raises a provocative question, “Can the subaltern speak?”<sup>205</sup> She argues that not only the colonialist but also the indigenous intellectual cannot speak for the subaltern women, who suffer from both imperialism and patriarchy.<sup>206</sup> Accordingly, Spivak applies the gender category to the subjectivity of the subaltern. The West constituted the Subject as Europe and simultaneously constructed its colonized

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power. Keith and LeBihan, *Critical Theory*, 230, 254.

<sup>202</sup> According to Gandhi, the “othering” of the Third World woman functions as a self-reinforcing project for Western feminism. Such feminism represents an Orientalist attitude because the Third World woman is seen as another object of Western knowledge. Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 84-85.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 96. For the nationalist, thus, Western feminism or the Westernization of native women looks dangerous.

<sup>205</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

<sup>206</sup> Also, see Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 89.

“Other as the Self’s shadow,” while denigrating knowledge existing outside the West as “sanctioned ignorance.”<sup>207</sup> By this “epistemic violence,” the trace of this Other is eradicated in its subjectivity. Despite indigenous intellectuals’ interest in the voice of the Other, their complicity in the constitution of the Other makes them represent only their own intellectual selves, rather than the subaltern. No one can speak for the subaltern women, and they do not seem to have voice. The subaltern women refuse to speak not because of their inability to speak but because of an androcentric system in which there is no adequate language for their own voice to be heard.<sup>208</sup> Although the “effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject” is irretrievable, Spivak implies that the body inscribed in the Third World women’s text speaks.<sup>209</sup> In reading Mark, I shall examine how the subjectivity of the gendered subaltern emerges in silence and how their body speaks through the obliterated trace of their subjectivity.

#### Feminization of Asian America

Another feminist issue of Third World women arises not only from the conflict between genders but also from competition between masculinities. Imperial and anti-colonial masculinities attempt to control women’s sexuality according to their own respective desires: the desire of imperial masculinity for territorial/sexual dispossession

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<sup>207</sup> Spivak, “Subaltern Speak,” 280-81.

<sup>208</sup> Seong Hee Kim, *Mark, Women and Empire: A Korean Postcolonial Perspective* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 76; Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, eds., *Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 76.

<sup>209</sup> Spivak, “Subaltern Speak,” 285, 287.

of the colonized land, on the one hand; and the desire of anti-colonial masculinity for sexual/territorial repossession from whiteness and white civilization, on the other hand.<sup>210</sup>

The competing desires of imperial and anti-colonial masculinities produce competing anxieties, since the imperial man defines himself by emasculating the colonized man. The colonized land is colonizable because it lacks real men.<sup>211</sup>

The issue of emasculation or feminization often appears in Asian American literary texts.<sup>212</sup> Traditionally, as Jinqi Ling puts it, the West has valued “men as embodiments of civilization, rationality, and aggressiveness” and devalued “women as embodiments of primitiveness, emotion, and passivity.”<sup>213</sup> This conceptualization is extended to the process of Western colonization. The West needed to establish its economic and political superiority over the East and consequently feminized the East.

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<sup>210</sup> Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 98-99.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. A reaction to the discourse of colonial masculinity occurs when the anti-colonialist revives physical and militaristic culture in the form of a nationalist movement.

<sup>212</sup> Ling argues that the usage of the term “emascation” presents complicity with patriarchal prejudices and the further marginalization of women, because it naturalizes the devaluation and inferiority of women as being “both feared and repudiated.” Although the term suggests the overall social consequence of the displacement of Asian men’s position as subject, Asian American men’s “emascation” as a concept metaphor is problematic. It reveals how the composite of their sexual identity on the basis of their race perpetuates the social and epistemological division of the hierarchical gender roles, and how the continued devaluation of women in turn naturalizes using “emascation” as a basic strategy for articulating Asian American men’s plight while capturing such articulation in the oppressors’ permanent logic. At the same time, the term “feminization” represents a specific form of Asian men’s racial gendering in America. I will use “feminization” in discussing the representation of the Asian descendants in America later on. Jinqi Ling, “Identity Crisis and Gender Politics: Reappropriating Asian American Masculinity,” in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Cheung (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 313, 317.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 314.

For instance, white America feared Asian immigrants, who might possibly challenge their dominating status, as shown in the anti-miscegenation laws which were instituted in the U.S. in the nineteenth century against Asian men as a potential sexual threat to white people.<sup>214</sup> So, they constructed “Asian men” as powerless and thus harmless.<sup>215</sup> These filthy and passive people were distinguished from other minorities like African American, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Asian women were ultra-feminized, being represented as desirable sexual partners willing to serve and please. This impotent Asian race was assigned the role of a model minority. In addition to this forced

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid. The Chinese Exclusion Law of 1883 included the anti-miscegenation law by preventing Chinese men from bringing wives from their country to join them. This law hindered them from having their families in the States and forming a second generation. John S. W. Park, *Elusive Citizenship: Immigration, Asian Americans, and the Paradox of Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 101. It is striking to see how legislative and public discourses in the U.S. were full of the language of pollution and contamination with regard to what Chinese men might bring upon White America. See, e.g., the New York Tribune’s dismissive comments about the Chinese as “morally, the most debased people on the face of the earth... with a depravity so shocking and horrible, that their character cannot even be hinted... Their touch is pollution.” Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 17. Quoted from Geoffrey A. Neri, “Of Mongrels and Men: The Shared Ideology of Anti-Miscegenation Law, Chinese Exclusion, and Contemporary American Neo-Nativism,” bepress Legal Series (2005), 24. The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress), <http://law.bepress.com/expresso/eps/>. Neri argues, “To guard against the ‘pollution’ thought certain to occur should a race so ‘filthy and unclean’ as the Chinese infiltrate White America, states looked to the anti-miscegenation law.” For the argument that “like blacks, the Chinese were viewed in the popular imagination as lustful and sexually threatening,” see Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1989), 217.

<sup>215</sup> Ling, “Identity Crisis,” 317. Ling states, “When Asian American men are economically and politically subordinate, they are seen as feminine and incapable of living up to Western definitions of masculinity: when they struggle against odds to secure limited social space for themselves or contend for some degree of equality with the cultural establishment, they are immediately regarded as ‘bastardized’ males whose criminal libido has to be controlled.”

model, Asians are doubly silenced when the matter of race is treated only in terms of white and black.

Asian American writers' reappropriation of masculinity overcomes forms of feminism which fail to assess the meaning of masculinity and patriarchy beyond the framework of male-female oppositions. Asian American literary texts become the sites of "specific forms of the entanglement of racial ideology, social power, and sexual politics."<sup>216</sup> However, this literature, as Liew mentions, tends to be reluctant to discuss religion.<sup>217</sup> Thus, relating feminist issues, particularly the feminization of Asian men, in Asian American literature and discourse to a biblical hermeneutics still finds itself in an experimental stage. In my reading of Mark, this social phenomenon of gendering a race, as in the case of the Asian race will be illuminated in terms of religion as well as ideology.

### *Postcolonial Feminist Biblical Criticism*

Postcolonial feminist discourse in biblical studies provides more specific insight on the exploration of the role of the body in interpreting Mark. Rather than explicating the definition and methodological aspects of postcolonial feminist biblical criticism, I focus on views of the woman's body in relation to knowledge in such critics.

Kwok Pui-lan, a postcolonial feminist theologian, begins the first chapter of her book, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, with comments about her

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>217</sup> Tat-siong Benny Liew, *What is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading the New Testament* (Honolulu; University of Hawai'i Press; Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 2008), x.

intellectual journey to “struggle to know.” For her and many Third World women, knowing is struggling because only after learning authoritative knowledge and then acquiring the proper “credentials and qualifications” can they speak about themselves.<sup>218</sup> I recognize that this struggle applies primarily to intellectuals, who can gain access to such knowledge. Yet, Kwok also speaks about a different type of knowledge when she describes historical imagination as a releasing of the past, which makes the present inhabitable, rather than a reconstructing the past.<sup>219</sup> She argues, “Memory is a powerful tool in resisting institutionally sanctioned forgetfulness. Too often, the memory of multiply oppressed women is inscribed on the body, on one’s most private self, on one’s sexuality. We have yet to find a language to speak in public how the body in such circumstances remembers and passes on knowledge from generation to generation.”<sup>220</sup> Here, knowledge is engraved upon the body in the form of memory. Moreover, such knowledge this female subject uses, as she puts it, “in the commitment to communal

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<sup>218</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 29. Ironically, she speaks her own voice after quoting a male postcolonial critic, R. S. Sugirtharajah, and an American feminist writer, Nancy Mairs, on change in order to explain the changes and development in her thoughts on imagination since she wrote the article, “Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World,” *Semeia* 47 (1989): 25-42; reprinted in Kwok Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (Maryknoll: Orbis books, 1995), 8-19. In *Postcolonial Imagination*, 29-51, Kwok speaks about three kinds of imagination: historical, dialogical, and diasporic imagination.

<sup>219</sup> This type of knowledge applies to the religious experiences of Third World women and their own reading practice of the Bible. Kwok demonstrates how oppressed women have turned the Bible into a site of contestation and resistance in support of their own emancipation by utilizing “the moral imagination of the interpretive process.” Thus, she regards the Bible as a “highly relevant and invaluable resource” for the contemporary postcolonial situation. Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination*, 77-78.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 37.

survival and in creating social networks and organizations so that she and her community can be healed and flourish.”<sup>221</sup>

Musa Dube’s interpretation of biblical texts thoroughly highlights the role of the body of postcolonial subjects in Africa from a feminist perspective. Dube argues that narratives of colonial dominance and resistance often use the woman’s body to articulate their agenda of domination.<sup>222</sup> It is important for feminist criticism not only to reclaim gender empowerment but also to expose the ideological employment of gender, particularly female bodies, to articulate oppressive international relations.<sup>223</sup> For instance, in the story of the hemorrhaging woman in Mark 5:24-43, the woman represents her own subordinated status and her body symbolizes the colonized Israelite nation.<sup>224</sup> In another article, Dube reads the same story with an oral African tale of a young girl singing in her grave and fifty years of African history: she depicts Africa as a girl who cries out due to

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<sup>221</sup> Kwok’s emphasis on the body and language has affinity with that of French feminist theories, but she criticizes French feminist discourse of body as Eurocentric and as reflecting white bourgeois culture in that it approaches the female body focusing on “her own individualist sexuality or sexual freedom.” In contrast, for many Third World women, the enslaved or colonized body “speaks a language of hunger, beating, and rape, as well as resistance, survival, and healing.” Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Musa W. Dube, *The HIV and AIDS Bible: Selected Essays* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2008), 87; Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 117; Musa W. Dube, “Rahab is Hanging Out a Red Ribbon: One African Woman’s Perspective on the Future of Feminist New Testament Scholarship,” in *Feminist New Testament Studies: Global and Future Perspectives*, ed. Kathleen O’Brien Wicker, Althea Spencer Miller, and Musa W. Dube (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 179. Dube discovers that in Joshua 2 the body of Rahab, a sex worker, is identified with the land of Jericho that the Israelite spies explore to invade.

<sup>223</sup> Dube, *HIV and AIDS Bible*, 91.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 88.

the thorn of colonialism in her flesh.<sup>225</sup> Still bleeding, then, the girl becomes Mama Africa, carrying on her back all the suffering from the anti-colonial struggle for independence and the global force of neocolonialism after independence. Finally, the disease of HIV/AIDS has entirely gripped her body. Such a powerful image of Africa, both in terms of the female body and the land, overlapping that of the hemorrhaging woman's body in Mark, shows how the female body not only records and speaks of inscribed suffering in her body but also exercises her agency of connecting and serving suffering people throughout the colonial past and the postcolonial present. Although the colonial masters believe that they brought civilization with its knowledge and technology to Africa, in Dube's story it becomes clear that Africa already had knowledge to build, organize, and nourish her own world.

Laura Donaldson also reads the woman's body and a different type of knowledge in the biblical text using a postcolonial optic. In reading the story of the demon-possessed daughter in Mark 7:24-30 with its parallel story in Matthew 15:21-28 and the story of the Medium of Endor in 1 Samuel 28:7, Donaldson focuses on the daughter's disabled and invisible body in the texts and interpretations.<sup>226</sup> For Donaldson, however, it is spectrality

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<sup>225</sup> Musa W. Dube, "Fifty Years of Bleeding: A Storytelling Feminist Reading of Mark 5:24-43," *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible*, ed. Musa W. Dube (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001), 50-60. Dube reads the story in light of her postcolonial lens. As the physicians' exploitation has made the hemorrhaging women's condition worse, the history of colonialism, neo-colonialism and globalization has brought Africans to cohabit with disease and death. In her interpretation, Jesus brings a liberation that breaks the bonds of death, that is, the bonds of patriarchal and colonizing international relations. Dube, *HIV and AIDS Bible*, 94-95.

<sup>226</sup> Laura E. Donaldson, "Gospel Hauntings: The Postcolonial Demons of New Testament Criticism," in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 101-102.

that makes one grasp “the presence of the invisible in the ordinary world of the visible.”<sup>227</sup> From an indigenous Indian perspective, the Canaanite spirit-possessed daughter is perceived as an emergent shaman and the Ghostwife of Endor as the daughter’s ancestress. Not only does Donaldson explore the theme of haunting in her reading of these invisible women, but she also dares to be haunted by engaging with the possessed daughter as an extraordinary subject. This is what Spivak means by “ethical singularity,” namely, establishing an ethical relationship with “a single figure” in place of knowledge of the other.<sup>228</sup> Therefore, Donaldson’s reading becomes an embodied reading in that the vision of the invisible subject brings the reader a transformative, haunted vision of oppressed history. Otherwise such indigenous subjects remain forever muted and demonized.

As observed above, these postcolonial feminist critics are concerned with the woman’s body. Their discourse reveals that the knowing of Third World women and indigenous women is embodied, relational, and spiritual. Such embodied knowledge is what I find in female and male subjects as presented in Mark. Furthermore, Dube and Donaldson not only interpret biblical texts but also embody what they read from the text. In another article in which she reads the stories of Rahab in Joshua 2, the window through which Dube sees the academy and the world is the window of Rahab’s home, which divides the powerful and the less powerful.<sup>229</sup> Yet, in the shadow of division and

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. Donaldson argues that many indigenous spiritual traditions reveals “ecstatic states or altered forms of consciousness” as prevailing sites of knowledge. Ibid., 104.

<sup>229</sup> Dube, *Feminist New Testament Studies*, 178.

the death of the women in the Bible, Dube's reading is altered into Africans' stories and songs. She rewrites Bible stories. Donaldson is haunted when she encounters the demon-possessed girl as an indigenous shaman, and thus she recovers the oppressed memory of the past. Similar to these authors' work, I should like to delve into embodied knowing both as a significant theme in understanding discipleship in Mark and as a way of performing such embodied knowing in my interpretation.

### *Concluding Comments*

Rather than counting on a single dominant methodology, I have developed a set of theoretical frameworks upon which I intend to draw for my approach to interpreting Mark. Postcolonial Studies elucidates not only the way that colonial identity is formed through the imperial construction of knowledge and body but also the concepts of hybridity and haunting, which function to disrupt such colonization. While Feminist Studies illuminates the construction of body and its agency in terms of gender, I further this feminist framework by comprising the issue of the feminization of Asian America. Finally, Postcolonial Feminist Biblical Criticism applies postcolonial and feminist discourses on knowledge and body to biblical interpretation and provides examples of embodied knowing both as a theme of and a way of interpretation.

As I grasp the significance of the female body as an agent of knowing, as well as of embodied reading, in postcolonial feminist biblical criticism, now I propose a hermeneutics, the hermeneutics of *phronesis*. By doing so, I wish to contribute to forming Asian and Asian American feminist hermeneutics. Since this hermeneutics involve power relations and presuppose communal reading practices of the groups such as Asian and

Asian Americans and diverse groups of women, I will discuss how each group develops their hermeneutics in and against the power system. Particularly, I will highlight Korean feminist hermeneutics, which attest that the body is the subject that exercises power.

Next, I will demonstrate how I make use of Western theories of *phronesis*, based on my own embodied experience and for my phronetic reading of Mark.

### Asian and Asian American Feminist Hermeneutics of *Phronesis*<sup>230</sup>

#### *Forming Asian and Asian American Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics*

##### Asian and Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics

While Donaldson relates being haunted to having an ethical relationship with a single figure occluded in the traces of history, Liew uses the image of a phantom to deal with racial/ethnic identity in discussing Asian American biblical hermeneutics. The term “biblical hermeneutics” by itself is not problematic, but when “Asian American” is attached to it, then the term comes into question. Such questioning is directly associated not only with the issue of purity regarding such hermeneutics but also with the problematic of “who Asian Americans are.” Liew disclaims any attempt to search for the authenticity or referentiality of Asian Americans and thereby answer what biblical hermeneutics practiced by Asian Americans is. Such an effort falls into the danger of

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<sup>230</sup> By the term hermeneutics I not only mean a theoretical basis of interpretation but also suggest a reading practice, which is not a method or a reading strategy. It is more like a tactic of reading that cannot be repeated because of the reader’s subjectivity and its relationship with her particular circumstances. This quality of understanding as an event is what I want to highlight. I wish to show by “doing interpretation” using *phronesis*.

essentializing Asian Americans, which are in fact heterogeneous in both demographic and political senses. Liew argues that

...racial/ethnic identity is not only unstable and subject to history, but also more like a phantom that always eludes one's grasp. As soon as an identity is retrospectively recognized, it is already being reshaped by forces and practices both of and beyond human plans and wills.... A ghost-like phantom is, in contrast, actually more haunting precisely because one cannot arrest it, and hence cannot assess its reality, property, or authenticity. Racial/ethnic identity is not something that one can figure out, tidy up, authenticate, and then adopt as one's springboard for intellectual and interpretive endeavors.<sup>231</sup>

Thus, rather than addressing Asian American biblical hermeneutics by constructing who the subject is, Liew suggests legitimating it through “an inventive tradition of citation, or of reference without referentiality.”<sup>232</sup> If the work of Asian American biblical scholars is persistently cited or referred to, this will form and transform the tradition of Asian American biblical hermeneutics.

Furthermore, such a practice of citational repetition causes a “re-vision” of biblical hermeneutics itself. Biblical hermeneutics, which has been constructed in the Western academy and conceived as “the thing as it is,” is concerned with what meaning one can find in the biblical text. Yet, Liew

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<sup>231</sup> Liew, *Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics*, 6. This description of phantom is also relevant to discussing the story of Mark 6:45-52, in which the disciples see Jesus' *phantasma*, because such perception of the ghost is precisely related to the identity question of who Jesus is. I will revisit this relationship when reading the text.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 7.

proposes biblical hermeneutics as reading the Bible “with and as theory” and highlights “how one can use the biblical text to understand the very making of meaning, or the working of power in the wor(l)d.”<sup>233</sup> Hence, biblical hermeneutics can be understood as a meaning-making process or an inquiry of forming and performing knowledge-power in and through the Bible. Such biblical hermeneutics, related to a power-laden notion of knowledge, applies to not only Asian American biblical hermeneutics but also biblical hermeneutics as practiced by those marginalized or oppressed among both professional and ordinary people. A representative example is the “hermeneutics of suspicion” advocated by feminist biblical critics.

### Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics

This hermeneutic principle encompasses both biblical texts, which were written by male authors, and interpretations, which are led by male-dominant and patriarchal biblical scholarship.<sup>234</sup> Feminist hermeneutics, as Mary Ann Tolbert puts it, stands over “against patriarchal hermeneutics, an advocacy position for the male-oriented,

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<sup>233</sup> The theory which Liew has in mind is related to “conditions and consequences of making meaning, making sense, or making reality.” Ibid., 10. His hermeneutical employment resonates with the approach that I employ in my dissertation in that I also utilize theories or theoretical frameworks as a gesture pointing to the constructedness of *doxa*—in this case, Western theories and practice of interpretation—instead of relying on methodology. Liew argues that a practice of citational repetition as a *habitus*, along with theory as *paradoxy*, can affect and change *doxa*. Ibid., 152. I will further employ these terms when I read Mark’s text.

<sup>234</sup> Although this scholarship certainly has its own biases, which undergird its interpretations, its objectivist norms judge feminist interpretations as subjective and deviating from those biased views.

hierarchically established present cultural power system.”<sup>235</sup> Although Schüssler Fiorenza argues that hermeneutics should be approached with critical consciousness and suspicion, she also acknowledges that the Bible functions as a liberating resource as well as a tool of oppression. Thus, she develops a multidimensional model of critical feminist hermeneutics, which includes a hermeneutics of proclamation, a hermeneutics of remembrance that seeks to reconstruct the history of women in the Bible, and a hermeneutics of creative actualization that articulates this reconstruction in an imaginative way for the ongoing history of women.<sup>236</sup>

Womanist interpretation of the Bible takes a step further in challenging not only the homogenous category “man,” which represents men of particular racial and class privileges, but also the universal abstraction of “woman.” Renita J. Weems, a womanist biblical scholar, also searches for “a reading at once critical and faithful, attempting to speak from a complex of political, theological, and ethical allegiances.”<sup>237</sup> Thus,

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<sup>235</sup> Mary Ann Tolbert, “Defining the Problem: The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics,” *Semeia* 28 (1983), 118. Along with the consciousness of power relations in knowledge construction, the authors of *The Postmodern Bible* demonstrate that the scientific objectivity of the historical-critical paradigm has placed “man” “at the center of subjectivity, discourse, and epistemology, a self-identical and ahistorical agent who occupies not merely a particular space, but the normative and universal position whose perspective is privileged and subsumes all others.” Castelli, Phillips, and Schwartz, eds., *Postmodern Bible*, 235.

<sup>236</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), x; Schwarz states that this is feminist theology as “a different way and alternative perspective for doing theology.” Hans Schwarz, *Theology in a Global Context* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 492. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “For Women in Men’s World: A Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation,” in *The Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 11.

<sup>237</sup> Weems’ treatment of the text reflects these multiple identities and commitments of a

womanist critics have developed a “hermeneutics of survival” (Delores Williams) and a “hermeneutics of resistance” (Retina Weems) based on experiences in their institutional and social locations.<sup>238</sup>

As we see in feminist and womanist biblical hermeneutics, suspicion is the primary step to awareness of the power issues in making meaning and constructing knowledge and the dismantling of patriarchal hermeneutics. Latin America’s ecofeminist theologian Ivone Gebara argues that “the hermeneutics of suspicion beckons us to new strategies in the exercise of power.”<sup>239</sup> The changes to which she refers include subjective conditions as well as objective conditions.<sup>240</sup> For instance, given cultural poverty in addition to economic privation, education not only for survival but also for structural change is demanded for Latin American women. Fighting for everyday survival and seeking religion as the place of consolation are not enough to bring about structural change. In Gebara’s radical proposal, therefore, the changes of subjective and objective conditions are directed toward the ultimate goal of the gradual creation of alternative institutions.

Concurring with this final goal, I want to emphasize women’s subjectivity in exercising power through the body in everyday life. Here I have recourse to a number of

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simultaneously feminist and black and womanist biblical scholar. As seen in her interpretation, womanist interpreters seem reluctant to lend support to a hermeneutical critique of biblical authority, given the particular history of many African Americans’ relationship to the Bible. Castelli, Phillips, and Schwartz, eds., *Postmodern Bible*, 227-30.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 251-54.

<sup>239</sup> Ivone Gebara, “A Feminist Theology of Liberation,” *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women’s Theology*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010), 54.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 56.

Korean women biblical scholars whose biblical hermeneutics affirm the female body, embodiment, and practice in life. With this gesture of including these local hermeneutics, I wish to present my concerns with expanding the tradition of Asian American hermeneutics to a global scale and aligning such hermeneutic discourses around the feminist focus.<sup>241</sup>

### Korean Feminist Hermeneutics of Embodiment

Recognizing “the ethos of the multi-axial interpretation of Asian feminist biblical hermeneutics,” rooted in the multi-religious and multi-scriptural context of Asia, Hyun Ju Bae proposes a “hermeneutics of compassion in detachment.”<sup>242</sup> While detachment

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<sup>241</sup> In discussing Asian and Asian American biblical hermeneutics, a feminist perspective is critical, not only because it considers female subjects to be significant but also because, as I have argued, the feminization of Asian people is still employed as an imperial and postcolonial practice. Of course there are diverse voices from many women in Asian countries and in the U.S. For instance, Sr. Pauline Chakkalakal, the Indian feminist biblical theologian, argues for a life-affirming, change-oriented, eco-friendly, and contextual reading of the Bible. In the Indian/Asian context in which religious pluralism is a fact of history, she argues that it is imperative to “search in the Scriptures of other great religions for liberative streams and engage in dialogue with women and men of other faiths.” See: <http://ntschorlship.wordpress.com/2011/07/29/radicalism-of-indianasian-feminist-biblical-hermeneutics-theology/>.

<sup>242</sup> Hyun Ju Bae, “Dancing around Life: An Asian Woman’s Perspective,” *ER* 56 (2004), 392. Also see, Kwok, *Discovering the Bible*, 39. As the West has its classics, Bae argues, so do Asians possess their cultural and religious classics, such as the *Analects* of Confucius, Buddhist scriptures, *Tao Te Ching*, *Chuang Tzu*, the *Vedas* and the *Koran* (393). Lee calls for an Asian hermeneutics that is conscious of its cross-textual and cross-scriptural context. Archie C. C. Lee, “Cross-Textual Interpretation and Its Implications for Biblical Studies,” in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourse and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 249. This is also one of the tasks of postcolonial feminist hermeneutics proposed by Kwok Pui-lan: (1) challenging the universalizing forms of Western interpretations; (2) continuing a counter-hegemonic discourse; (3) placing the Bible within a multi-faith context; (4) inviting women of marginalized, diaspora and indigenous peoples to voice their concerns; and (5) learning from other interpretative practices. Kwok, *Discovering*

indicates Asian women's critical stance against the oppressive function and use of the Bible, compassion implies the faith community's "art of friendship" with both people today and the written text(s) in creative dialogue and interaction. For Bae, therefore, the task of an Asian feminist biblical scholar is to seriously consider important "fulcrums in the plural that matter for her own existence as well as for the life of her community."<sup>243</sup> For Bae, this hermeneutics is best evoked by an image of "dancing around life."<sup>244</sup> When one dances, she attunes her body to the rhythm of life, while all human faculties participate in the movement of the body.

Bae's hermeneutics is inspired by a "hermeneutics of feet," practiced as doing theology by Hwa Soon Cho, who is known as a "motherly apostle" or a "God-mother to women laborers in Korea."<sup>245</sup> Like the Syrophoenician woman in Mark, Cho left her comfortable home, both geographically and metaphorically, in order to enhance the life and human dignity of the weak. Thus, this hermeneutics of feet challenges Asian women to put their feet and their whole self in the shoes of the weak and to act in solidarity with them.<sup>246</sup>

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*the Bible*, 46.

<sup>243</sup> Bae, "Dancing around Life," 395. Also, Teresa Okure proposes "a hermeneutics of life." For her, the Bible is primarily about life and is for promoting life. Life and life experience are the primary hermeneutical keys for interpreting the Bible. Teresa Okure, "First was Life, not the Book," in *To Cast Fire Upon the Earth: Bible and Mission Collaborating in Today's Multicultural Global Context*, ed. Teresa Okure (Natal: Cluster, 2000), 198.

<sup>244</sup> Bae, "Dancing around Life," 396.

<sup>245</sup> Letty M. Russell, "Introduction: Crossing Bridges of No Return," *Let the Weak Be Storing: A Woman's Struggle for Justice*, ed. Lee Sun Ai and Ahn Sang Nim (Bloomington: Meyer Stone, 1988), 4.

<sup>246</sup> Bae, "Dancing around Life," 396, 400.

Seong Hee Kim's hermeneutics of *salim* is also concerned with life. Generally, the term *salim* indicates ordinary tasks practiced by women at home. Yet, its fundamental meaning is "making things alive," "mending broken things," "feeding everybody," and "creating peace, health, and abundant living."<sup>247</sup> By employing the gendered term *salim*, Kim recalls Korean women's experiences in their colonial and postcolonial history and identifies the way that women read biblical stories by using dialogical imagination and inspiring reciprocal healing and wellbeing. The *salim* hermeneutics is a life-centered and relation-oriented Bible reading practice. I would further argue that the practice of *salim* is an embodied practice. Its practice has been passed down by women from generation to generation. Women have fed the household and shared resources with neighbors and strangers, thus sustaining the communal body and even giving life to their nations. I am part of my mother's body and embody the *salim* of my foremothers.

In short, an Asian American feminist biblical hermeneutics engages in "the making of meaning" and "the working of power" in and through biblical interpretation. The development of feminist biblical hermeneutics affirms this exercising of power in women's communal practice of reading the Bible. Especially, Asian women's hermeneutics of embodiment demonstrate the female body as the agency of making meaning and empowering the life of the community. In the following, I shall perform a biblical hermeneutics based on Asian American women's embodied experiences, while utilizing theories of interpretation for my own purpose, in order to form Asian and Asian American feminist biblical hermeneutics.

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<sup>247</sup> Kim, *Mark, Women, and Empire*, 31. Kim brings these definitions from a Korean ecofeminist theologian, Chung Hyun Kyung, *Goddess-Spell according to Hyun Kyung* (Paju: Yolimwon, 2001), 236.

*Performing an Asian and Asian American Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics:*

*A Hermeneutics of Phronesis*

Asian American Embodied Experiences

As a Christian Korean woman who lives in the U.S. as a resident alien and speaks English as a second language, I read the Bible in various ways: I read it with my ethnic faith community, which lives in the in-between space of the Korean past and the American dream; I read it professionally with the academic community, which stands in the liberal Protestant tradition; and I read it with the broader structure of the biblical professional guild, which forms part of the North American context. This socio-cultural location influences my reading of Mark, and, in turn, such a reading re-visions and re-creates a new reality. My social location is not merely a material reality separate from my body; it is an embodied place, because my body engages in meaning-creation by moving and interacting with people in such a material and relational space.

Two memories of my bodily experiences are relevant to introducing a discussion on performing interpretation. One involves my pre-Christian experience; the other has to do with my migration to the U.S.

My pre-Christian experience was richly religious, for I was raised up in a household in which multi-religious traditions were venerated and a plurality of rituals were observed. There was no sense of tension or conflict in performing *jesa* memorial services for ancestors, regularly presenting offerings in the Buddhist temple, and communicating with the spiritual world with shaman practices. These faith practices are, taken together, a significant part of life: they formed the disposition, morality, culture, and tradition of my family. Furthermore, these practices connected us to relatives, communities, ancestors, and spiritual beings. Food was the medium of such connection: it

was shared with both insiders and outsiders, the rich and the poor, and it was given to divine entities to please or appease them. I grew up eating this food—along with sharing in the joy, the anger, the sorrow, and the pleasure of my people—and imagining that this food had given life to the long-suffering nation. The food became my, and our, flesh. When I chose to be a Christian at my early age, should or could I have purged this part of my flesh, along with the spirit, away?

My body had to adjust to a new environment when I decided to bring together this spiritual journey with intellectual pursuit by pursuing advanced studies in the U.S. A sense of displacement derived not only from the transition to a strange place but also from the experience of the estranged self. No matter how I identified myself, my skin color and the way I spoke told people who I was. This form of presence often signifies imperfection and impurity, and also invisibility. The self is denigrated and then divided, as it sees the other inside. When it happens, I discovered, the body feels pain. Even without my recognition, the body cries. This is not an individual experience but a collective one, because “minority individuals are always treated and forced to experience themselves generically.”<sup>248</sup> However, this collective experience of being othered transforms the self—now, the collective self. Just as the self is not fixed, so the body is also fluid. Which body is my body? Is it the body whose Korean *habitus* remains so strong? Is it the represented body as an Asian woman with culturally attached images? Or the body in pain because of penetrating gazes? While the body is represented and

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<sup>248</sup> Minorities typically experience “continuous economic exploitation, racial or sexual or other discrimination, political disenfranchisement, social segregation or marginalization, cultural and psychic denigration, ideological domination, and institutional manipulation.” Vincent B. Leitch, *Cultural Criticism, Literary Theory, Poststructuralism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 93.

constructed, it has its own agency, as it always keeps searching for meaning. This is also true when I read the Bible. My body is involved in the reading: my brain, guts, and nerves react. In the reading process I not only use my knowledge, I also improvise wisdom, which has been embodied in interaction with tradition and community. Hence, what is produced through interpretation is not merely an interpretive work on paper but a conversational event between the text and my whole person—the body—in relation to community and tradition, as well as new challenges.

I choose the word *phronesis* to describe this hermeneutic event. This is a word that is used in Western classics, in hermeneutical theories, and more recently in practical-theological discourse. Aristotle and Hans-Georg Gadamer have already laid the foundations of such a hermeneutics. Some may ask why an Asian and Asian American hermeneutics should employ concepts from Western meta-theories. It is a topic of ongoing debate whether “the master’s tools will dismantle the master’s house.”<sup>249</sup> However, my focus in this writing is not on the ultimate goal of dismantling or deconstruction. Instead, I emphasize the use of such tools by minority individuals for their own purpose.

Michel de Certeau demonstrates that consumers, who are massively marginalized today, “make” or “do” something through their consumption. Although the representations and images of the systems of production promote consumers to just consume the products, this seemingly passive majority “uses” the products imposed by a

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<sup>249</sup> Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Berkeley: Crossing, 1984), 110-13.

dominant economic order.<sup>250</sup> His real concern is with “modes of operation or schemata of action,” not with the subjects who are authors of the action.<sup>251</sup> This is a tactic that Certeau distinguishes from strategy.<sup>252</sup> Certeau argues, “The tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices.”<sup>253</sup> This consumption is another production—the secondary production hidden in the process of their utilization. In order to clarify such use, Certeau takes another example, that of the indigenous Indians who were colonized by the Spanish, who seemed to be successful in imposing their own culture on the colonized. Although the Indians looked submissive, even consenting to their subjection, they made something of what the conquerors imposed on them not by just receiving or rejecting them but by making use of them. For their own purposes they “remained other within the system.”<sup>254</sup>

This is a tactic of minority people, who attempt not only to survive but also to produce something by using the products of the powerful. This is the *phronesis* that I practice in interpreting the biblical text in the Western academic setting. Minority people transform the universally imposed knowledge—the Truth, into truths sustaining and making their lives meaningful through their everyday practice.

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<sup>250</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xii-xiii; xvi.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>252</sup> I will discuss Certeau’s distinction between strategy and tactic in terms of operational differences in Chapter 4. Ibid., 30-39.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., xiii, 32.

## Improvisation of Western Theories of Practice

If wisdom (*sophia*) has the truth as its *telos*, *phronesis* aims at *sophia* and orders everything else so as to promote the acquisition and actualization of wisdom. In other words, *phronesis* “does not employ wisdom as an instrument; rather it looks to how wisdom might come to exist.”<sup>255</sup> Aristotle gave serious consideration to this type of knowledge, that is, practical knowledge or reasoning, as distinguished from objective or theoretical knowledge.<sup>256</sup> While theoretical reason obtains the truth simply through asserting and denying, *phronesis* attains the truth through “making what it regards as good actually come to exist.”<sup>257</sup> Thus, Aristotle alternatively defines *phronesis* as “administrative ability” or “intelligence and foresight in action.”<sup>258</sup> It is *phronesis* that is directed toward the concrete situation. Thus, it must grasp the circumstances in their unbounded diversity. In this regard, *phronesis* is moral knowledge or “intellectual virtue” in two respects<sup>259</sup>: its task is to determine what the concrete situation in which one finds

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<sup>255</sup> Michael Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 228.

<sup>256</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1975; 1988), 314. MacIntyre also demonstrates the importance of (practical) reasoning as a virtue from an Aristotelian standpoint. While identifying theoretical reasoning as the *telos* and practical reasoning as *phronesis*, that is, “the right action to do in each particular time and place,” MacIntyre follows Gadamer in emphasizing practical reasoning as communal and traditional. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 162.

<sup>257</sup> Pakaluk, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 214, 219.

<sup>258</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, VI, 9, 1141 b 33.

<sup>259</sup> Aristotle classifies five thinking-related virtues: craftsmanship (*techne*); knowledge (*episteme*); administrative ability (*phronesis*); sound intuition (*nous*); and wisdom or profound understanding (*sophia*). Pakaluk, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, 209.

herself asks of her, and it is directed to the *telos* toward which she is aiming with her moral being (*hexis*).<sup>260</sup> Moral knowledge as something that one has to do is also different from a *techne* that can be taught, because it is acquired through experience.<sup>261</sup> Moral knowledge contains a kind of experience in itself, the fundamental form of experience (*Erfahrung*).<sup>262</sup>

These practical and moral aspects of *phronesis* are also important for Hans-Georg Gadamer. He distinguishes hermeneutic philosophy or theory from “reflective practice,” which corresponds to *phronesis*.<sup>263</sup> Hermeneutic theory is primarily concerned with an event that occurs universally when one interprets.<sup>264</sup> What happens to interpreters is “understanding,” which constitutes the fundamental structure of human *Dasein* as one’s “being-in-the-world.”<sup>265</sup> The historically situated *Dasein* engages one’s prejudice. It is this prejudice that makes understanding possible. Prejudice is not individual because it is restrained by the past interpretations of tradition.<sup>266</sup> The engagement of the interpreter’s

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<sup>260</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 313, 321. This practical reason is “for something; it aims to bring about something.” “There must be some goal or target at which sound reason aims and which provides the rationale for its commands.” Pakaluk, *Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, 213.

<sup>261</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 315.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 322.

<sup>263</sup> Joel Weinsheimer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics and Literary Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 40.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>265</sup> Thus, Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory is not merely about an art or methodology of interpreting the text but the quest for being itself. Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1994), x.

<sup>266</sup> King clarifies the distinction between prejudice and tradition, stating, “Understanding

horizon with tradition is expanded by a dialectical fusion of horizons, a dialogue between the text and the interpreter.<sup>267</sup> Here interpretation as understanding is not considered as something that a subject does to a given object but as a “response to effective history” and thus the “ontological event” happening within one’s being-in-the-world.<sup>268</sup>

While understanding is a universal phenomenon for the human-being-in-the-world and prejudice is indispensable in understanding, not all prejudices are beneficial. There are true prejudices and false prejudices engaging interpretation. It is then the function of *phronesis* as reflective practice to discriminate true from false interpretation or true from false prejudices. According to Joel Weinsheimer, “What distinguishes the true from the false interpretation is not a principle but a process, for to historical beings truth is disclosed in the historical process of interpreting.”<sup>269</sup>

Both Dale Martin, a biblical critic, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, a practical theologian, emphasize such a process in their respective disciplines. Defining *phronesis* as “pastoral wisdom” or “theological know-how,” Miller-McLemore contends that the capacity to “*think* theologically,” which Martin argues for, is not sufficient, but that it is crucial to promote “the capacity to ‘*practice* theology’ by putting theology into action

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is conditioned by the past (our ‘tradition’) as well as by our own circumstances and agendas (our prejudices.)” Prejudice is not totally subjective or arbitrary because tradition as “a conditioning factor that provides a clear limit upon the ways in which one may interpret a text.” In turn, the interpreter continually modifies tradition. Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and ‘The Mystic East’* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 73, 74-76.

<sup>267</sup> Weinsheimer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 15.

<sup>268</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, xxxi-xxxiii; Weinsheimer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 35.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 40.

through one's body on the ground.”<sup>270</sup> Interestingly, in discussing *phronesis* both Miller-McLemore and Martin acknowledge the performative quality of improvisation through embodiment.<sup>271</sup> Taking practicing music as an example, Miller-McLemore argues that embodied know-how is actualized based on “excellent grounding in basic skills.”<sup>272</sup> For Martin, biblical interpretations as “improvisation,” which, as in jazz, “requires and nurtures creativity.”<sup>273</sup> At the same time, it assumes unpredictable results. Such improvisation as embodied practice of theological reflection is freely and creatively conducted “within certain socially constructed expectations.”<sup>274</sup> The stress is upon learned, repeated, and embodied practice. This is what “knowing” means and what doing theology or doing interpretation implies.

The recognition of *phronesis* as practical knowledge or reasoning, as seen in Aristotle and Gadamer as well as in Martin and Miller-McLemore, leads to paying attention to the significance of embodied knowing and the lived truth. Particularly, Gadamer’s dismissal of “the notions of the detached, dispassionate researcher working

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<sup>270</sup> Martin, *Pedagogy*, 18; Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, “Practical Theology and Pedagogy: Embodying Theological Know-How,” in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008), 171, 173.

<sup>271</sup> Growing attention to the significance of improvisation in any practice that has performative quality is seen in many works of biblical scholars as well as practical theologians. Also, see Richard W. Swanson, *Provoking the Gospel: Methods to Embody Biblical Storytelling through Drama* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2004).

<sup>272</sup> Miller-McLemore, “Practical Theology,” 181.

<sup>273</sup> In highlighting what makes improvisation possible, Martin exemplifies pre-modern interpreters’ reading practices that one can embody by imitating them. Martin, *Pedagogy*, 23, 47-70.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 86.

towards a neutral and objective knowledge of the subject matter” is helpful in acknowledging that the interpreter’s tradition, social location, and cultural assumptions affect interpretation. However, there is a need to reconsider this hermeneutic discourse of *phronesis* from a postcolonial perspective.

Above all, this Western tradition of hermeneutics promotes a separation between principle and process and a hierarchy between theory and practice as well as between the universal and the particular. Moreover, when Gadamer argues that theoretical reasoning or understanding as the universal phenomenon engages tradition, the concept of tradition is treated as the “normative paradigm” rather than as fluid.<sup>275</sup> The subject who discriminates false from true interpretation is also influenced by tradition. How then could this *phronesis* work critically? It seems to me that the Western concept of “reflective” or “critical” is embedded in reason and lacks embodiment. Furthermore, since interpretation based upon Western tradition as normative has been universalized, its historically situated nature is ignored. Interpretation, which is no more “an ontological event,” has become the ontology. In this respect, rather than understanding Miller-McLemore’s “hard work on the scales” as thorough learning of methodologies and their application through repetition, I contend that such improvisation as “doing or performing reading” is made possible when a reading is situated in a particular cultural condition and

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<sup>275</sup> Weinsheimer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 16; King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 76-77. King argues that tradition could bring cultural isolationism or relativism (77). He thinks that Gadamerian prejudices, coined by one’s own tradition, keep him or her from understanding other traditions and cultures. Rejecting this monolithic conception of culture, King presents the applicability of hermeneutics in a wider, trans-cultural context (78).

repeatedly happens as “concrete social practice” because interpretation is embodied practice.<sup>276</sup>

Hence, *phronesis* as reading practice cannot be taught like a methodology or the skills of interpretation. It is a kind of practical understanding and application of a text by a subject who acts with moral consciousness, responsibility to the community, and engagement in tradition in a particular situation. It has a quality of improvisation without anterior certainty concerning the end of interpretation; it searches rather for a qualified truth by embodying it. So, it seems that, if *phronesis* is practical reasoning or wisdom practiced, improvisation is its actualization or performance in the concrete situation that needs interpretation.

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<sup>276</sup> Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 67. I would even argue that the fusion of horizons, which Gadamer explicates as the event of understanding in interpreting, occurs through and in the body. Thus, it makes sense when Fulkerson identifies *phronesis* as practical wisdom (understanding) with *habitus*. What is helpful in this comparison is that one of the distinctive points in Bourdieu’s definition of *habitus* is to transcend the opposition between objective and subjective. The close relationship between *habitus* and *phronesis* has been also observed because of the common nature of their embodiedness. Mary McClintock Fulkerson, “Theology and the Lure of the Practical: An Overview,” *RC* 1, no. 2 (2007), 294-304.

## Performing Theories and Interpretation: A *Phronesis* Reading of Mark

While *phronesis* is a way of performing an interpretation of Mark's text, I find it to be, interestingly, an important topic in the text itself. How to read leads to what to read. Despite the absence of the word *phronesis*, the notion of understanding or knowing is prevalent in the Gospel of Mark.

I regard a certain type of understanding in Mark as *phronesis*. As Gadamer asserts, understanding in Mark may be an ontological event that happens when human beings are exposed to the divine—Jesus as the Son of God. When a human being encounters Jesus, he or she may question, “Who then is this?” (*Tίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν;* 4:41). In search for the answer to this epistemological question, Western interpreters approach the text with their prejudices and agendas, which prioritize reason and autonomy, and thus their various christological inquiries render Jesus the object of knowledge. This, I argue, is a historically situated interpretation.

Encountering Jesus through Mark's story, however, many Asians ask the same question, “Who then is this?” Yet it may not be necessarily a christological question or a question about Jesus' identity. They may immediately realize that this is the one of whom they have known. For many in Asia, *phronesis* often precedes theoretical reasoning.<sup>277</sup> *Phronesis* contains moral quality as in Western hermeneutics and philosophy, but for Asians it is more than moral judgment or discriminating true from false prejudices. Rather, it can be better understood in terms of ethical singularity, a concept mentioned in

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<sup>277</sup> In contrast to Jhu Xi's orthodoxy rationalist dualism, a Neo-Confucian philosopher, Wang Yangming in the Ming dynasty argued for knowledge as action. According to him, one can know only through doing. He even asserts that any knowledge that had been gained *then put* into action was considered delusion or false.

Donaldson's reading of the demon-possessed daughter. It is an ethical relationship with "a single figure," Jesus Christ, who was executed on the cross by the imperial power. In place of knowledge of him, this relationality makes discipleship possible. Principle and process, understanding and following, are not separate. If it is a type of knowledge, it is embodied knowledge based on such relationality.

To conclude, this hermeneutics of *phronesis* is operative in my interpretation of Mark in two significant ways. First, *phronesis* corresponds to "understanding" as the embodiment of mystery that certain characters are presented as experiencing in Mark. This understanding is an important dimension of discipleship. While analyzing a number of narrative units that take place in as well as on the way to Gentile territories, I will explore how Jesus' body is represented and how the mystery of his body is embodied. Specifically, in what follows I will demonstrate that Mark represents the body as phantasmic (6:45-52), consumed (7:24-30), and passive (7:31-37). These representations of the body are opposed to the Roman imperial construction of the body. Jesus' broken and shared body is embodied through his encounter with colonial subjects across bodies and territories. Consequently, the colonized body is displaced, dissipated, and destabilized, but it is also, through mystery, reclaimed, restored, and resuscitated. In this way, silenced and invisible people evade and overcome the omnipresence of power. Second, I read these biblical stories with my own *phronesis*, drawing upon experiences and narratives of Asian American women. Asian and Asian American women's embodied experience will provide new insights into an alternative way of knowing, different from knowing as an autonomous rational capacity as presupposed by Western Markan scholars. Thus, for me, *phronesis* is a reading practice, which engages

simultaneously Mark's text and context as well as my own context in the act of interpretation.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PHANTASMIC BODY (MARK 6:45-52)

#### Introduction

This chapter focuses on Mark 6:45-52, the story of a ghostly appearance (*φάντασμα*) on the part of Jesus. When Jesus' disciples struggle in the midst of the Galilean Sea, Jesus sees their desperate plight from afar and walks on the water to them. Then, they are frightened because they think he is a ghost. Commentators have viewed this appearance merely as the disciples' misconception of the walking on the sea by Jesus, thus stressing his miraculous acts or his supernatural ability to see and move beyond the physical sense of sight and space.<sup>278</sup> In this interpretation, the topics of christology and discipleship are combined. While such an interpretation focuses on Mark's christological concern, it also characterizes the disciples in either a positive or negative way. On the one hand, their response of great astonishment is understood as representing religious awe or a numinous experience (6:51b). On the other hand, such astonishment is viewed, as the narrator comments (v. 52), as signifying failure of understanding and the hardness of their hearts.<sup>279</sup> Their frightening experience of seeing

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<sup>278</sup> The majority of interpreters highlighting Jesus' supernatural ability and miraculous acts refer to the divine power as being beyond the order of nature depicted in the Hebrew Bible (Job 9:8; 38:16; Psalm 77:19).

<sup>279</sup> Achtemeier argues that verse 52 came from Mark's own redaction because it displays the Markan theme of the misunderstanding of the disciples. Paul J. Achtemeier, "Toward

Jesus as a ghost is taken as another example of their misunderstanding of Jesus and thus as an indication of their failure in discipleship.

However, the disciples' experience of Jesus as *phantasma* may be viewed as more than a pure religious experience of the "wholly other" or a failure to know Jesus' identity. I will argue for a view of the disciples' vision as a haunting that reflects the social memory of colonized subjects. The disciples' social memory of the broken body of Jesus is presented in the paradoxical mode of a presence in absence, as a haunting, which functions to disrupt the imperial presence and power. The followers of Jesus in Mark's time experience the reality that Jesus is absent but present—present only when the colonial past returns in the form of the disfigured body.

My argument will proceed in the following way. First, I will discuss the text's socio-historical context, with a focus on how the Roman Empire constructs imperial identity and the body. Second, I will explore the themes of presence and absence in Mark as contesting the Roman presence. Third, focusing on the representation of the body in the text, I will argue that the disciples' vision of the *phantasma* and the accompanying affective dimension may be viewed in terms of postcolonial haunting. Finally, I will conclude with the implications for discipleship by suggesting that haunting is a site of alternative knowledge in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

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the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catena," *JBL* 89 (1970), 283.

*Roman Imperial Ideology of Presence*

Julius Caesar's adopted son Octavian was designated as Augustus, meaning "revered," and was acclaimed as the savior of the world who would secure peace and prosperity for all humankind. The propagandized goal of peace and prosperity was realized, however, by political-military power and the economic subjection of the conquered peoples. The visitation (*παρουσία*) of the emperor or his emissary and the encounter (*ἀπάντησις*) of the people with the powerful would have caused fear among the peoples in the colonies.<sup>280</sup>

A variety of social, religious, and legal devices were also used to present the emperor as ubiquitous in both the metropolis and the colonies, in the life as well as in the minds of the subjugated peoples. The cult of the emperor in almost every major city and province, and particularly in Greek cities, played a significant role in bringing religion and economics together in the network of imperial power relations.<sup>281</sup> Shrines and temples erected to the emperor signified his pervasive presence in public space in the

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<sup>280</sup> While the term *παρουσία* is used 24 times in New Testament, *ἀπάντησις* appears only in Matthew 25:6; Acts 28:15; and 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Only Matthew among the Gospels uses both of them, but despite the absence of either word in Mark, the idea of *parousia* is contained in several places where it is said that the Lord or Son of man will come to judge (12:9; 13:26, 32-37).

<sup>281</sup> Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 22. Crossan prefers to use the word "imperial theology" to "imperial cult." John D. Crossan, "Roman Imperial Theology," in *The Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 59-73.

cities of the empire.<sup>282</sup> The emperor's statues and images were viewed as the direct implement of the divine *parousia*. Versnel argues, "The statue was the concrete sign of this personal attendance and as such functioned as an asylum. This means that statues could be used and activated in order to ensure the presence and aid of the god."<sup>283</sup>

In Greek cities, the competitive exhibition of honors for the emperor also occurred in imperial games and public festivals, which reflected the extensive pyramids of patronage relations as well as the social hierarchy of the empire.<sup>284</sup> The structure of the amphitheater where imperial games were performed displayed the hierarchical order of the empire. In this skillfully invented and hierarchically arranged place, the emperor presided over a carefully ordered empire in miniature at the games.<sup>285</sup> Games and public festivals also exhibited the emperor's power in public by displaying spectacular violence and causing repression. Social outcasts such as robbers, bandits, condemned criminals, and runaway slaves were expected to perish in a terrible way for the entertainment of

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<sup>282</sup> Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 23.

<sup>283</sup> H. S. Versnel, "What Did Ancient Man See When He Saw a God? Some Reflections on Greco-Roman Epiphany," in *Effigies Dei: Essays on the History of Religions*, ed. Dirk van der Plas (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1987), 42-55, 46-47.

<sup>284</sup> The wealthy magnates of the cities sponsored those institutions to honor and worship the emperor. They had networks of local clients dependent on them, while they themselves became clients of the emperor and thus secured "their own dominant position locally in the bargain." Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 24.

<sup>285</sup> Christopher Kelly, *The Roman Empire* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 80-81. All classes met there but were hierarchically separated. Colin M. Wells, *The Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 252.

normal law-abiding people.<sup>286</sup> Recognizing a collective distance from those butchered, spectators were unconsciously but deeply impressed by the state-sanctioned terror, both totally exposed in and well-compressed into the theatrical site.<sup>287</sup> For the Roman public since Augustus, this “formalized way of death” by the state was a fundamental institution and a social ritual.<sup>288</sup>

Whereas the presence of the emperor, who exercised peremptory power in the taking of life in amphitheaters, appealed to the “civilized” people in the imperial metropolis, “the less ‘civilized’ areas of the empire were controlled by military violence.”<sup>289</sup> The Roman glorification of great victories over subjugated peoples was accompanied by horrific violence and terrorism. Enslavement, mass slaughter, and

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<sup>286</sup> Kelly, *Roman Empire*, 79. For instance, gladiators, most of whom were slaves or condemned criminals, were trained to die properly while fighting. Wells, *Roman Empire*, 251.

<sup>287</sup> Kelly, *Roman Empire*, 81. According to Wells, Romans had a highly developed “theatrical sense of public ceremonial.” Wells, *Roman Empire*, 252. Futrell also points out that “the amphitheater was a politicized temple that housed the mythic reenactment of the cult or Roman statehood. The struggle of the gladiator embodied an idealized and distilled version of the military ethic of Romanitas. His death served as a foundation sacrifice that answered the crisis of empire, validating the Roman struggle for power and offering a model for understanding the basis of Roman power.” Alison Futrell, *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997). Castelli cites part of this quote in Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 111. She also quotes Gunderson, who applies Althusser’s conception of “ideological state apparatus” to the arena as an instrument of the reproduction of the Roman subject. Erik Gunderson, “The Ideology of the Arena,” *CA* 15 (1996), 117. Thus, Horsley argues that the theater is the most important component, because its significance went far beyond its practical purpose and was attached to the ideological foundation of the Augustinian cultural program. Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 83-84.

<sup>288</sup> Wells, *Roman Empire*, 249.

<sup>289</sup> Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 25-26.

massacres of whole towns were practiced by Roman warlords and emperors.<sup>290</sup> Mass crucifixions were carried out to prevent revolts by the people and treason by Roman aristocrats.<sup>291</sup> While crucifixion was an effective means of demonstrating state terrorism in order to conquer the other of Rome, it also caused public shame as well as physical pain, making the body docile by using the physical and symbolic penetration of the naked body through flogging, nailing, and public gaze, thus sexualizing the tortures inflicted.<sup>292</sup>

### *Roman Construction of the Body*

Elizabeth Castelli states that public displays of violence “provided spatial, performative and symbolic idioms for defining, articulating, and reinscribing social identities and hierarchies, power relations, and public allegiances.”<sup>293</sup> Thus, Rome constructed the imperial identity by exercising punishment according to differentiations made between the *honestiores*, the “more honorable,” and the *humiliores*, the “more humble.”<sup>294</sup> On the one hand, the *honestiores* were exempted from punishment. If they

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>291</sup> David Tombs, “Prisoner Abuse: From Abu Ghraib to the Passion of the Christ,” Linda Hogan and Dylan Lehrke, *Religions and the Politics of Peace and Conflict* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 179–205.

<sup>292</sup> David Tombs, “Crucifixion, State Terror, and Sexual Abuse,” *USQR* 53 (1999), 96.

<sup>293</sup> Castelli, *Martyrdom*, 107.

<sup>294</sup> Perkins argues that early Christians’ social identity was formed in competition with the empire. Just as the empire searched for a trans-imperial elite alliance that would come together on the basis of cultural and educational privilege, the Christian church strived to form an alternative trans-imperial social entity constituted by common religious and moral beliefs and practices. She defines Christians’ appropriation of the “universalizing” language of ethnicity as an “imperial configuration,” like the terms “Hellenism” and “Romanness,” employed to create unity. Establishing its own cosmopolitan identity, the

committed serious transgressions, punishment was limited to banishment, relegation, or confiscation. On the other hand, if the *humiliores* violated the law, they were liable to the most severe and humiliating punishments, such as being sent to the mines, beaten, thrown to the beasts in the amphitheater, burnt or crucified.<sup>295</sup>

Whereas it was the legal system that facilitated the construction of the new trans-imperial identity, early Christians not only interacted with the established social order but also resisted the social inscription of hierarchical bodies.<sup>296</sup> Christian discourses on the

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emergence of the Christian church as a cultural movement disrupted the dominating imperial ideology of Greek and Roman elites and their monopoly on social power and authority. In this regard, the Christian church was an alternative site of imperial power. See Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (London; New York: Loutledge, 2009), 2, 9, 13, 27, 29-30, 100. Denise Buell also demonstrates that early Christians distinguished themselves as a race from others such as Jews, Greeks and Romans, while simultaneously claiming their inclusivity. Such Christian universalism developed through ethnic reasoning based on religious practice. Buell poses the question of whether the universalizing tendency of early Christians can be understood as mimicry of imperial discourse and practices and the pursuit of collective subjectivity. Denise Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 226.

<sup>295</sup> Jérôme Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire*, ed. Henry T. Rowell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968, 2003), 52-53. While arguing that the distinction between *honestiore* and *humiliore*, which was fixed on the criterion of prestige, was made according to the social and economic status, Alföldy also explicates these legal notions that only the latter, “ordinary mortals,” could suffer the “full severity of the Roman criminal law, namely flogging and torture, forced labour, condemnation to gladiatorial shows and beast-hunts and execution by crucifixion.” Géza Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome*, trans. David Braund and Frank Pollock (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 106, 109.

<sup>296</sup> Mary Douglas argues that the body functions as the image of social construction, in which the issue of boundary is raised. She states, “What is being carved in human flesh is an image of the society.” Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Loutledge, 1966), 116. For example, the distinction between purity and impurity is applied to the human body and extended to the society, so that such a hierarchical classification serves to structure and maintain the social order. This anthropological perspective on the body is useful to understand the Roman imperial construction of body. Dale B. Martin contends that hierarchy and pollution were primary somatic ideologies in Greco-Roman society. Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). He

resurrection of the flesh and the vindication of the whole person—body and soul—in the Last Judgment are examples of this resistance.<sup>297</sup> Later, martyrdom discourse also represented the discursive production of such resistance.<sup>298</sup>

Adopting practices of collective memory as a theoretical framework in her book *Martyrdom and Memory*, Castelli argues, “the memory work done by early Christians on the historical experience of persecution and martyrdom was a form of culture making, whereby Christian identity was indelibly marked by the collective memory of the religious suffering of others.”<sup>299</sup> In other words, collective memory was generated by an impulse to recall their unspeakable past. According to Castelli, martyrdom is “the product of commemorative interpretation” because in this discursive frame a broad range of historical encounters between Christians and the dominant imperial culture are

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insists that different constructions of the human body as a microcosm of the social body differed based on the social status of individuals and groups. Yet, the view of cultural anthropology, which emphasizes the connection between the social body and the individual body, is limited in that it removes the agency from the body by seeing it as the “biological raw material on which culture operates” or a “kind of vehicle for the expression of a reified social rationality.” Thomas J. Csordas, ed., *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8; Michael Jackson, *Paths toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 123.

<sup>297</sup> Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 13.

<sup>298</sup> Notwithstanding the legal foundation for differentiating bodies, martyrdom narratives highlight the character of martyrs as innocent or righteous “because of lack of legal precision in the charge and punishment of Christians.” Castelli, *Martyrdom*, 45-47.

<sup>299</sup> What Castelli does regarding the history of early Christians is not to reconstruct it but to explore the representations of Early Christian martyrdom as culture-making. Thus, the important question is not that of “what really happened” but that of “how particular ways of construing the past enable later communities to constitute and sustain themselves.” Ibid., 5.

illustrated.<sup>300</sup> I not only understand such martyrology as social commentary but would also highlight the suffering body as the site in which the agency of those colonized subjects and the imperial power contest.

The body of Jesus among the *humiliores* is such a site of contestation in the face of the dominant discourse of the body. Mark 15:15 illustrates Jesus as beaten and delivered to be crucified. In the Roman context, this body signifies dishonor, degradation, and docility.<sup>301</sup> Jesus' body was bleeding, broken, and rotten. This is an abject body. For the followers of Jesus, this body executed on the cross caused collective trauma and carried social stigma. It is a porous, permeable body shared with many people as well as his disciples.<sup>302</sup> As such, it functions as the basis for forming the Christian church's identity, an identity which competes with the trans-imperial identity. How does Mark figure and reconfigure the disfigured body of Jesus? Is it not a distinctive characteristic of Mark's narrative to describe Christ's body as absent, ending with the story of the empty tomb? I now turn to Mark's themes of presence and absence; I shall argue that Jesus' body is present in absence—present in the form of early Christians' cultural memory of haunting.

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 4, 6. Castelli argues that in martyrdom discourse “gender plays a significant role precisely because martyrdom has to do foundationally with competing ideas about the character and legitimacy of different systems of power.”

<sup>301</sup> Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 98-99; Jennifer Glancy, “Boasting of Beatings (2 Corinthians 11:23-25),” *JBL* 123, no. 1 (2004), 111.

<sup>302</sup> In 14:22-25, Jesus describes his blood as poured for people.

## Markan Presence as Response to Roman Presence

### *Mark's Replication of and Resistance to the Imperial Presence*

Roman presence and power form the backdrop for Mark's Gospel. Scholars have argued that the opening verse of Mark directly challenges the imperial cult of the divine emperor and its accompanying imperial propaganda.<sup>303</sup> According to Craig Evans, Mark's bold acclamation of the good news (*εὐαγγέλιον*) for the world that begins in Jesus Christ is related to the installation of the new emperor Vespasian in 69 C.E.<sup>304</sup> There were rumors, argues Evans, circulating in the Roman Empire that Jewish prophecy had been fulfilled with the advent of Vespasian as the new emperor.<sup>305</sup> Because of his former achievements in Jewish territory, his exaltation as the new "son of God" seemed to prove the fulfillment of such prophecy.<sup>306</sup> The newly enthroned emperor Vespasian was

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<sup>303</sup> Crossan, "Roman Imperial Theology," 60. Crossan contends, "Roman civilization was founded on imperial theology centered on the divinity of the emperor." Horsley argues that Mark's Gospel is an anti-colonial nationalist discourse. Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2001).

<sup>304</sup> Craig A. Evans, "The Beginning of the Good News and the Fulfillment of Scripture in the Gospel of Mark," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 83-103. If the date of the writing of Mark's Gospel is traced to the time around the Jewish war in 70 C.E., the Gospel would have been written during the reign of the Roman emperor Vespasian (69-79 C.E.). After the death of the last of the Julian emperors, Nero, the emperors that followed failed to consolidate their position. Ending political turmoil, Vespasian opened the rule of the Flavian family and, in so doing, needed to reinforce the legitimacy of his status as emperor.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 91. Vespasian had been the general once sent by Emperor Nero to suppress the rebellion in Galilee, caused by food shortages, debt problems, and a surge in unemployment in 66 C.E.

regarded as the savior of the world.<sup>307</sup> The deification ( $\alpha\piοθέωσις$ ) of the emperor was promoted by every city, which “celebrated the good news and offered sacrifices on his behalf.”<sup>308</sup> Therefore, by raising the critical question of who really is the son of God, Mark challenged the imperial cult of the divine emperor.<sup>309</sup>

Simon Samuel, however, contends that Mark’s concepts of beginning ( $\alphaρχή$ ), good news ( $\εὐαγγέλιον$ ), son of God ( $υἱός θεοῦ$ ), and Christ in the superscript of Mark show both assimilation to and abrogation of Roman *imperium* on the part of a minority community (1:1). In Samuel’s postcolonial interpretation, such ambivalence functions to decenter the dominant discourses and becomes “a potential for disruption” of imperial power by presenting the beginning of the theo-political order of the alternative empire.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>309</sup> However, Schüssler Fiorenza is cautious regarding the presupposition underlying such anti-imperial studies: New Testament writings were critical of Roman imperial power and resisted its structures of domination because they were written by subordinate and marginalized people. She contends that this reading ignores the possibility that early Christian writings could also reinscribe the structure of domination which it sought to resist. Thus, the argument regarding the lordship of God and Christ may not necessarily exclude imperial motivations. She warns that an anti-imperial reading stops short of inquiring how such registered imperial language is still effective today as well as in the past. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 4. Smith also argues that early Christians, like other subjects of Rome, might have accommodated themselves to Roman rule because of its peremptory presence and power. Abraham Smith, “1 and 2 Thessalonians,” in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 313.

<sup>310</sup> Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 75; Simon Samuel, “The Beginning of Mark: A Colonial/Postcolonial Conundrum,” *BI* 10, no. 4 (2002), 417. Samuel also sees Mark as both accommodating and disrupting the Jewish dominant nationalist discourses.

Tat-siong Benny Liew stresses Mark's duplication of Roman colonial ideology by casting the expectation of the *parousia* as a form of colonial mimicry.<sup>311</sup> Dissatisfied with the present political power, Mark's politics of *parousia* presents the divine authority as finally expressed in God's violent intervention through Jesus' *parousia*.<sup>312</sup> Jesus plays the role of annihilating all opponents and all other authorities. The vindication that will be accomplished in the *parousia* is "vindictive."<sup>313</sup> Thus, such defeating power is seen as representing the "might-is-right" ideology of colonialism and imperialism, which causes various forms of suffering and oppression by replicating imperial practices such as scapegoating and subordinating others.<sup>314</sup> In contrast to the divine authority, in Mark's construction of colonial subjects the lack of agency on the part of human beings is exemplified by the disciples' passive position in relationship with Jesus.

Although these scholars differ with regard to whether Mark resists or replicates the logic of dominance and subordination and the discourse of power through the representation of the divine authority and power of Jesus, they all note the language and images of Jesus' power. From the outset and throughout the Gospel, Jesus is proclaimed and affirmed as Son of God (1:11; 1:24; 3:11; 5:7; 8:29; 9:7; 14:61-62; cf. 15:39).<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Tat-siong Benny Liew, "The Gospel of Mark," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 105-32.

<sup>312</sup> Tat-siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 116.

<sup>313</sup> Liew, "Gospel of Mark," 117.

<sup>314</sup> Liew, *Politics of Parousia*, 117.

<sup>315</sup> For example, the unclean spirits' recognition of Jesus as Son of God and their falling at his feet is understood as "prostration before divine beings or high-ranking people"

Moreover, Jesus has miraculous power to heal the sick, cast out demons, and control the chaotic power of nature. He has the ability to see a person's inner thoughts and has clairvoyance and healing power even from afar (6:48; 7:29-30). Jesus' supernatural power is that of one who is capable of binding the strong man and plundering that man's house (3:20-27). Jesus' entry into Jerusalem along with the exclamation of the people are reminiscent of the emperor's triumphal return or *parousia* (11:7-11).<sup>316</sup> Although the heir, the beloved son of the owner (ὁ κύριος) of the vineyard is said to be killed by the tenants, the lord will come and destroy them (12:1-12). Thus, one should watch for when the Son of man will come and judge them (13:32-36). As such, Jesus is described as present even in the future and as having absolute power. It is reasonable to consider that such discourse was produced in the Roman imperial context as replication or as resistance.

### *Jesus' Power and Presence in Mark 6:45-52*

Such power-laden language prevails in Mark 6:45-52 as well. This passage is one of three sea travel stories in Mark 4-8.<sup>317</sup> These chapters describe Jesus' ministry as criss-

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(3:11). John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 120.

<sup>316</sup> Jesus' or God's *parousia* is described several times in Mark with eschatological overtones (11:9-10; 12:9; 13:26, 32-36). Mark's description of this scene definitely alludes to Hebrew Bible passages. *Ibid.*, 322-25. Collins explains, however, that such illustrations of "a royal entry or *parousia*" and the gestures of honor are also found in Roman writers' depiction of military processions. See Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 519-21.

<sup>317</sup> In Mark 4-8 Jesus is depicted as traveling across the Galilean sea between Jewish and Gentile territories six times: (1) Jesus crosses from the west to the east of the Galilean sea, a Gentile area (4:35-41; 5:1). (2) He crosses to the other (west) side of the sea (5:21). After healing the sick, he teaches in Nazareth and sends the disciples. (3) His next journey occurs on the same west side (6:32). Here Jesus feeds five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. (4) Jesus intends to make the disciples go on ahead to the east

crossing the Sea of Galilee, after its previous concentration in Galilee.<sup>318</sup> The reach of this ministry in Jewish land stretches to areas outside Judea, such as Idumea and the regions across the Jordan as well as around Tyre and Sidon (3:8). Attaining fame in these areas represents a harbinger of his upcoming ministry in Gentile territories. Mark 6:45 seems to signal the sense of being driven, given the use of the term ἀνάγκαζειν. Although the nuance of the verb is not reflected in English, the term denotes the “necessity” incumbent upon Jesus to make the disciples go ahead (*προάγειν*) to the other side of the sea where the Gentiles resided. This verse expresses exigency with regard to Jesus’ action (*εὐθὺς ἤναγκασεν*) in making the disciples proceed to Bethsaida, a Gentile district.

The language and geographical indications used in these sea-crossing stories may lead one to interpret this exigency in light of Mark’s contestation with the empire. In this voyage the disciples begin to struggle in rowing because of a windstorm. Sea and wind in ancient times are often described as “a single force” having destructive power. Crossing the Sea of Galilee, a chaotic place between the Jewish and the Gentile territories, requires

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side (6:45). After Jesus walks on the sea and joins them in the boat, however, they travel up north and land at Gennesaret in the west of the sea (6:53). After healing the sick, Jesus goes up to the area of Tyre, goes through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee, and into the region of the Decapolis. There, Jesus heals a person who is deaf and feeds four thousand people. (5) He travels to the district of Dalmanutha (8:10). (6) He intends to cross to the other side. Jesus and the disciples come to Bethsaida, which is located on the east of the Jordan River linked to the north of the Galilean Sea (8:13-22). Mark describes three these travels giving specific details (# 1, 4, 6). Our passage depicts the events of the fourth journey.

<sup>318</sup> In Mark’s Gospel, spatial or geographical notions are of significance, as scholars have observed. Werner Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974). Examining 288 spatial references in Mark, Malbon demonstrates that those spatial locations represent a system of relationships in the narrative. Understanding the narrative system of spatial relationships leads to a deeper perception of the Gospel’s mythological system. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986).

overcoming the resisting force.<sup>319</sup> Scholars, therefore, interpret the disciples' affliction on the sea in terms of the early Christians' effort at Gentile mission. The intention of Jesus' crossing of the sea is understood as the necessity of the integration of Gentiles into the early Christian church. However, it has not been observed that such toil is illustrated with words connoting the struggle of early Christians with imperial presence.<sup>320</sup>

Although the term *ἀπόλλυμι* does not appear in 6:45-52, it signifies both the destructive power of the sea in 4:38 and the battles between Jesus and the evil power to demolish each other. The word is applied not only to the unclean spirit's power to destroy a person (9:22) but also to Jesus' power to destroy the evil spirit: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" (*Tί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦς Ναζαρηνέ;* *ἥλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς,* 1:24) Not only do the Jewish religious authorities and the Herodians conspire to destroy Jesus (3:6; 11:18), but also God is represented as destroying the evil tenants in the parable (12:9). Moreover, the terms *ἐπιτιμᾶν* (to rebuke) and *φιμόνυσθαι* (to be silent), which are used when Jesus casts out the evil spirits, have the same effect in his making the sea still (1:25; 4:39; 9:25). Thus, Jesus' intervention in his disciples' distressed condition on the sea displays a power struggle. This might connote an anti-imperial impulse, but further observations will make the point clear.

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<sup>319</sup> Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 160. While the sea is conceived of as a chaotic place and a symbol of destructive power along with wind, the Sea of Galilee in Mark's narrative world also functions as a boundary between the Jewish and the Gentile territories and at the same time becomes the bridge between them.

<sup>320</sup> Donahue and Harrington only relate the illustration of the first sea voyage to Mark's first readers' experience of general afflictions such as "the upsurge of the power of chaos and evil" during Nero's persecution or during the Jewish War. *Ibid.*, 162.

The word *βασανίζειν* (“to torture,” or “to be distressed”), used to describe the torment the disciples go through on the sea in 6:48, reminds the reader of the scene in which Jesus confronted the Gerasene demoniac. In Mark 5:1-20 Jesus is presented as the one who torments an unclean spirit who is possessing the man. The man cries out: “I adjure you by God. Do not torment me (*μὴ με βασανίσῃς*)” (v. 7).<sup>321</sup> Here Jesus’ tormenting can be understood in terms of not only supernatural power combating the unclean spirits but also as a political attack on imperial power, because they are identified as Legion, which represents the Roman military force.

This implies that the empire controlled colonized lands through military violence. Yet, what Jesus ultimately shows in this scene is his overcoming of the destructive power: he drives out demons representing the empire. He is depicted as exercising the supreme power. So, both people and disciples are astounded by what he has done, while unclean spirits fall down before him crying out, “You are the Son of God” (3:11; 5:7). Considering the significance of the title, this story can be readily read as counteracting the imperial presence and power. In so doing, however, Mark’s depiction of Jesus’ conquering power duplicates the language of what the evil power—both spiritual and political—does.

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<sup>321</sup> Warren Carter explains that the word *βασάνοις* meaning “pains” in Matthew 4:23 suggests “not only disease but also distress and torment from imperial power and torture by imperial tyrants.” (cf. Egypt and the exodus [Wis. 19:4]; King Ptolemy Philopator [3 Macc. 3:27]). “In 4 Maccabees, where it is used thirty-six times, it refers to the torture that the Seleucid Antiochus Epiphanes imposes on the old man, the seven brothers, and their mother who refuse to obey Antiochus’ order to be unfaithful to God...” Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 126.

In addition to  $\betaασανίζειν$ , the term  $\dot{\varepsilon}\lambda\alpha\acute{u}nein$ , which means “to drive,” is employed to describe the disciples as “rowing” ( $\dot{\varepsilon}\nu\tau\tilde{\omega}\dot{\varepsilon}\lambda\alpha\acute{u}nein$ ) on the sea. Despite the absence of the term in Mark’s story of the Gerasene demoniac, Luke’s parallel story reports that the demoniac was driven ( $\dot{\eta}\lambda\alpha\acute{u}neto$ ) by a demon, whose name is Legion, into the wilderness (Luke 8:29). Thus, the disciples’ toil on the sea again evokes the imagery of struggle against the imperial force, a struggle that throws their life into commotion. However, while Jesus once appeared to torment the personified imperial power, the disciples in the voyage in 6:45-52 are tormented by the destructive power of the sea and wind. This time Jesus does not appear to suppress this chaotic power of the sea over them and seems to be absent for them.

However, Jesus finally manifests himself with the words “I am” ( $egō eimi$ ), which recalls the revelation of God’s name to Moses in Exodus 3:14, and saves them by stopping the wind. These motifs of divine manifestation through the self-identification as well as the power to still the sea represent an epiphany. An anticipated human response is awe and fear. Thus, some scholars argue that the literary genre of the story is epiphany, while others regard it as a miracle.<sup>322</sup> Yet, for Versnel epiphany and miracle are not separate but linked, particularly in the belief of Greeks and Romans. He states that not

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<sup>322</sup> Donahue and Harrington also argue that Mark focuses “on the epiphany rather than on the wondrous action. Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 213. Theissen argues that the sea travel presents miracles of deliverance and play down the epiphanic element. Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, trans. Francis McDonagh, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 97. Similarly, Best argues, “By adding 6:52 Mark has turned attention away from the epiphanic element.” Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel according to Mark* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 193. Collins briefly introduces a discussion of the genre of this passage. Collins, *Mark*, 327.

only personal manifestations but also miracles prove the arrival or presence (*parousia*) of the god.<sup>323</sup> Hence, whether a focus is epiphany or miracle, scholarly discussions tend to understand this passage in terms of presence.

As shown in the above observations, Jesus' power to defeat the windstorm and his divine manifestation present his divinity as superior to the human emperor. While adopting the imperial language and ideas of power, Mark decenters the imperial domination. On the other hand, Mark also drops a hint of Jesus' absence in Mark. Mark's community painfully struggled with reality, the reality of Jesus' absence in the midst of the rigid imperial ubiquity. In the following I will argue that the notion of Jesus' absence in the face of imperial presence emerges as resistance to the imperial ideology.

### Markan Absence as Resistance to Roman Presence

#### *Absence as Mark's Response to Imperial Politics*

Although Markan Studies have not given proper recognition to the important notion of absence in the Gospel, a couple of scholars have dealt with the theme. J. Lee Magness argues that Mark's absent or suspended ending is a literary device found in ancient Hellenistic epics, tragedy, biography, and romances, as well as in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid., n. 62. Versnel, "What Did Ancient Man See," 52.

<sup>324</sup> J. Lee Magness, *Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark's Gospel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986). Yet, this literary approach, like others that focus on parallels between the features of the Gospel and Hellenistic literary conventions, does not seriously take into account the influence of the Roman Empire upon every aspect in the lives of colonized people. The early Christians in the time of Mark cannot be understood apart from this universal imperial presence and power.

Eugene Eung-Chun Park argues that the *parousia* expectation was the response of the early Christians to the problem of *apousia*, which Park coins to mean the absence of Jesus. This way he proposes a historical and theological resolution to the problem of Jesus' absence. The motif of Jesus' appearance, namely, the post-Easter christophany, is closely connected to early Christian tradition.<sup>325</sup> However, faced with the very lack of Jesus' appearance, the Synoptic Gospel writers tried to resolve this existential problem with their own theological understandings for the delay of the *parousia* of Jesus.

This theological reasoning, based on the early Christians' historical experience, had been discussed in a volume with a particular concentration on the theme of the absence of Jesus in Mark published in the 1970s.<sup>326</sup> The authors of *The Passion in Mark* consider the historical situations in which Jesus' absence became most critical. For the early Christians, Jesus was absent and did not intervene to protect his people from persecution between the times of resurrection-as-departure and parousia-as-return. Hence, what these authors conclude is that Mark opposed a theology of apparitional presence, the theology demonstrating that the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples after Easter.

John Dominic Crossan argues in this volume and in a later article that the story of the empty tomb is Mark's design to stress Jesus' absence.<sup>327</sup> He emphasizes the sequence

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<sup>325</sup> Eugene Eung-Chun Park, "The Problem of the Apousia of Jesus in the Synoptic Resurrection Traditions," *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2001), 121-35.

<sup>326</sup> Werner H. Kelber, ed., *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

<sup>327</sup> John D. Crossan stresses only Jesus' absence for Mark in his article, "Form for Absence: The Markan Creation of Gospel," *Semeia* 12 (1978): 41-55.

of resurrection-absence in 16:6, “he was risen” and “he is not here,” where Luke’s parallel passage reverses the order.<sup>328</sup> For Crossan, “absence is not just from the tomb pending appearance but from the earth pending *parousia*.<sup>329</sup> In this argument the *parousia* expectation presupposes Jesus’ absence as an intensively Markan experience. While Theodore Weeden, another author of the volume, mentions “the eschatological struggle against Rome” in which Jesus did not intervene, these authors’ historical-theological inquiries do not properly engage the imperial context in which Mark constructs a reality of Jesus’ absence.<sup>330</sup> In these studies, early Christians’ socio-political awareness of Jesus’ absence faded away into the theology of non-apparition, being paired with the eschatology of *parousia*.

One can observe how either presence or absence can be emphasized in interpreting the topic of *parousia* in Mark. The historical and theological reconstruction of the authors of *The Passion in Mark* stresses the reality of Jesus’ absence until the *parousia* occurs. In contrast, for Liew the apocalyptic discourse of *parousia* does not stand for historical reality but for Mark’s response to imperial politics. Liew seems to understand the politics of *parousia* as the language of presence and power rather than absence. If any aspect of absence is found in his argument, it is the absence of human agency—the agency of colonial subjects that derives from such colonial politics. Thus it is that Mark constructs the colonial subjects, and thereby this competing political ideology generates the logic of

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<sup>328</sup> Luke 24:6 reads, “He is not here but is risen.”

<sup>329</sup> Crossan, “Form for Absence,” 51.

<sup>330</sup> Theodore Weeden, “The Cross as Power in Weakness,” in *The Passion in Mark*, ed. Kelber, 115-34.

power—domination and subordination.

While the expectation of the future *parousia* can function as either reinforcing the sense of absence or representing colonial mimicry of imperial politics, I argue that Mark’s Gospel suggests the notion of the present *apousia*, which operates as competing with the imperial presence.<sup>331</sup> Put differently, absence is the response of colonized subjects to imperial politics, derived from their experience of Jesus’ absence. However, this absence both of Jesus and as a way of representing the subjects embodies agency in a certain way. Here haunting plays a critical role.

### *Absence, Silence, and Fear*

#### Absence

The sense of absence is grasped particularly in the sea travel stories. In the first story of 4:35-41, Jesus leads his disciples across the Sea of Galilee to the other side (*εἰς τὸ πέραν*), which indicates the Gentile district called the country of the Gerasene (5:1). On the way, they are exposed to a great windstorm and waves on the sea. Water is almost filling the boat, but Jesus is found to be asleep (4:38, *καθεύδων*). Sleeping is used as an euphemism for death, and sometimes the boundary between sleeping and death seems obscure, as seen in Jesus’ word in 5:39: “The child is not dead but sleeping (*οὐκ ἀπέθανεν ἀλλὰ καθεύδει*).”<sup>332</sup> In the midst of this life-threatening situation on the sea, the disciples cry out to the sleeping Jesus, “Do you not care if we perish (*ἀπολλύμεθα*)?” Then, Jesus

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<sup>331</sup> In contrast, Matthew mostly emphasizes God’s or Jesus’ presence and immanence (1:23; 18:20; 28:20).

<sup>332</sup> Also see John 11:11-12.

awakes and rebukes (*ἐπετίμησεν*) the wind, as he had rebuked unclean spirits (1:25; 3:12; 9:25). The wind ceases (*ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος*).<sup>333</sup> As Jesus says to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”, they are filled with great fear (*ἔφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν*). This story presents two themes: the sense of Jesus’ absence as well as the demonstration of his presence and power; the lack of faith of the disciples and their fear.

The second story, 6:45-52, is preceded by the feeding of the five thousand in the Jewish region. Immediately after this successful ministry, Jesus wants to let the disciples go before (*προάγειν*) him to Bethsaida.<sup>334</sup> However, in a threatening situation similar to the first sea travel story, Jesus’ absence among them or his distance from them is more dramatically highlighted by the words, *ἀπολύω*, *ἀποτάσσω*, and *ἀπέρχομαι* in 6:45-46: Jesus dismisses the crowd; takes leave of the disciples<sup>335</sup>; and goes away to the mountain to pray. In the evening, the boat with the disciples, who were typically to be found with Jesus, is in the “middle” (*μέσω*) of the sea (v. 47) while he is “alone” on the land. The disciples are tormented while rowing on the sea because of the windstorm. Strangely enough, Jesus had intended to pass by (*ὑθελεν παρελθεῖν*) them. Yet, when they see Jesus walking on the sea and are terrified by his ghostly appearance, he says, “It is I” (*ἐγώ*

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<sup>333</sup> This is repeated in the second sea travel story (6:50).

<sup>334</sup> While in 4:35-36 Jesus initiated the trip but the disciples took him with them in a boat, in 6:48 he makes his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to Bethsaida without him. In 14:28 Jesus says that, after he is raised up, he will go on ahead (*προάξω*) of them to Galilee; and this word (*προάγει*) is repeated by the young man at the empty tomb in 16:7.

<sup>335</sup> In the New Testament passages in which *ἀποτάσσω* is used, the word implies farewell (Luke 9:61; 14:33; Acts 18:18, 21; 2 Cor. 2:13).

είμι). Despite the following words of Jesus, “Do not fear ( $\mu\eta\ \phi\beta\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$ ),” the disciples, who have seen the wind cease ( $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\dot{\omega}\pi\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu\ \dot{\alpha}\dot{\alpha}n\epsilon\mu\omega\varsigma$ ), are greatly astounded ( $\lambda\dot{i}\alpha\upsilon...$   $\dot{\epsilon}\dot{\xi}\dot{\iota}\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ ). This story also presents the themes of absence and presence on the part of Jesus as well as the theme of fear on the part of the disciples. Additionally, the question of their faith is replaced with the issue of incomprehension regarding the loaves ( $o\upsilon\ \gamma\dot{a}\rho\ \sigma\upsilon\eta\kappa\alpha\dot{n}\ \dot{\epsilon}\pi\dot{l}\iota\ \tau\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \dot{\alpha}\rho\tau\alpha\iota\varsigma$ ) and their hardened heart ( $\dot{\alpha}\lambda\lambda'\ \dot{\eta}\nu\ \alpha\dot{u}\tau\dot{\omega}\nu\ \dot{\eta}\ \chi\alpha\dot{r}\delta\iota\alpha\ \pi\epsilon\pi\omega\alpha\mu\dot{e}\nu\eta$ , v. 52).<sup>336</sup>

In the second sea story, Jesus initially planned to send the disciples to Bethsaida, but they arrived at Gennesaret (6:53). Only after another feeding story and Jesus’ argument with the Pharisees, who seek a sign from heaven (8:1-10; 11-12), do Jesus and the disciples arrive at Bethsaida by boat (8:14-21).<sup>337</sup> In this last sea travel story, Jesus gives the disciples a warning about the leaven of the Pharisees and that of Herod in the boat. It seems reasonable that the disciples relate Jesus’ words about leaven to bread, coming as they do shortly after the feeding event. They discuss ( $\delta\iota\epsilon\lambda\omega\gamma\dot{i}\zeta\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ ) with one another the fact that they have no bread ( $\dot{\alpha}\rho\tau\alpha\iota\varsigma\ o\upsilon\kappa\ \dot{\epsilon}\chi\alpha\dot{u}\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \nu$ , v. 16). Conventionally, their words have been considered to be another sign of their misunderstanding because of the following words of Jesus. He is depicted as having power to perceive their inner thought. They bear witness to the miracles of bread, but they still do not understand ( $o\upsilon\pi\omega\ \nu\omega\dot{e}\iota\tau\omega\ o\upsilon\delta\dot{\epsilon}\ \sigma\upsilon\dot{\iota}\epsilon\tau\omega$ , v. 17).

<sup>336</sup> They look doubly absurd not only because this happens shortly after the feeding event but also because it is not the first time that Jesus has made the wind cease on the sea.

<sup>337</sup> According to Malbon, this detoured journey anticipates Jesus’ eventual arrival at Bethsaida where the blind may see. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 27-29.

However, the narrator's comments are contradictory. The story begins: "Now they had forgotten to bring bread (*ἀρτούς*)" (v. 14). The next statement proves dissonant in light of the disciples' awareness that they do not have bread: "and they had (no bread) except for one loaf with them in the boat" (*εἰ μὴ ἔνα ἄρτον οὐκ εἶχον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ*)."<sup>338</sup> The double negative in Greek can be read in two ways: as emphasizing the fact that they had such a small amount of bread that it is treated as if it amounted to nothing or as highlighting the "one loaf" that they do have.<sup>338</sup> These two readings bring about different nuances to Jesus' words, "Why are you discussing that you don't have bread?" These words are enigmatic because, while he reminds the disciples of the feeding events they have witnessed, he seems to imply that something is going on that they do not perceive. The disciples' sense of having no bread, along with the notion of one loaf present in the boat, creates a paradox. Jesus' question may make the reader recall his miracles but also could point in an opposite direction: if you seek a sign from heaven, you too may be infected with the leaven of Pharisees and Herod.

From these stories the following observations may be made. First, despite the manifestation of Jesus' power on the surface level of the narratives, the theme of absence is implied on the metaphorical level: Jesus is present but sleeping; he appears, but as a

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<sup>338</sup> With respect to the first position, see Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 506. While this double negative is known as Mark's style, D (it) remove *οὐκ*, reading, *εἰ μὴ ἔνα ἄρτον εἶχον* (they had (except) one loaf"); and P<sup>45vid</sup> (W) Θ *f<sup>1</sup>* et al. attest the reading *ἔνα μόνον ἄρτον ἔχοντες* ("having only one loaf") with no negative. Collins, *Mark*, 382. Yet few scholars consider the second position ("they had 'one loaf'"), because the lack or absence of bread is consistent with the statement of verse 14.

ghost; and Jesus, perhaps signified as one loaf, is with them in the boat, but there is a sense that the disciples do not have bread.<sup>339</sup>

Second, bread functions both literally and metaphorically in the narrative: the bread that Jesus fed to the multitudes; the bread for Jesus' companions during their journey; and the bread related to Jesus' warning about the leaven of Pharisees and Herod. Bread finally signifies the body of Jesus in the Last Supper (14:17-26). In his article on the Last Supper in Mark, Vernon K. Robbins captures the meaning of bread in relation to Jesus' absence and presence: "the bread invokes the *death and absence* of Jesus rather than his presence manifested in miraculous powers."<sup>340</sup> Jesus is present literally as well as figuratively. However, as Robbins grasps it, the presence of bread conjures up his absence—the absence of his body. While one loaf in the boat may suggest Jesus' presence, paradoxically his absence is evoked by the disciples' sigh, "We have no bread" (*ἀρτους οὐκ ἔχουσιν*). Jesus' saying of 14:7 anticipates this reality of his absence: "But you will not always have me" (*ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε*).

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<sup>339</sup> Interpreting this passage only in relation to the feeding stories and thus emphasizing the disciples' forgetfulness regarding the miracles of bread, scholars hardly consider that "one loaf" may signify Jesus' presence. Kelber seems to read it metaphorically, but for him "one loaf" is that which "embodies the oneness of Jews and Gentiles." He continues, "This oneness Jesus had manifested during the boat trips. The loaf they have is symbolic of the unity of all." Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus*, 40. Donahue and Harrington claim, "Many commentators find it [a single loaf] to be a veiled allusion to the presence of Jesus." Yet these authors neither make a further argument nor refer to those commentators who "argue for a christological interpretation." Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 251, 254.

<sup>340</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, "Last Meal: Preparation, Betrayal, and Absence (Mark 14:12-25)," *Passion in Mark*, ed. Kelber, 35.

Third, this reality of absence generates despair and anxiety. On this point I differ from those who highlight the divine power and manifestation of Jesus and see wonder and awe as arising from the mortal's encounters with “the uncanny or the Wholly other.”<sup>341</sup> For Timothy Dwyer, the uncanny is the breaking-in of the kingdom of God in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Dwyer argues that the intervention of God’s reign engenders “a sense of energy or urgency,” which overpowers the human being.<sup>342</sup> Reactions to this divine invasion into the human realm are both fascination and terror.<sup>343</sup> While Mark frequently uses various words to depict affirmative, and sometimes negative, reactions to Jesus’ words and deeds, these emotive responses are accompanied by troubling experiences such as doubt, fear, and terror, which I believe are related to Jesus’ absence.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Timothy Dwyer, *The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 201.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>344</sup> Mark uses a variety of words indicating emotional status. Some words such as ἐκπλήσσομαι (to be astonished) are used to illustrate responses of the disciples and people to Jesus’ teaching and healing (1:22; 6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18). This type of reaction does not necessarily move on to faith (6:6). Similarly, the noun ἐκστασις (astonishment, 5:42; 16:8) and the verbs θαυμάζω (to be astonished, 1:27; 10:24, 32), ἐκπλήσσω (to be astonished, 1:22; 6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18) and ἔξιστημι (to be amazed, 2:12; 5:42) are used to describe people’s amazement at Jesus’ extraordinary teaching and miraculous acts. Yet again, the same word ἔξιστημι is negatively used to portray the disciples’ misunderstanding (6:51) and put in the mouths of people in his hometown who accuse him (3:21). While θαυμάζω is employed when people marvel at Jesus’ healing and teaching (5:20; 12:7) or wonder at his miracle (6:51), Jesus is said to marvel because of people’s unbelief (6:6). It is also used twice of Pilate’s reaction regarding Jesus’ trial and death (15:5, 44). However, there are also other words used exclusively to express disturbing emotions such as δειλός (fearful, 4:40), ταράσσω (to be terrified, 6:50), and φοβεόμαι, its noun form φόβος (4:41, x2; 5:15, 33, 36; 6:20, 50; 9:32; 10:32; 11:18, 32;

## Silence and Fear

I find Dwyer's observations on the pattern of wonder and the relationship between wonder and silence useful. First, in many cases fear is primarily motivated by an uncontrollable situation, followed by a new level of fear based on knowledge and the sight of one who can control the uncontrollable (4:35-41; 5:35-43; 6:45-52).<sup>345</sup> Second, fear, astonishment, and amazement, often accompanying silence, are appropriate responses to the demonstration of divine power. Thus, silence and proclamation are not mutually exclusive (2:1-12; 4:35-41; 5:33; 7:31-37). Mark 16:1-8 is a good example in this regard: "And they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid" (v. 8). Dwyer argues, "After the message of the resurrection, a greater and more lasting wonder follows. The sight of the "young man" causes astonishment, but this is not what the women should be astonished about. When they are told that God has intervened and raised Jesus from the dead and that Jesus will appear in Galilee, they are struck with a greater wonder." His point here and elsewhere is that fear and silence result from a divine encounter. Wonder does not indicate a lack of faith and misunderstanding; instead, silence is a "function of knowledge of Jesus' person and power on the basis of observation." While he draws on the positive aspect of wonder and silence, he never considers the notion of absence as shown in the young man's words, "He is not here; see the place where they laid him" (16:6).<sup>346</sup>

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12:12; 16:8), and ἐκφοβος (fear, 9:6).

<sup>345</sup> Dwyer, *Motif of Wonder*, 190-92; Magness, *Sense and Absence*, 93-102.

<sup>346</sup> Dwyer, *Motif of Wonder*, 191, 197.

For me, the affective responses of the women disciples in 16:1-8 seem to be associated with their awareness of Jesus' absence rather than with their divine encounter. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, who attempted to anoint the dead body of Jesus, are struck with fear and trembling at the empty tomb. Before this event, there was an unnamed woman who broke a flask of expensive ointment and poured it over Jesus' head at Simon's house in Bethany. Her action caused a disputation among men around Jesus. Yet, Jesus regarded what she had done as a preparation for his burial. He says, “but you will not always have me (*ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε*). She has done what she could. She has anointed my body (*τὸ σῶμά μου*) beforehand for its burial” (14:7).<sup>347</sup>

These two stories are closely connected. The anonymous woman has done in advance what the women disciples at the tomb would not achieve because of the absence of Jesus' body. While the former has prepared for the burial of the body of Jesus, the latter are looking for the body of Jesus crucified. The young man at the tomb announces, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here” (*Μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον. οὐκ ἔστιν ὁδε*, 16:6). As Jesus had foretold, the women hear the words about Jesus' absence, along with the words about the resurrection. The reason they are struck with terror (*ἐκθαμβέιν*) is that Jesus' crucified body, which they are looking for, has disappeared. Despite the announcement of Jesus' resurrection, the young man's words end with Jesus' absence.

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<sup>347</sup> It is not Jesus but the woman who is to be commemorated wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world (14:9).

The young man also says that they will see him in Galilee (16:7). This statement may refer to the appearance of the resurrected Jesus, but it could also imply the ultimate manifestation in his *parousia*.<sup>348</sup> As such, the possibility of Jesus' immediate appearance remains at least ambiguous and what is apparent is that Jesus is absent. The last words of the original ending of the Gospel of Mark are “they were afraid” (*ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ*). Commentators resolve this odd ending by explaining fear or wonder as resulting from witness to the divine power. However, I argue that the sensation of shaking might arise from their memory of the suffering body of Jesus and be a reaction to the reality of absence rather than the affirmation of the divine presence. This absence of the body causes fear especially confronting the imperial presence.

To support my argument that the disciples' fear is related to the suffering of Jesus and his absence, I would add the following observations. The terms denoting their fear are used in the first two sea travel stories, in which the motif of absence is found. In Jesus' words, “Why are you afraid (*δειλός*)? Have you no faith?” (4:40), it is clear that the disciples' mood is not one of “wonder” but one of fear, which is interchangeable with lack of faith.<sup>349</sup> The ensuing emotive status is overwhelming fear (*ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον*

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<sup>348</sup> Marxsen, *Mark*, 89-92. Dwyer argues that the young man's words point to the resurrection appearance as the present realization of Jesus' previous announcement because of the tense change from the future (*προάξω*) in 14:28 to the present (*προάγει*) in 16:7. Dwyer, *Motif of Wonder*, 188. Eugene Eung-Chun Park argues that ending the Gospel without an account of the appearance of the resurrected Jesus reflects the harsh reality of Mark's community. Thus, the phrase, “*ἡγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅδε,*” is read, “*even though Jesus was resurrected, he was not there to be seen.*” Park further contends that the young man's words display “intentional ambiguity,” so that they might refer to Jesus' post-Easter appearance or the manifestation of Jesus in his *parousia*. Park, “Problem of the Apousia,” 131-32.

<sup>349</sup> Also in 5:30, Jesus says, “Do not fear, only believe.” (*Μὴ φοβοῦ, μόνον πίστευε*)

*μέγαν*), which Dwyer regards as the second level of fear “based on knowledge and sight of one who can control the uncontrollable.” Yet, the disciples’ question, “Who then is this?” shows that they are without knowledge, despite their sight. In 6:50, seeing Jesus walking on the sea, their posture is one of fright and terror (*ταράσσειν*), which indicates their disturbed and unsettled state, one of mental and spiritual agitation and confusion (6:50).<sup>350</sup>

Another significant setting in which fear is highlighted is the Passion Narrative. When Jesus speaks about his passion on the way up to Jerusalem, the disciples are filled with amazement and fear (*καὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο, οἱ δὲ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἐφοβοῦντο*, 10:32; cf. 9:32). Even when they are momentarily seized with awe, upon seeing Jesus’ transfiguration, which happens between two Passion predictions of Jesus, they are terrified (9:6). Interestingly enough, in both the transfiguration passage and in the final portion of Mark’s Gospel, the motifs of presence/absence, silence, and fear are presented.

9:5-6	16:6-8
<i>καλόν ἔστιν ἡμᾶς ὥδε εῖναι...</i> It is good for us to be here...	<i>οὐκ ἔστιν ὥδε...</i> He is not here...
<i>οὐ γὰρ οἶδει τί ἀποκριθῇ...</i> He did not know what to say...	<i>οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν,</i> they said nothing to anyone.
<i>ἐκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο</i> for they were terrified. <sup>351</sup>	<i>ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ</i> for they were afraid.

<sup>350</sup> BDAG, 990.

<sup>351</sup> Here the number of the subject changes from singular to plural. Peter did not know

The disciples' desire for being with Jesus is frustrated by his death on the cross and the absence of his body. Of course, Mark speaks about the glorious transfiguration of Jesus. Further, Jesus' passion predictions and the young man's announcement include the fact of the resurrection. Yet, as we have seen, fear, along with silence, also arises in the contexts of Jesus' suffering, death, and absence. Anxiety emerges from the memory of the body, which dys-appeared and disappeared.<sup>352</sup>

However, it is not only Jesus that is absent. God is absent as the Gospel runs toward its end. From the beginning of the Gospel, God's voice affirms Jesus as the Son of God. Yet, this son, who is willing to please God, eventually suffers on the cross. Jesus cannot bear to call God his Father while dying with a painful outcry: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" The Son's Father, however, is silent (15:34). If the resurrected Jesus had appeared in the final scene, God's silence could have turned into vindication. However, there is neither divine intervention nor vindication. Some may argue that the division of the temple curtain (*εσχίσθη*) is such a sign (15:38). Yet, this scene is not described as a cosmic event as in Matthew 27:51-53. Instead, the scene reminds the reader of the earlier scene in which heaven had been divided (*σχιζόμενος*). In that earlier scene a voice was heard from heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (1:10-11). Instead of hearing this same voice at the end of Mark's

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(pluperfect) what to say, but "they" as a group (or community) were afraid (aorist + adjective).

<sup>352</sup> See the second part of Chapter 1 in which I explained the disappearance and the dys-appearance as forms of absence with regard to Jesus' body, which is broken and absent. Thus, anxiety may be primarily related to Jesus' death and absence.

gospel, the reader hears the Roman centurion, “Truly this man was a son of God.”<sup>353</sup> It is clear what this “Son of God” implies in the context of the Roman Empire. Jesus’ absence and God’s silence may be the reality, as early Christians in Mark’s time painfully experienced in the overwhelming imperial presence.

In interpreting Mark’s Gospel, I take a different angle from the traditional understanding of awe and wonder as resulting from the divine presence and power. I will further argue that these affective symptoms, which are related primarily to the absence of Jesus, signify more than misunderstanding or lack of faith. The followers of Jesus experience his presence in the form of absence and see what is not seen by the empire. This phenomenon is represented by their sighting of a *phantasma*, which I consider as a haunting in the framework of imperial-colonial relations.<sup>354</sup> This reading, instead of

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<sup>353</sup> In contrast to Matthew, Mark does not have a genealogy; instead, this Son of God is presented as the “son of Mary” (6:3). This title can be seen as discrediting any notion of Jesus as a true Son of God, not only because it was customary in the ancient Mediterranean world to be called according to paternal lineage but also because the emperor was exalted as *divi filius* (Son of God). Moore asks if this utterance of the centurion could be a crypto-Christian confession or something altogether different, “Or is he merely engaging in grim gallows humor instead, the tone inflecting his ‘Truly this man was a Son of God’ actually being one of scathing sarcasm rather than awed reverence....” Stephen D. Moore, “Deconstructive Criticism,” *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 107.

<sup>354</sup> Alternatively, a social scientific approach regards the disciples’ visionary experience of Jesus, along with other four incidents related to the career of Jesus (baptism, testing, transfiguration, and resurrection appearances) in the Synoptic Gospels, as an altered state of consciousness. It is argued that denying the human capacity for the experiences of alternate realities would be “quite anachronistic and ethnocentric, taking our post-Enlightenment, post-industrial revolution, technologically obsessed society as normative for judging anyone other than ourselves.” Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 173, 327, 329.

pursuing a christological inquiry, opens an alternative way of understanding discipleship in Mark.

### The Phantasmic Body

#### *Elusive Presence*

As I have already discussed, the language and images of presence dominate in this narrative unit (6:45-52): Jesus' walking on the sea; his declaration of *egō eimi*; and his power to cause the wind to cease and save his disciples. The following narrative structure shows that even the notion of absence appears to reinforce the presence and power of Jesus.

6:45-47	Jesus makes his disciples get into the boat ( <i>έμβηγναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον</i> )
6:48	Jesus sees them ( <i>ἰδὼν αὐτοὺς βασανιζομένους ἐν τῷ ἔλαυνειν</i> )
6:49-50	The disciples see Jesus ( <i>ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης περιπατοῦντα</i> )
6:51-52	Jesus goes up with them into the boat ( <i>ἀνέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ πλοῖον</i> )

When the disciples undergo hardship on the sea, Jesus is to be found alone on land, for the purpose of praying on the mountain. Thus, in verses 45-47 Jesus' distance from the disciples is highlighted.<sup>355</sup> Still, while having remained on land, he is able to see

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<sup>355</sup> The boat in Mark's narrative is a special place in which Jesus gives the disciples private teachings. Yet, this time it is only the disciples who get into the boat. Best views the boat as the symbol for the later Christian community, which the disciples represent. Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1981), 232-33. Malbon understands the function of the boat in the narrative as a

the disciples struggling against the wind on the sea (v. 48).<sup>356</sup> Jesus' extraordinary viewing (*iδῶν*) is parallel to the disciples' vision, which is presented as a misperception. Mark describes what they see (*iδόντες*, v. 49) as a ghost (*phantasma*). More precisely, it is said that they thought (*ἔδοξαν*) that they were seeing a *phantasma* and cried out (*ἀνέκραξαν*). The following verse, v. 50, explains why they cried out: it is because, again, they all saw (*iδόντες*) him and were terrified (*ἐταράχθησαν*). Verses 49-50 exhibits this set of vision-affective responses.<sup>357</sup>

Seeing him (they think that he is a ghost) - Cry out (because)

See him	- Be terrified
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This highlighting of the disciples' "seeing" reminds the reader of Jesus' earlier saying in chapter 4, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that they may indeed see (*βλέπωσι*) but not perceive (*ἰδωσιν*) and may indeed hear (*ἀκούωσι*) but not understand (*συνιῶσιν*) ..." (4:11-12) Later, in chapter 8, he challenges the disciples, "Do you not yet perceive or understand (*οὐπώ νοεῖτε οὐδὲ συνίετε;*)? Are your hearts hardened? (*πεπωρωμένην ἔχετε τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν*) Having eyes do you not see (*βλέπετε*) and having ears do you not hear

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mediator between the land and the sea. Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 100-101.

<sup>356</sup> It was early in the morning when he came to them. The fourth watch is around 3:00 to 6:00 in the morning. The suggested darkness accentuates Jesus' ability to see his disciples from afar.

<sup>357</sup> While Matthew describes the disciples as seeing Jesus and puts the words "It is a ghost" in their mouths without reporting this second "seeing," John does not even mention "ghost" (Matt 14:26; John 6:19).

(ἀκούετε)? And do you not remember?” (8:17-18) Seeing, hearing, and understanding are synonyms, and they all fail to take place because of their hardened heart. Likewise, this story contains the motifs of seeing, understanding (*συνῆκαν*), and the hardened heart (6:52). Since the contexts in which the hardened hart is mentioned in chapters 6 and 8 involve Jesus’ feedings of the multitudes, bread is related to the themes of seeing/understanding and the hardened heart. In short, Jesus reveals his identity and power. The problem appears to come only from the disciples’ incomprehension regarding bread, which denotes their hardened heart. The plot of the story seems to fit that of a miracle and epiphany story, supplemented by the Markan theme of discipleship.

Although Jesus’ power is present and the disciples’ vision functions to emphasize their misunderstanding, I contend that these aspects can be viewed in other ways. First, concerning his presence, there is also the shadow of his absence, which can be seen by way of allusion to the Hebrew Bible tradition as well as in light of the whole narrative. It is strange that Jesus sees and comes to them but “intends to pass by” (*ἡθελεν παρελθεῖν*) them.<sup>358</sup> This expression can be read intertextually, in line with the tradition of the Hebrew Bible, which suggests a different mode of divine presence.

The NRSV rendering of Exodus 33:14 changes the literal meaning of “my face” in Hebrew into “my presence.” Thus, it reads, “My presence will go with you.” Yet, LXX translates the verse: “I will go on before you (*προπορεύσομαι σου*).” Here God’s presence is to proceed or pass by Moses. When Moses requests God to show him the glory, God

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<sup>358</sup> Donahue and Harrington translate *ἡθελεν* as “is about to” rather than “intends or wants to” in that the former rendering highlights “the epiphany of Jesus,” while the latter is viewed as presenting “an instance of Jesus’ desire for self-concealment in Mark.” Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 213.

says, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, YHWH” (v.19; Κύριος in LXX).<sup>359</sup> In God’s words, no human being is allowed to see God’s face, so God will put Moses in a cleft of the rock and cover him with the hand until God (and God’s glory) passes by ( $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\theta\eta$ ).<sup>360</sup> Only when God takes away the hand, Moses shall see God’s back instead of seeing the face (vv. 22-23). In this tradition of the Hebrew Bible, God’s presence does not mean a face-to-face encounter but rather catching a glimpse of God’s back and the gleam of God’s glory. Thus, the language of passing-by in our story recalls the divine trace as the way God acts in history rather than a direct encounter. The nature of the divine “pass-by” might be a form of absence or a different type of presence, which cannot be tolerated by human eyes.

Finally, however, Jesus declares, “*egō eimi*.” These words may be viewed as denoting the divine revelation or designation in light of the Exodus reading. Yet, in Mark’s literary context the words provide no clarity regarding Jesus’ identity. George Aichele acknowledges that the question of Jesus’ identity prevails in the entire story of Mark. He argues, however, that Mark’s presentation of Jesus’ identity is ambiguous. In 8:33 the Messiah and the Son of Man are set in opposition to one another. Moreover, Jesus’ words about the Son of Man in 14:62 set up a paradoxical equation with Son of God as the Messiah and thus stay away from the evident declaration of “(who) I am.”<sup>361</sup> Even in 15:4, where Pilate demands Jesus’ answers to the chief priests’ many accusations

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<sup>359</sup> I have mentioned Exodus 3:14 in which God’s name is given upon Moses’ request: Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ὄντων.

<sup>360</sup> This verb is used twice in Exodus 33:23 (LXX).

<sup>361</sup> George Aichele, *Jesus Framed* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 23-24, 26, 31.

against him, Jesus does not provide any answer regarding his identity.<sup>362</sup> Considering these contexts, one is not forced to read Jesus' saying of "I am" in 6:50 as the disclosure of his divine presence. Hence, Jesus' elusive presence is suggested, based on the way of God's presence in the Hebrew Bible and supported by Mark's narrative context, where "*egō eimi*" eludes the definite identification of Jesus.

Crossan's argument that Jesus' absence is both the form of the Gospel and its prevalent theme further strengthens my position. According to Crossan, Mark believes that Jesus does not appear to save his people from insecurity before the *parousia*.<sup>363</sup> Mark's rejection of a "theology of apparition" led him to create an "anti-tradition of the Empty Tomb" based on the early Christians' experience of Jesus' absence.<sup>364</sup> Crossan argues in another venue: "Such a story, confessing a theology of apparitional presence and miraculous assistance which he could not accept, had to be safely and securely 'reprojected' into the earthly life of Jesus and surrounded even there with injunctions to silence and reactions of apostolic incomprehension which stressed immediately the dangerous misunderstandings which could arise from such stories."<sup>365</sup> In other words,

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<sup>362</sup> Thus, Aichele asserts that the enigmatic style of Jesus' character and the "paradoxical narrative provide no readerly satisfactions." *Ibid.*, 33. Therefore, Mark's story is remarkably incomplete. This postmodern perspective of the story is distinguished from narrative criticism in that his reading challenges the ideological closure and completeness, which narrative criticism usually pursues. Also, see George Aichele, *The Phantom of Messiah: Postmodern Fantasy and the Gospel of Mark* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2006).

<sup>363</sup> John D. Crossan, "Empty Tomb and Absent Lord (Mark 16:1-18)," *The Passion in Mark*, ed. Kelber, 152.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>365</sup> Crossan, "Form for Absence," 47.

Mark inserts an apparition tradition into this passage as if it had occurred during Jesus' earthly life. If this is the case, such a move reflects the reality of Jesus' absence in Mark's time. Despite the limitation of any reconstruction of history, Crossan's interpretation contrasts with all sorts of "presence" interpretations, such as epiphany, miracle, and *parousia* expectation.<sup>366</sup> His interpretation also offers a helpful insight to understand Markan discipleship. Misunderstanding on the part of the disciples—in Mark's own context—is not about their failure to recognize Jesus' identity, epiphany, or miraculous power, but rather implies a false expectation of his apparition and presence.<sup>367</sup>

### *Illusive Vision: Haunting by the Phantasmic Body*

At this point, I should like to provide expanded evidence regarding the different layers of understanding of Jesus' presence and discipleship on the part of early Christians by investigating common motifs observed in Luke 24:30-39. What is striking here is that there is an allusion to *phantasma*.

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<sup>366</sup> Although Best argues that Mark derived from tradition the two accounts of feeding (6:35-44; 8:1-10) and the two voyages on the Sea of Galilee (4:35-41; 6:45-52) and added "some important qualifications such as "the fear, misunderstanding, and blindness of the disciples" (4:40; 6:52; 8:14-21), he does not specify what the tradition is, as Crossan partly does. Best, *Disciples and Discipleship*, 192. Rather, Best highlights the reason the feeding and sea miracles are presented as a group. What they represent is Jesus' care for the community. "The disciples do not understand—a pattern of the church which will not believe that *Jesus comes to help it in emergencies*" (153). Italics added. Here we see how the same text can be interpreted differently on the basis of different historical assumptions.

<sup>367</sup> Again, Best represents the former position: "What now of the fear and blindness of the disciples? They see the miracles but are not convinced by them of Jesus' true nature: let the early church beware of presenting Jesus as a miracle worker to the world, for the world may see the miracles and not be convinced." Ibid., 194.

Mark 6	Luke 24
[6:41 λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησεν καὶ κατέκλασεν τοὺς ἄρτους καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ...]	30 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν μετ' αὐτῶν λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπεδίδου αὐτοῖς.
Taking ...loaves...he blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples... ]	When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.
49 οἱ δὲ ιδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης περιπατοῦντα ἔδοξαν ὅτι φάντασμά ἐστιν καὶ ἀνέκραξαν,	31 αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοίχθησαν οἱ ὁφθαλμοὶ καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν· καὶ αὐτὸς ἀφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν.
But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out	Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.
50 πάντες γὰρ αὐτὸν εἶδον  For they all saw him  καὶ ἐταράχθησαν.  And were terrified.	36 [ἐγώ εἰμι, μὴ φοβεῖσθε] <sup>368</sup> 37 πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν.
ὅ δὲ εὐθὺς ἐλάλησεν μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Θαρσεῖτε,	They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a spirit (ghost).
But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart.	38 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Τί τεταραγμένοι ἐστέ, καὶ διὰ τί διαλογισμοὶ ἀναβαίνουσιν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν;
ἐγώ εἰμι, μὴ φοβεῖσθε.  It is I; do not be afraid.”	He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?
52 οὐ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις, ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία πεπωρωμένη.	39 ἰδετε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι αὐτός.
For they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.	Look at my hands and my feet. See that it is I myself!

<sup>368</sup> Some manuscripts of Luke 24:36 include the same wording in Mark 6:50b.

Luke 24 depicts post-resurrection appearances of Jesus first to two of his disciples, while on the way to Emmaus, and then to a larger group that included the eleven disciples. A number of common elements may be observed in Mark 6 and Luke 24. First, just as the disciples' seeing is linked with *phantasma* in Mark's story, so does Luke 24:31 put the two disciples' vision (*διηνοίχθησαν*) and Jesus' invisibility (*ἄφαντος*) together.<sup>369</sup> Second, in Luke, when Jesus appears to all the disciples, they think that they are seeing a ghost (*έδόκουν πνεῦμα*, v. 37).<sup>370</sup> Third, their response was one of fear and being frightened. (*ἔμφοβοι; τεταραγμένοι*, vv. 37-38). Fourth, this affective condition is emphasized when Luke also raises the issue of the heart (*διαλογισμοὶ ἀναβάίνουσιν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ*, v. 38).<sup>371</sup> Fifth, the words “*ἐγώ εἰμι*” appear in Luke 24:39. Additionally, some manuscripts of Luke 24:36 keep the same wording, *ἐγώ εἰμι, μὴ φοβεῖσθε*, as in Mark 6:51. Sixth, the understanding of the two disciples occurs when Jesus breaks and gives bread to them (v. 30), just as Mark relates the disciples' understanding to the motif of

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<sup>369</sup> The verb *διανοίγει* means literally “to open,” but figuratively “to understand.” While their eyes were opened (24:31), they say that Jesus opened to them the scriptures (v. 32). Thus, verse 45 says, “Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.” In Mark, thus, this “opening” implies understanding, which is required for discipleship. I will discuss this in Chapter 5.

<sup>370</sup> Interestingly enough, some manuscripts such as D contain the word *φάντασμα* instead of *πνεῦμα*.

<sup>371</sup> In Mark, the expression “discussing in (their) heart” (*διαλογιζομαι ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ*) often describes the inner thoughts of the religious leaders as well as of the disciples (2:6, 8; 8:16-17; 9:33; cf. 11:31). See Chapter 1, Part 2. Interestingly, such doubts “in the heart” come along with the sense of a “burning heart” (Luke 24:38, 41), similar to the paradox of seeing and not-seeing.

bread.<sup>372</sup>

Given their completely different narrative settings, from where do these similarities in themes and language derive? My observations support Crossan's hypothesis that Mark might have incorporated the tradition of Jesus' apparition into a miracle story of Jesus' life. I would construe a more elaborated theory of traditions. On the one hand, there is a tradition of Jesus walking on the sea, which represents his epiphany, as preserved in John 6:16-21. Either Mark also had the tradition in which the aspect of miracle is supplemented or highlighted, or he himself added some elements such as Jesus' extraordinary power and particularly the disciples' misunderstanding. On the other hand, Luke 24 and other early Christian witnesses preserve the tradition of the post-Easter appearance of Christ.

Since the common elements in both Mark 6 and Luke 24 that I mentioned above do not appear in John's story, one can assume that Mark incorporates details of the tradition of the post-resurrection appearance of Christ into the story of Jesus' epiphany or miracle on the sea.<sup>373</sup> This story constitutes a perfect place in which to locate the apparition tradition, because it follows the feeding story in which Jesus takes the loaves, blesses and breaks them, and gives them to the disciples, just as the apparition story in Luke follows

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<sup>372</sup> In Mark 6:52, bread points to the feeding event in the preceding story, whereas bread in Luke 24:30 is mentioned in the context of the table fellowship of Jesus and the two disciples. However, the same words and image appear in both stories. Moreover, the term *κατακλίνω* ("be or reclined at the table") is used in Luke's parallel story of feeding the five thousand, though Mark's story does not have it. Thus, in both Mark 6 and Luke 24 understanding is closely connected to bread which Jesus takes, blesses, and gives to the disciples.

<sup>373</sup> Among other things, John's story only keeps the words *ego eimi* and the disciples' reaction of fear (*ἐγώ εἰμι, μὴ φοβεῖσθε*, John 6:20; Mark 6:50; cf. Luke 24:36, 39). These are popular motifs in epiphany and apparition stories.

the story in which the risen Christ takes the bread, blesses and breaks it, and gives it to the two disciples.<sup>374</sup>

However, my focus is not on whether these two illustrations are the same event of the post-Easter apparition of Jesus or not, or when the detailed actions really happened. Instead, my questions are: Why does Mark incorporate the existing apparition tradition into Jesus' earthly ministry; and how is the meaning of this appearance transformed in the new (literary and historical) context? As Crossan suggests, the reason for the insertion is that Mark is keenly aware of the reality of Jesus' absence: Jesus will not appear until the *parousia*. Furthermore, for Mark, the body of Jesus is the absent one, not the resurrected body shown in the appearance in Luke 24.

In Luke 24:36-43, the Jesus whom the disciples think is a ghost has flesh and bones: "Touch me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have" (v. 39). For Luke, it was necessary to emphasize that the post-Easter apparition was not an illusion: Jesus can be invisible ( $\alpha\acute{\imath}\phi\alpha\nu\tau\omega\varsigma$ ) but also has a real body. Jesus asks them to "touch" his body. It means that the body has skin that functions as the boundary of the body.<sup>375</sup> For Mark, however, this cannot happen after Jesus' resurrection, since Mark believes that the resurrected Jesus will not appear until his *parousia*. The body of Jesus is totally absent. The body of Jesus is not what they cannot both see and touch. Rather, their memory of his body is that of the body on the cross. Jesus' body was executed by the

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<sup>374</sup> Even here Mark is closer to Luke than John. John only depicts Jesus as taking the loaves, giving thanks, and distributing them directly to the multitude (John 6:11).

<sup>375</sup> According to Rhoads, in Jewish understanding "the skin makes a person a bounded system." David Rhoads, *Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2004), 161, 164-65.

imperial power. It was a body beaten, broken, bleeding, and rotten. Thus, this body is abject and porous. Rather than seeing the resurrected body with flesh and bones, the broken body on the cross revisits only as a ghostly body, which is boundless. The *phantasma* is a form of traumatic social memory—the return of the past in the present. Despite the absence of the resurrected body of Jesus, however, he is present in the way that the followers of Jesus are haunted by his *phantasma*. The fear and anxiety generated by such a presence is the symptom of the unspeakable memory, which cannot rise to the surface of historical consciousness in the midst of the imperial presence.

Theories of postcolonial haunting will deepen this rereading of the disciples' perception of the *phantasma* as a haunting rather than misunderstanding. I will use these theories to show how the subjectivity of oppressed people operates through the affective dimension of haunting, which functions as the site of resistance and transformation.

### Haunting as Postcolonial Intervention

#### *Postcolonial Haunting and Its Affective Dimension*

As I briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which functions to displace the process of colonization by destabilizing traditional binary oppositions, also applies to temporality and thus connects the past and the present. Haunting is a hybridization of the colonial past into the present.<sup>376</sup> It occurs in the present

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<sup>376</sup> Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matter: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 142; Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 177. Like past and present, various spheres of life such as the private and the public and the psyche and the social are not

through the repetition or projection of the obscured or obliterated colonial past in the form of cultural memory.<sup>377</sup> Bhabha calls this belated temporality of colonial history “time-lag.”<sup>378</sup> This return of the colonial scene serves as a disruptive intervention into the present. In the belated temporality of colonial history, formerly displaced colonial subjects reclaim their places and voices, but the place of these subjects is a placeless place, not an actual place.

This aspect of postcolonial haunting promotes a distinct view of Gospel writing—a writing of both history and the world.<sup>379</sup> In making history, an author, wittingly or unwittingly, excludes and even effaces some histories, which then become hidden. In this respect, making history is the act of exercising power. In contrast, colonial subjects not only do not possess the power to make history but also are forgotten in history. If these subjects strive to restore their cultural or national identity as attached to any historical site—whether a physical location or a historical figure, this nationalist impulse tends to imitate colonial desire. Rather, a potential strategy for the postcolonial writing of history is suggested in this way: “The postcolonial act of writing the hidden stories of subjects of

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separate or opposed but are linked through an “in-between temporality” and develop an “interstitial intimacy.” Ibid., 19.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>378</sup> Bhabha states that the belated postcolonial staging of colonial-era history “impels the past, projects it, and gives its dead symbols the circulatory life of the sign of the present.” Ibid., 254.

<sup>379</sup> For this reason, historical reconstruction has a limitation, but what historiography should still attempt to do is historical recovery of the suppressed past and invisible subjects. In this regard, a way of writing a history is haunting, which embodies the social memory of a hidden history that haunts the present.

colonial oppression is thus figured by the limit of consciousness where recovered histories emerge in traces as spectral figures of colonial conflict and erasure.”<sup>380</sup>

In Mark’s writing, there certainly exists a motivation to restore the original figure and place as well as the colonial desire embedded in the process of such an identity formation. Mark reinvigorates the early Christian community by declaring Jesus as Christ, Son of God, and reaffirming Galilee as the base of Jesus’ movement and the restoration of the people. While the triumph of this historical figure Jesus, who was resurrected and will return to judge on the day of *parousia*, was incorporated into the Gospel as historiography, there is also a repressed past not captured by historical consciousness. Behind the impetus of reestablishing the communal or cultural identity, there is still the past that is too painful to recall and thus suppressed. Although Jesus’ death on the cross was a historical fact and became a theologically constructed symbol, writing history could not fully capture what his broken body indeed signifies, which floats deep into the bottom of the cultural memory. The trace of the figure can be only sketched with a spectral aura and come to the present only as disfiguration. We see this in the presence of the *phantasma* in the Gospel.

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<sup>380</sup> Michael F. O’Riley, “Postcolonial Haunting: Anxiety, Affect, and the Situated Encounter,” *PT* 3, no. 4 (2007), 3-4. “...the violence constitutive of history’s erasures and appropriations be evoked and transcended through a testimonial silhouette that haunts the moment of historical recovery with a “spectral” aura: by writing histories of irretrievable subject-positions, by sketching the traces of figures that come to us only as disfigurations not in order to restore the original figures but to find the limit of foundations in shadows that the disfigurations themselves outline.” He cites these statements from Gyan Prakash, “Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography,” in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 496.

The crucified body of Jesus is the humiliated and abject body, which is inscribed in the social memory of early Christians in Mark's time. According to Julia Kristeva, the "abject" is related to leaks and flows out of the body, which imply that the margins of the body do not hold.<sup>381</sup> The cause of human reaction with horror at the abject is not its filth but that which troubles identity and system by disturbing borders and orders.<sup>382</sup> Not only is the broken and shared body of Jesus fluid and thus abject, but also the phantasmic body of Jesus is boundless.<sup>383</sup> The suppressed colonial past, where the collective memory of the suffering body of Jesus is embedded, returns as a disruptive intervention into the present. For the early Christians, Jesus' *phantasma* might be such an intervention. This ghostly presence intensifies the sense of absence, but that disfigured body is still presence—a different way of being present.

Being haunted is a way for oppressed people to live the repressed past as a placeless place and to encounter the dead as present in absence. Hence, early Christians' memory and vision of Jesus' porous body reflect their experience as a social body, which is displaced under the conditions of imperial presence.<sup>384</sup> Again, while early Christians struggle to form their collective identity in competition with the trans-imperial construction of identity, this social body, at the same time, embodies the brokenness and boundlessness of Jesus' body. These are the hybrid subjects, who abide the border of an

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<sup>381</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.; Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 90.

<sup>383</sup> I used the word "shared" in the sense that his broken body as "bread" is eaten by people.

<sup>384</sup> I will discuss this aspect of displacement of colonial subjects in the next chapter.

in-between reality.

The background of Bhabha's speaking about such hybrid subjects is the emergence of world literature. He proposes the new terrains of world literature, such as "transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees—these border and frontier conditions," as lying beyond the traditional theme of the transmission of national cultures.<sup>385</sup> A "worlding" of literature as the act of writing the world, therefore, becomes a critical act to focus on "freak social and cultural displacements," not on the sovereign national cultures or the universal human culture.<sup>386</sup> Bhabha maintains that in this displacement the boundaries between home and world and between the private and the public are blurred. This border crossing makes one's vision doubled and disoriented.<sup>387</sup>

Thus, the "worlding" of literature conjures up "historical specificity, using the medium of psychic uncertainty, aesthetic distancing, or the obscure signs of the spirit-world, the sublime and the subliminal."<sup>388</sup> It is this "unhomeliness"—"the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world"—that generates such personal, psychic and spiritual symptoms.<sup>389</sup> Such an unhomely moment resides in the cracks of the wider

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<sup>385</sup> Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 17.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 17-18. While postcolonial theories seem to generally ignore the dimension of the transcendent, I argue that Bhabha's "in-between temporality" or "time-lag" implies a transformation of the colonial into a mythical experience.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 13. Bhabha demonstrates unhomeliness/*unheimlich* in terms of dislocation and relocation. The estranging sense of being relocated into new configurations functions as the "condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (13). In this respect,

political realm.<sup>390</sup> I argue, therefore, that the affective dimension of postcolonial haunting is where the colonial and the transcendent can meet. I want to further emphasize not only that it is the critic's task to illustrate the unhomely presence by employing the transcendental elements but also that it is the subjectivity of colonized people that simultaneously engages transcendence and politics.

### *Agency of Phantom-like Presence*

Different groups of early Christians sought to establish the unifying body as visible in various ways, and these efforts were regarded as both religious and political acts. Mark's writing is not an exception, but the author seems to be more aware of the disjunction and invisibility of Christian identity arising from the memory of the body of Jesus. When the abject body of Jesus haunts their vision in the midst of the imperial presence, this haunting becomes the "belated repetition of the violent history."<sup>391</sup> Then, their memory and reality of the fluid body causes anxiety and fear, which O'Riley calls the affective dimension.<sup>392</sup>

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unhomeliness is different from homelessness. Perkins employs the idea of unhomeliness to relate to the Christian sojourning discourse with its emphasis on "not feeling at home anywhere, of being displaced everywhere in this world." According to Perkins, the universal sense of unhomeliness emerges when Christians formed their cosmopolitan identity in competition with the cultural formation of the trans-imperial identity. Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 33.

<sup>390</sup> Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 15.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Although any memory of the colonial past can be approached from a materialist point of view, for O'Riley aesthetic consideration of haunting is crucial because the memory "represents a structured dimension of cultural imaginary." O'Riley, "Postcolonial Haunting," 4. He writes, "It is exactly this affective dimension of the unhomely of history as a disruptive presence that I will explore here by focusing on the way such instances are

I relate this affective aspect of postcolonial haunting to the motif of fear predominant in the Gospel of Mark. The psychic and spiritual quality of the haunting experience cannot be seen apart from imperial and colonial politics. The subjectivity of the oppressed people operates in the way that the haunting disrupts the imperial presence and power and its body and identity. The unhomely stirring that Bhabha suggests is what I see in Mark’s illustration of the disciples’ vision of the *phantasma*—their fear and astonishment, and the blurring of boundaries.<sup>393</sup>

Rather than interpreting the disciples’ vision of Jesus’ *phantasma* as their failure to recognize who Jesus is, I maintain that seeing the ghostly presence represents an impalpable form of social memory. This memory lingers around the narrative world like the flashback: unforgettable yet suppressed in the historical consciousness. Yet, it raises a difficulty for the reader, because the narrator often relates their astonishment to their inability to understand (*συνῆκαν*) or their hardened heart. How then can the disciples’ fear be viewed as an unhomely stirring? The reader may not need to completely agree with such a narrative point of view. Bhabha contends that the reader observes “interstices between the historical past and its narrative present” in which colonial temporality—the

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figured as situated or positioned hauntings from which theories of postcolonial resistance arise” (1). He emphasizes the function of affective aspects of “situated” haunting in order to map or situate resistance under conditions of transnational empire and globalized incarnations of imperialism, because it becomes hard to locate resistance to such forms of imperialism (2).

<sup>393</sup> Along with the themes of uncertainty, indeterminacy, and anxiety, the secrecy motif is prevalent in Mark as well. Although the secrecy motif has been discussed above all under the title of the messianic secret, with a focus on Jesus’ identity, in the narrative it functions to blur the boundaries between insiders and outsiders, between the private and the public, and between the hidden and the revealed. In Mark’s narrative, the disciples are simultaneously the insiders, who are with Jesus and given private teaching by him, and the outsiders, who appear to misunderstand. The secret does not provide or require a definite line to delimit the notions of truth and identity.

unspoken, unrepresented past—haunts the present.<sup>394</sup> Thus, while in the narrative their fear and hardened heart are considered as the disciples' misperception and lack of comprehension of who Jesus is, the affective dimension Mark represents might be engendered when the colonial past—the disfigured body of Jesus—haunts the present—the displaced body of the community. When the unspeakable past haunts the present, secrets must be kept and silence is demanded.<sup>395</sup>

As such, ambiguity and anxiety arise from “a visual recognition of injustice positioned in the situated encounter with colonial history.”<sup>396</sup> This interruptive moment turns to a mode of critical engagement and resistance. Haunting is a space for recovery of colonial history.<sup>397</sup> Encountering the disturbing haunting presence, the displaced colonial subjects and histories reclaim voices and places in the present context.<sup>398</sup> As I emphasize,

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<sup>394</sup> Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 22.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 18. In contrast to traditional interpretations of the secrecy motif in Mark's Gospel, an interesting interpretation of such secrecy has been given by Elsa Tamez. Interpreting the apocalyptic discourse of Mark in the context of war and armed conflict in Colombia, Tamez argues that silence is what, out of fear, people cannot help but choose as the mode of life. The reason for fear, that is, “the possible accusation of treason, the fear of being denounced” explains how the secrecy motif is present in the Gospel (115). Jesus himself fears that information considered subversive would reach the local Jewish authorities and further inflame the Roman governor and the troops. This contextual interpretation brings fresh insight into interpreting Mark's important themes of silence and fear, not only in theological terms but also in terms of the socio-political context. This, in turn, helps the reader understand the present situation of wars and conflicts in light of Mark's apocalyptic text. Elsa Tamez, “The Conflict in Mark: Reading from the Armed Conflict in Colombia,” in *Mark: Text @ Context*, ed. Nicole W. Duran, Teresa Okure, and Daniel Patte (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 101-26.

<sup>396</sup> O'Riley, “Postcolonial Haunting,” 5.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 6. See Homi Bhabha, “Anxious Nations, Nervous States,” in *Supposing the Subject*, ed. Joan Copjec (London: Verso, 1994), 203.

<sup>398</sup> This may have a similar sense to what Perkins means when she refers to “the Christian

however, reclaiming their places does not mean recapturing the places that they have lost. At the moment of claiming “my own place,” their anxiety turns into the desire for power and becomes quasi-hegemony.

On the contrary, as Laura Donaldson asserts, “haunting interrupts the hegemonic through ‘hallucinatory’ confrontations with other histories.”<sup>399</sup> Haunting is a powerful site of knowledge. Haunting is even “a way of life, a method of analysis, and a type of political consciousness that must be passed on or through.”<sup>400</sup> Being haunted is a very particular way of knowing what has happened and what is happening.<sup>401</sup> If we understand the disciples’ haunting this way, their misunderstanding is a place of contestation of knowledge. Their silence and fear is a mode of recovery of colonial history. Their doubled and disoriented vision is the sign of resistance and transformation.

In his discussion of an Asian and Asian American biblical hermeneutics with “yin yang eyes,” Liew uses the term “the phantom-like presence” as an “effective strategy to counteract the problem of representational fixity.”<sup>402</sup> Although he does not speak of Jesus

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self-presentation of traumatic dislocation coupled to an anticipation of triumphant relocation.” Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 33.

<sup>399</sup> Laura Donaldson, “Gospel Haunting: The Postcolonial Demons of New Testament Criticism,” in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), 98. She quotes Spivak.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 104, 110. Also, see Gordon, *Ghostly Matter*, 183.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Tat-siong Benny Liew, “Reading with Yin Yang Eyes: Negotiating the Ideological Dilemma of a Chinese American Biblical Hermeneutics,” *BI* 9, no. 3 (2001): 309-35. To me such fixity seems to be related to a fixity of meaning implied by “phallogocentrism.” Demonstrating presence as a masculine signifier, Luce Irigaray criticizes the phallus as restrictive, monolithic, limitedly singular, and fixed. She argues that the phallus adopted in psychoanalysis is the signifier of presence, the one, visible thing that must be there to

as the phantom-like presence or Jesus seen as a ghost by the disciples, his statement about “a phantom-like presence” is similar to my reading of the *phantasma*: “They [yin yang eyes] bespeak a phantom-like presence that can be seen, but can not be sieged [besieged or seized] or fenced in. As such, it is as threatening as the yin yang eyes that see ghosts.”<sup>403</sup> Such “eyes” not only see ghosts but also generate the multiple self, “I”.<sup>404</sup> Hence, the contradiction of yin and yang functions to challenge fixed identity and the established order. Such a vision of underrepresented or marginalized people in the society is like a haunting, involving embodied knowledge, which resists imperial knowledge and its construction of the colonized body.<sup>405</sup>

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allow positive definition of gendered identity and positive definition of meaning in language. She uses the female body as a counter-strategy to the ubiquitous use of the male body. This feminist critique of symbolic male presence may warrant further investigation in relation to challenging imperial and colonial presence. Keith Green and Jill LeBihan, *Critical Theory & Practice: A Coursebook* (London-New York: Routledge, 1996), 247. Interestingly, the subjects who resist the fixity are the body (eyes) of Asian Americans, for Liew, and the female body, for Irigaray. However, I would argue against them on their use of the word “strategy.” The vision or optic of minority people or the female body is not a hegemonic counterpart to the panoptic of the powerful or the ubiquitous male body.

<sup>403</sup> Liew, “Reading with Yin Yang Eyes,” 329.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid., 328-29. For him the “I” is comparable to the demon, the Legion, which is read as the multiplicity of self. In Mark 5:9b, the Legion says, “For we are many.” For an interpretation of the passage from a Korean shaman perspective, see Sejong Chun’s “Exorcism or Healing? A Korean Preacher’s Reading of Mark 5:1-20,” *Mark: Text @ Context*, ed. Duran, Okure, and Patte, 15-34.

<sup>405</sup> Haunting stories make up a literary genre in contemporary American literature. Kathleen Brigan argues that one of the literary functions of the ghost in traditional Gothic novels is to illuminate the more shadowy or repressed aspects of characters. Especially in contemporary African American ghost stories, the haunting of an individual or a family reflects the crises of a larger social group. The figure of the ghost itself emerges from the cultural history of a group such as African religious thought in slave folklore or the belief in ancestor spirits. Yet, she further argues that the emergence of haunting stories is a pan-ethnic phenomenon, registering a widespread concern with questions of ethnic identity and cultural transmission. However, it should be pointed out that it is also “an

Some remarks from a feminist perspective should be added to the insight of Asian American biblical hermeneutics. In her article “Ghostwriting,” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak criticizes Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* for evoking the ghost of Karl Marx—the ghostly Father, while lacking a place of the Mother.<sup>406</sup> Spivak states, “She [woman] is nowhere in *Specters of Marx*.<sup>407</sup> One may encounter this problem of lack of female ghostly figures whenever one reads magisterial texts like those of Shakespeare, Marx, or Derrida. This is the case in reading our *phantasma* story in which there is no heroine by whom we are haunted. Spivak seems to suggest a “ghost dance” as a way of reading rather than depending on the figure of the hero.

Ghost dancing is a religious ritual practiced by the Sioux tribe, who attempt to be haunted by their ancestors as they dance. The ancestors are not merely the objects of ritual worship; the ritual is intended to “make a common multinational figured past return through the ghostly agency of haunting so that a future can dictate action as if already there as a ‘before’.”<sup>408</sup> This “making the past a future” is what she means by the “future anterior” distinguished from a “future present.”<sup>409</sup> Ghost dancing cannot insure a future present but instead is to submit to undecidability, which demands responsible decision and action for now. Thus, according to Spivak, ghost dancing is “an attempt to establish

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imaginative recuperation of the past” to re-create ethnic identity and to press this new version of the past into the service of the present. Kathleen Brigan, *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 2-4.

<sup>406</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Ghostwriting,” *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (1995): 64-84.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

the ethical relation with history as such, ancestors real or imagined. The ethical is not a problem of knowledge but a problem of relation.”<sup>410</sup> It is “a prayer to be haunted” and “a learning to live at the seam of the past and present.”<sup>411</sup> Donaldson exactly practices this kind of reading by choosing to be haunted by the demon-possessed daughter and by letting the girl have agency.<sup>412</sup> Yet, can this performativity—a ghost dance—be possible in reading Mark’s *phantasma* text without a heroine who haunts? Following Spivak, my answer is yes.

The phantasmic body of Jesus needs not be a gendered male body. This body, as well as the yin yang eyes to see the ghost, resists the fixity of identity, which the empire seeks while hierarchizing bodies. The mystery of Jesus’ ghostly figure or disfigured body is “a productive opening of meaning rather than a determinate content to be uncovered.”<sup>413</sup> What is needed is to engage with the *phantasma* of Jesus, have singular relationship with him or it, and dance while being haunted by ancestors—our foremothers, who shared the body of Jesus.<sup>414</sup> This is the ethical injunction of the *phantasma*.

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<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 79; Donaldson, “Gospel Haunting,” 98.

<sup>413</sup> Colin Davis, “Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms,” *FS* 59, no. 3 (2005): 373-79.

<sup>414</sup> I will provide an example of the latter in the next chapter.

## Conclusion

Although Mark 6:45-52 certainly exhibits Jesus' presence and power through epiphany and miracles, it also discloses a strong notion of absence. Empire-critical, narrative, and intertextual approaches to the text lead to different layers of understanding Jesus' presence and discipleship. While Jesus is described as omnipotent and omnipresent in the narrative, at a deeper level of discourse the divine presence is elusive and paradoxical. This paradoxical aspect illuminates how the Gospel responds to the broader cultural and political reality.<sup>415</sup> In articulating early Christians' reaction to this reality, insights from postcolonial theories of haunting are most useful. The findings of this interpretation can be summarized as follows.

In the pervasive presence of the empire in post-70 CE, the followers of Jesus encounter the reality of Jesus' absence. Despite the desire for the appearance of the resurrected Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for these Christians Jesus' death on the cross still bears witness to the inscription of such imperial power upon the body of the colonized. The repressed past of this crucified body returns in the form of the recurring scene of oppression. This repetition of violence haunts the followers of Jesus. For them the body of Jesus is the haunting presence. In their vision of the *phantasma*, they embody the disfigured body of Jesus and reflect their presence as displaced and invisible subjects in the empire. Thus, anxiety caused by encountering this haunting figure functions to resist placing discipleship in the comfort-zone but rather to keep questioning if one

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<sup>415</sup> Perkins reminds us that Christianity is a socio-political entity in its historical emergence, not being limited to being as a religious constitution. Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 4.

embodies the way of Jesus—the brokenness of his body. In this respect, the Markan Jesus' question, "Do you not yet understand?" is not necessarily a reproach over the disciples' failure to identify Jesus as Christ, but a haunting question lingering around them and a flash-up of the cultural memory of the colonial past in the present. Haunting as the site of alternative knowledge encountering hidden histories both fractures the time of history by tackling the imperial presence and disrupts the notion of discipleship as it is.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONSUMED BODY (MARK 7:24-30)

#### Introduction

Mark 7:24-30 is a story in which a “Greek/Gentile (*Ελλήνις*) woman—a Syrophoenician by race/nationality (*τῷ γένει*)” suddenly comes to Jesus, who is hiding in a house in the region of Tyre, and implores him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. This is the first scene in which a Gentile woman is explicitly healed by Jesus.<sup>416</sup> Jesus’ remarks, in which he refers to this woman as a “dog,” sound harsh. Readers have understood his attitude as marked by Jewish prejudice against Gentiles, especially a Gentile woman, or as testing the woman’s faith. Due to this foreign woman’s prowess and prudence, however, Jesus is seen as breaking the boundary between Jews and Gentiles. This interpretation frequently adds that the story implies the Gentiles’ incorporation in Christianity. Further, Jesus’ landing on the Gentile territory is interpreted as legitimating the colonial missionary project.

This chapter, however, highlights the fact that the encounter of the woman and Jesus occurs at the border of Tyre and Galilee, both of which territories were under the rule of the Roman Empire. Put differently, my reading is concerned more with how the two subjects engage and negotiate with each other in a border situation. Although the

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<sup>416</sup> Jesus heals a Gentile man, the Gerasene demoniac, earlier in Mark’s narrative (5:1-20).

term “understanding,” which is considered to be significant in terms of Markan discipleship, does not appear in this story, it turns out that the woman is one of the few in the whole Gospel narrative who “perceives” or “understands.” She perceives the brokenness and movement of Jesus’ body and utilizes embodied tactics in order to allow her daughter to share his body. Furthermore, she discerns that this singular event is part of the Jesus event for other displaced people. This kind of knowing is what I call *phronesis*, in contrast to rational knowledge of Jesus’ identity. Through this encounter, Jesus, who has revealed a Jewish perspective on the Gentile woman, moves across the border and reaches the other.

In what follows I will begin by reconsidering the question of places and identities presented in the text, while considering its geopolitical context within the Roman Empire. Next, I will focus on the power dynamics between these two colonized others and show how they negotiate with and transform each other at the border. To describe this contact, I will utilize Pierre Bourdieu’s ideas related to *doxa* and Michel de Certeau’s distinction of tactic and strategy. Then, I will demonstrate how the transcorporeality and transterritoriality of Jesus’ body is featured in the understanding of the woman. The transcorporeal and transpatial body signifies the trace of the mystery. Discipleship is to follow this path of the mystery. Finally, I will move on to a rereading of the story in the present transnational context. By doing so, I will show what is going on with those who lack a proper place, especially at the borders (both in antiquity and today), and relate this finding to the theme of Markan discipleship.

## Empire and Territories

### *Roman Occupied Lands and the Border*

The Gospel of Mark was written a few years before or after the Jerusalem temple was destroyed by the Romans during the First Jewish-Roman War of 66-70 C.E. Some scholars argue that Mark was written in Rome because it addresses themes of persecution and because of the latinisms frequently observed in this book.<sup>417</sup> Others situate Mark in the context of believers living in northern Palestine or southern Syria, where conflicts between Jews and Gentiles had been heightened by the war. These scholars see Mark reflecting on the struggle that arose regarding the issue of Gentiles' inclusion in the Christian community.<sup>418</sup> However, even when one assumes that the Gospel was written in northern Palestine or southern Syria, I argue, such a context cannot be considered apart from the Roman Empire's influence.

Latinisms in Mark demonstrate the imperial influence upon the colonized territory.<sup>419</sup> Ched Myers suggests that they indicate the “expected [Roman] linguistic

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<sup>417</sup> While Marxsen argues about Mark’s location as Galilee based on the prominence of Galilee in the Gospel, scholars such as Martin Hengel locate the composition of Mark in Rome. See Collins who gives a brief explanation of Hengel’s argument that Mark is written in Rome because the term “Syro-Phoenician” occurs in Roman writers. Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967); Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 366. Cf. Martin Hengel, *Studies in Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 29.

<sup>418</sup> Brian K. Blount, *Go Preach!: Mark’s Kingdom Message and the Black Church Today* (New York: Orbis, 1998). Howard Kee is representative in seeing the Gospel as originating from a sectarian community near Palestine or in southern Syria. *The Community of the New Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977).

<sup>419</sup> Waetjen argues that along with the specific names of locations such as Gerasa, Tyre, Sidon, and Decapolis, latinisms involving Roman military and economic terms

penetration in the socio-economic and administrative spheres of the colonized culture of Palestine.”<sup>420</sup> Although Waetjen argues that the audience is identified with rural Gentile Christians belonging to the lower-class strata of Syria, he similarly contends that the rural territory was “occupied by Roman legions and exploited by Roman business entrepreneurs and traders.”<sup>421</sup>

Although one cannot be certain about the actual place where the Gospel was produced, I further argue that what can be gleaned from the text is evidence regarding the implications of the border situation under the imperial influence. In this regard, Mark 7:24-30 is a key passage for interpreting the Gospel, given its geographical setting where the encounter of Jesus, who is a Galilean Jew, and a woman, whose origin is Syria,

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demonstrate political conditions under Roman rule. Herman Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power: A Socio-political Reading of Mark’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 4-15. Quoting Werner H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 129. Waetjen shows examples of military terms such as *λεγιών* (legion, 5:9, 15), *σπεκουλάτωρ* (a soldier/executioner, 6:27), *φραγγελλόω* (scourge, 15:15), *πραιτώριον* (governor’s residence, 15:16), *κεντρίων* (centurion, 15:39, 44, 45). Also, there are economic terms indicating measure and currency such as *μόδιος* (a bushel, peck measure, 4:21), *δηνάριον* (Denarius, a Roman silver coin, 6:37; 12:15; 14:5), *ξέστης* (a liquid measure) (7:4); *κῆνσος* (tax, 12:14), *κοδράντης* (Quadrans, a penny, 12:42).

<sup>420</sup> Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 41.

<sup>421</sup> Waetjen, 13-15. Waetjen argues for this rural background because of the more frequent use of *κώμη* (village), and *ἀγρός* (field) as the places of Jesus’ ministry than *πόλις* (city). This statement is not accurate (*κώμη* is used 7 times; and *ἀγρός* 8 times; but *πόλις* appears 9 times in Mark). But if we consider Matthew’s and Luke’s uses of those words (in Matthew the words used 4, 15, and 25 times respectively; and in Luke 12, 10, and 36 times), Mark’s concern with *πόλις* is contrasted with Matthew and Luke who prefer to present cities as the backgrounds of their stories. While the text originated in Roman-occupied Syria, the place of Jesus’ ministry is Roman-occupied Palestine. These two different contexts in time and space, however, “belong to the same socio-cultural system, indeed, the one is continuous with the other.” Ibid., 15-16.

occurs at the border within the empire.<sup>422</sup> Along with the implication of this border encounter, I shall show how geographical markers signify geopolitical conditions in which the ethnic dynamics and identity politics at work in the imperial-colonial framework.

First, Mark 4-8 describes Jesus as traveling around and across the Galilean sea. In describing these travels, Mark often uses the expression “the other side” ( $\pi\acute{e}ραν$ ), which connotes otherness, both from the side of the Jews and from the side of the Gentiles.<sup>423</sup> From the perspective of Jews residing to the west of the sea, the territory of non-Jews on the east is “the other side.” From the east (non-Jewish) side, the (Jewish) west of the sea is “the other side.” As such, the term “the other side” denotes a sense of otherness or distinction between places and between peoples.

Second, our story begins with the description of Jesus as moving from “there” into the region of Tyre. What does the “there” refer to? Immediately before this story, Jesus healed the sick and then debated with the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem about the purity tradition of the elders. This happened around Gennesaret located in the northwestern shore of the Galilean sea, where Jesus and his disciples arrived by boat after the feeding of the five thousand. The reader knows that this feeding miracle occurred in a Jewish area, because shortly before the event Jesus had healed the hemorrhaging woman and the daughter of a synagogue leader named Jairus (5:21-43).

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<sup>422</sup> When dealing with the theme of crossing boundaries in the synoptic tradition, Theissen describes the local border situation between Palestine and the neighboring regions, in which Mark’s writing was produced. Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 60-80.

<sup>423</sup> This word appears seven times in Mark (3:8; 4:35; 5:1, 21; 6:45; 8:13; 10:1).

Both the twelve years during which the woman had suffered from bleeding and the young girl's age of twelve can be related to the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus, after feeding the masses in the Jewish region Jesus attempts to have his disciples get to "the other side," to Bethsaida first, but the final destination of this voyage turns out not to be Bethsaida but Gennesaret, on the same side of the sea (6:45). So, when 7:24 uses "from there," the reference is to Gennesaret. From there, Jesus has now arrived in the districts of Tyre (*ὅρια Τύρου*).

Here we see another geographical term, *ὅρια*, which can be translated "regions" or "districts." We have an alternative reading, *μεθόρια*, which means "borders," "margins," or "frontiers."<sup>424</sup> It is at the border of Tyre where Jesus and this Gentile woman meet. What, then, does this border signify for the two sides of Galilee and Tyre? Like the term "the other side," which signifies otherness, this border may imply the distinction between Galilee and Tyre, whose relationship is long and complicated.

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<sup>424</sup> There are textual problems in this indication of place. One such problem involves the replacement of the word *ὅρια* (regions/territories) with *μεθόρια* (*μετά + ὅριον*, borders / frontiers) in some manuscripts (A M). Although the majority of witnesses support the reading *ὅρια*, *μεθόρια*, which is a *hapax legomenon*, is an interesting reading, considering the implications of boundary-crossing or border situation for interpreting Mark.

Another problem is that some manuscripts such as ΙΙ A B *f<sup>1</sup>f<sup>13</sup>* M add "and Sidon" (*καὶ Σιδῶνος*). However, the representatives of the Western and Caesarean types of text (D W Θ 28 565) support the shorter reading. This supplement is regarded as an assimilation to Matthew 15:21 and Mark 7:31. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1994), 95. Since Sidon was a city of ancient Phoenicia, the name "Sidon" and "Sidonian" came to stand for Phoenicia generally. The books of the major prophet include denunciations of Sidon in their respective oracles against foreign nations (Jeremiah 24:22; 27:3; Ezekiel 27:8; 28:21-22). Philip Schmitz, "Sidon," *ABD*, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 17-18. At times, Sidon and Tyre were in a rival relationship and often appeared paired.

Tyre was a city of ancient Phoenicia, located in Lebanon, 22 miles south of Sidon and 12 miles north of the Israel-Lebanon border. Alexander the Great conquered the city in 332 B.C.E., killing or selling into slavery most of its population. After the Greeks rebuilt the city, the Romans made Tyre a Roman colony. With a few exceptions, Tyre was occupied continuously from the middle of the third millennium B.C.E. to the Greco-Roman and Byzantine periods. It played a significant role in the political and economic history of Greco-Roman Palestine.<sup>425</sup>

The relationship between Tyre and Israel is long and complicated, as evidenced by Tyre's frequent appearance in the Hebrew Bible. Hostility between Tyrians and Jews was promoted by the outburst of the Jewish War in 66 C.E. just before Mark's gospel was written. According to Josephus, the Tyrians, as in other places of Syria in which "the action of each being governed by their feelings of hatred or fear of their Jewish neighbors" arose, slaughtered and held captive a considerable number of Jews.<sup>426</sup> The territory that Jesus enters, therefore, is one that has had a complicated and tensive relationship with Jews.<sup>427</sup>

In addition to the history of political relations between Jews and Tyrians, one should note that Jesus' home of Galilee as well as Judea were, like Tyre, a Roman colony. Jesus was a Galilean Jew living in a colonized territory. Emperor Vespasian and his son

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<sup>425</sup> H. J. Katzenstein and Douglas R. Edwards "Tyre," *ABD*, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 686-92.

<sup>426</sup> Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Book II, trans. H. ST. J. Thackeray (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 508-509.

<sup>427</sup> John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 232; *War*, 2.478-79.

Titus captured Jerusalem in 70-71 C.E.<sup>428</sup> Evidence appears in coins inscribed “*Judea Capta*,” meaning “Judaea conquered.” This denarius exhibits a Jewish prisoner bound under a palm tree. As usual in the imperial period, the conquered is depicted as female. To terrorize the people into submission, they destroyed villages, massacred or enslaved some of the people, and crucified leaders of the resistance. Roman aggressors imposed tribute on the countryside. Rome appointed client rulers, like the Herodian kings and the Jerusalem high priests, to control the country and collect the tribute. Mark also shows that he is conscious of the presence of Roman military in the surrounding regions, when he describes the Gerasene demoniac bound in chains as calling himself “Legion” in 5:1-20. As such, Roman legions conquered and re-conquered Galilee and Judea. Thus, both Jesus and the woman were subjected people living in the peripheries of the Roman Empire and they encountered at the border in which ethnic tension was heightened.

### *The Construction of the Other*

By discussing the historical and narrative settings of Mark, I seek to pay attention to geopolitical meanings. In doing so, it is helpful to consider the geographical settings and markers in the text in terms of “the symbolic coding of space.”<sup>429</sup> Despite their

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<sup>428</sup> Ste. argues, “Vespasian, whose son Titus sacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70 with the most appalling carnage, is called by Tertullian ‘Iudaeorum debellator’ [the “conqueror of Judeans”] (*Apol.* 5.7). Let us never forget that the Roman passion for ‘ruling’ was anything but disinterested or motiveless: the intensely practical Roman governing class ruled because that was the best means of guaranteeing the high degree of exploitation they needed to maintain.” G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 328.

<sup>429</sup> Laura E. Donaldson, “Are We All Multiculturalists Now? Biblical Reading as Cultural Contact,” in *In Search of the Present: The Bible through Cultural Studies*, ed. Stephen D.

different approaches, a number of important studies of Mark’s symbolic meanings of space stress the division into Jewish and Gentile territories by the Sea of Galilee and the resulting reconciliation or integration through the sea travels between Judaism (Jewish Christians) and its Gentile other.<sup>430</sup> However, a geopolitical consideration of the text invites further observations beyond such topographical meanings.

First, as emphasized above, the process of differentiation or otherness in Mark takes place in an imperial context. This aspect gives geographical markers geopolitical significance.<sup>431</sup> In this sense, people on the two sides of the border might be enemies, but both peoples are subject to the Roman Empire. Thus, Jesus’ movement from a Jewish territory to a Gentile district may cause tension between Jews and Gentiles, but this move and his encounter with the other also happen on imperial terrain.

Second, in addition to the notion of “the other side,” there exist other such otherings. Many occur at borders and even within a territory. For instance, regarding what constitutes a Jewish region, Donaldson argues: “Indeed, since the region of ‘Galilee’ was originally known as *Geld ha-Goyim*—the country of the non-believers—

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Moore, *Semeia* 82 (1998), 79-97.

<sup>430</sup> See Werner Kelber’s literary interpretation, *Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); Elizabeth Struthers Malbon’s structuralist research, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986); and Ched Myers’ socio-political reading of Mark, *Binding the Strong Man* (1988).

<sup>431</sup> Donaldson employs “geographical imaginary” to interpret Mark’s text from the perspective of Cultural Studies. Whereas by “geographical” she means “the spatial form of the social” and “the social form of the spatial,” “imaginary” indicates “an incomplete and fractured subjective register.” Donaldson, “Multiculturalists,” 85. Therefore, considering the significance of imperial configuration and impact in the symbolic field heightens the geopolitical sense of the text.

dividing the shores of Galilee into believing ‘Jewish’ and non-believing ‘gentile’ halves suppresses Mark’s irregularity.”<sup>432</sup>

Third, otherness or differentiation is not fixed but is as negotiable and mutable as the self or sameness is. Jennifer A. Glancy asserts that one’s identity is intersectional and that this intersectional identity can be negotiated through bodies and through corporal encounters. In these embodied exchanges, cultural complexity takes place and the intersectional identities of those who encounter one another are negotiated.<sup>433</sup> This may be what Donaldson means by “cultural contact,” which she uses as a reading practice.<sup>434</sup>

I argue that cultural contact also occurs in the microscopic site of the body, because the body is where one’s social location takes place and where complex cultural identity is negotiated.<sup>435</sup> For the woman in question, she is represented by multiple identity markers—gender, parenthood, regional location, ethnicity, class, religion, and culture. Thus, when she is exposed to cultural contact with Jesus, whose identity is also intersectional and negotiated, this contact becomes more complicated. I will discuss this issue by focusing on the identification of the Syrophoenician woman as a “Greek,”

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 86. For this argument Donaldson cites Michel Clévenot and William Nottingham, *Materialist Approaches to the Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985), 182.

<sup>433</sup> Jennifer A. Glancy, “Jesus, the Syrophoenician Woman, and Other First Century Bodies,” *BI* 18 (2010), 362. Glancy calls this “corporal performance of social identity” (344).

<sup>434</sup> Donaldson, “Multiculturalists,” 79, 84. According to Donaldson, Mark’s narratives are “productive sites for articulating issues of cultural contact in that they emphasize the perils of traversing social and physical spaces” (85).

<sup>435</sup> Glancy, “Other First Century Bodies,” 345, 360.

‘Ελλήνις. However, the identity markers of the woman will also divulge how scholars project the constructions of their own identities into their understandings of the woman.

### Identity and Geopolitics: The Notion of *Hellenis*

#### *Traditional Views*

##### *Hellenis* as a Non-Jew or Gentile

As many English translations show, rather than denoting Greek ethnicity, the term ‘Ελλήνις refers to a non-Jew. In this case, the rendering of the word as “Gentile” makes sense because it is a generic term to indicate a non-Jew.<sup>436</sup> A deep gap between Jews and Gentiles is presented in “the dog talk” between the woman and Jesus. The Markan Jesus’ assertion of “first the children and then the dogs” fits with Mark’s narrative, which develops the order of Jesus’ ministry as occurring first in Jewish territory and then in Gentile territory.<sup>437</sup> This position assumes that the generic binary classification of Jews versus non-Jews reflects on the theological debate of the early Christians—particularly observed in the Pauline theology of “first Jews and second Gentiles”—or the table

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<sup>436</sup> Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 233. While RSV, NIV and KJV translate it as “Greek,” NRSV, NASB and ESV read it as “Gentile.” The translator of NRSV changed “Greek” in the RSV into “Gentile.” This woman is the only non-Jewish female healed by Jesus in Mark. Because of geography, a Gerasene man possessed with an unclean spirit and exorcised by Jesus is also assumed to be a Gentile man. He proclaims what Jesus has done for him in the Decapolis (5:1-20).

<sup>437</sup> Although Mark does not use the term “second,” “first” implies the possibility of “second,” which means that Jesus did not exclude the non-Jews as the beneficiaries of the kingdom of God. In contrast, Matthew does not have the word “first” in reporting the conversations of Jesus and the Canaanite woman.

fellowship with Gentiles in early Christianity.<sup>438</sup> In this line of argument, the woman represents the Gentile perspective.<sup>439</sup> The woman's faith, wit, or courage, which transforms Jesus' perspective on the non-Jews, is highlighted. She opens finally the way for Jesus' mission beyond the Jewish community.<sup>440</sup>

While having christological significance because of the woman's gifts and ministries to Jesus, the story is most often interpreted from an ecclesiological or missiological perspective as affirming the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom of God.<sup>441</sup> However, Horsley criticizes scholarly interpretations designating the Syrophoenician woman a "Gentile," for "impos[ing] on the text a later dichotomy between Jew and Gentile as essentialist markers of religious-ethnic identity."<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 237.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

<sup>440</sup> Sharon H. Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Letty M. Russell (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 65.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 70-72. Ringe points out that the church has adapted the story to its ecclesiastical needs and that scholars, who are the insiders of the church and the privileged of society, have domesticated the gospel and the image of Christ according to their point of view. However, David Joy, who provides a postcolonial interpretation of the story, is not an exception in arguing, "The bold and unconventional attempt of Jesus to break the boundary of race, by accepting the Syrophoenician woman into his community, is another crucial dimension of this passage. With the inclusive christological affirmation, Mark presents a radical picture of christology here. This christology bypasses all conventional racial frameworks." David Joy, *Mark and its Subalterns: A Hermeneutical Paradigm for a Postcolonial Context* (Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub. Ltd., 2008), 161. Sometimes such an interpretation connotes superseessionism. "Mark's theology of the Gentiles as the new people of God replacing the Jews." Best, *Disciples and Discipleship*, 183.

<sup>442</sup> Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 212.

### *Hellenis* as Greek-speaking

Some scholars think that the term *hellenis* is related to Greek culture and language rather than racial or ethnic origin.<sup>443</sup> This view is followed by the assumption that the woman is of a higher social status than the poor people in Jewish rural areas whom Jesus might represent. Thus, Theissen argues that the identification of the woman as a Greek indicates her bilingual ability and hellenized culture.<sup>444</sup> For him, this knowledge of Greek language and culture denotes a member of the upper class. He asserts that the word used for the bed (*κλίνη*) on which her daughter was found healed, instead of mattress (*κράβαττος*) suggests her urban, affluent status (cf. Mark 2:4, 9, 12; 6:55).<sup>445</sup> This interpretation is strengthened by his quotation of Pseudo-Clementine's revision of the story, in which she is described as a "Syro-Phoenician, by race a Canaanite" as well as a wealthy woman who is able to buy slaves (Matt. 15:22).<sup>446</sup> Furthermore, considering the social and political conflict between Jews and non-Jews in the largely agricultural border regions between Tyre and Galilee, Theissen reads Jesus' harsh remarks in this way: "First let the poor people in Jewish rural areas be satisfied. For it is not good to take poor

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<sup>443</sup> Joel Marcus does not see *hellenis* as representing her ethnicity as Greek, because Mark indicates her "race" as Syro-Phoenician. Thus, *hellenis* refers to her language and upper class social status. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 462.

<sup>444</sup> Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 60-80. Joy also stresses the economic disparities between the people of Tyre and the peasants of Galilee due to Roman colonial policies and argues that the Syro-Phoenician woman presents her case by accepting some of the gender and cultural identities of the time. Joy, *Mark and its Subalterns*, 161.

<sup>445</sup> Theissen, *Gospels in Context*, 71.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., 74.

people's food and throw it to the rich Gentiles in the cities.”<sup>447</sup> This “Greek lady” however, crosses over the social barrier between the itinerant preacher and the landed property owner class.<sup>448</sup>

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza criticizes Theissen for not placing the story of this woman—whether she is an educated upper-class woman or a wretched foreign woman—“within the context of an early Christian theological debate, but within a conflict between poor Galilean villagers and rich Gentile citizens, with Jesus expressing the resentment of the under-privileged population.”<sup>449</sup> Such an interpretation, she argues, not only lacks appreciation of this individual woman’s agency but also represents the ethnocentrism of early Christianity, which is problematic.

### *Ideological Constructions*

#### *Hellenis* as Oppressed

Mary Ann Tolbert highlights the Greek woman’s gender as the cause for Jesus’ negative response. Beyond her national (born in Syria) and religious (“Greek”) affiliation, the woman is given no other markers of status.<sup>450</sup> Since Jesus has already healed a Gentile, the demoniac from the Decapolis (5:1-20), as well as the daughter of

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>448</sup> Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 233-37.

<sup>449</sup> Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 98. The title of the book indicates Schüssler Fiorenza’s great appreciation of this woman in Mark.

<sup>450</sup> Tolbert contends that “Greek” is more a religious label than a racial one. Mary Ann Tolbert, “Mark,” *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 268.

Jairus, what is important for the healing is not that she is a Jew or a Gentile. While her nationality, religion and gender differentiate her from Jairus, only her gender differentiates her from the demoniac. Thus, Tolbert argues that the woman is marginalized because of gender.

For Horsley, who employs a socio-political approach to the text, the woman is “a poor, widowed or divorced woman alone in the world with a possessed daughter.”<sup>451</sup> Similarly, Schüssler Fiorenza regards the woman as multiply marginalized, but she takes a further step to illuminate her role in early Christian theological argument. While Jesus discloses religious prejudice and exclusivism, the woman, who is characterized as an ethnic, cultural, and religious outsider, enters the site of canonical male discourse as a triple outsider.<sup>452</sup> She finally overcomes Jesus’ prejudice and achieves the well-being of her little daughter. The story of this woman makes women’s contribution to one of the

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<sup>451</sup> Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 213. Mary Rose D’Angelo also argues that the woman is “a triple outsider” by gender, ethnicity and religion. See her article, “(Re)Presentations of Women in the Gospels: John and Mark,” in *Women and Christian Origins*, ed. Ross Shepard Kreamer and Mary Rose D’Angelo (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 129-49.

<sup>452</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 11-12. The woman’s role in this early Christian theological debate relativizes the historical centrality of Paul. According to Schüssler Fiorenza, it may be for this reason that Luke did not incorporate this story into his Gospel. He recognized the problem of the Gentile mission in early Christian beginnings and attributes its solution to God. In the plan of God that Luke portrays, the apostle Peter and the Gentile missionary Paul represent the central figures of early Christian mission and church. Luke’s historical outlook does not allow any room for “an educated Greek woman, who as a religious and ethnic outsider argues with Jesus for the Gentiles share in the power of well-being.” *Ibid.*, 97-98. In contrast, Witherington assumes that Luke might omit this story because he found it too offensive to his Gentile audience. In terms of the historical Jesus, Witherington writes, “his apparent initial unwillingness to help her is perhaps a reflection of his conviction that the focus of his ministry and mission was on his fellow Jews (Matthew 15:24).” Thus, he goes on to say that we can see a precedent for the later Gentile mission of the Church. Ben Witherington III, “Syrophoenician Woman,” *ABD*, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 286.

most crucial transitions in early Christian beginnings historically visible. For Schüssler Fiorenza, therefore, the woman deserves of the name of one of the apostolic foremothers of Gentile Christians.<sup>453</sup>

Reclaiming the woman as a multiple outsider and as a forerunner in early Christian beginnings is a provocative move. However, some critics might ask why the woman should have joined the Christian inclusive table-community. They contend that she remains a woman of another faith, becoming neither a Jew nor a Christian.

### *Hellenis* as a Religious Other

Postcolonial critics highlight her religious otherness. R. S. Sugirtharajah warns against ecclesiocentric and missiological readings that see in this story a motive for the missions and the woman as a prototype of authentic faith in the story.<sup>454</sup> He argues that the narrative suggests neither that the woman came to Jesus with a spiritual request nor that Jesus went into the territory to preach. According to him, the narrative focuses on the healing itself. To focus on ecclesiocentric and missiological readings hinders any meaningful dialogue with people of other faiths by regarding Jesus as an advocate of the mission to the Gentiles and the Gentile woman as the faithful seeking Jesus' healing.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 138.

<sup>454</sup> R. S. Sugirtharajah, "The Syrophoenician Woman," *ET* 98 (1986), 13-15.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid. Similarly, Samuel argues that the Syrophoenician woman, "though belonging to another religion, sought healing from Jesus, thus bypassing the accepted boundaries of religion." Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 163.

Reading the story along with Matthew's parallel story from her indigenous American perspective, Laura Donaldson provides a distinctive interpretation, viewing the woman as a religious other, but focusing not on the woman but on her daughter, whose roots are in the indigenous religion.<sup>456</sup> Donaldson argues that the Canaanite daughter in Matthew might "signify a trace of the indigenous." The daughter might be experiencing the initial stages of a vocation as a shaman known to indigenous peoples.<sup>457</sup> However, the regimes of coercive Christian curing drive her into the category of deviance. There is a strong connection between colonial oppression and forms of mental illness, which is easily considered to be demon-possession. Thus, Jesus' exorcism is seen as domesticating and neutralizing "the disorderly extraordinary." Her body, however, functions as an "agent capable of transforming cultural discourses" insofar as her silent witness persistently "calls the abled to investigate rigorously the reader's own complicity in oppressively naturalized ideologies of health."<sup>458</sup>

While critiquing missiological interpretations, Sugirtharajah and Donaldson emphasize the woman's religious otherness and view Jesus' healing as positive or

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<sup>456</sup> Laura Donaldson, "Gospel Haunting: The Postcolonial Demons of New Testament Criticism," in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), 102. Highlighting the gendered difference of the demon-possessed daughter from the Gerasene man, Donaldson argues that stereotypical male and female attributes are ascribed to the characters of the two stories under the designation of "the colonized." While the Gerasene man possesses hyper-masculinity, screaming at the top of his voice with vigorous action, the demon-possessed daughter is silenced and invisible. Ibid., 103.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., 102-103. Cited from Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 38.

negative practice, respectively. In contrast to Donaldson, Simon Samuel argues that Jesus should not be seen as a colonist but as a colonized other, who internalizes colonialism. Kwok Pui-lan employs the same line of argument: the Syrophoenician is a woman of another faith, and her story is inscribed within the master discourse of the Christian canon and interpreted to justify mission to the Gentiles. However, Kwok adds a discussion of notions of identity, which is multiple and contradictory.<sup>459</sup>

### *Hellenis* as Multiple Identities

Kwok's social location leads her to see the woman as an outsider standing at the boundaries of the privileged and the marginalized: the woman is marginalized as a woman and as a Gentile, but she is "Greek-speaking and from the urban class."<sup>460</sup> For Kwok, the woman's outsider position does not necessarily mean economic or cultural deprivation. She agrees with Burton L. Mack's argument that the marginality of the people in the miracle stories is "more a matter of social stigma than poverty and

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<sup>459</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 65. While stressing that the readers do not have knowledge of the unnamed Gentile woman directly from her and her own people but from Christians, Kwok is concerned with how a Gentile pagan woman functions rhetorically in the biblical narrative. Kwok Pui-lan, *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 71.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 75. Supporting Horsley's position, Jennifer A. Glancy argues that *hellenis* is "a marker of cultivated and privileged ethnicity that is consistent with an identity as Syrophoenician by descent" and thus *genos* (race) suggests "an intersectional ethnocultural identity." Yet she also maintains that both privilege and oppression define her identity. She differs from Kwok in her concept of the body "in which privilege and oppression are expressed simultaneously and co-constitutively." Glancy, "Other First Century Bodies," 352-53.

oppression.”<sup>461</sup> Further, she recognizes contradictions in one’s identity and raises questions like: “Should we treat the Other as the same, include the Other in the same, or displace the same with the Other?”<sup>462</sup> One should acknowledge that sameness and difference are ideological constructions and respect diversity in terms of race, gender, class, culture, and religion.<sup>463</sup>

As the above scholarly discussions of the woman’s identity demonstrate, one may apply the ideas of contradiction and otherness mainly to the woman. However, Simon Samuel gives helpful insights on Jesus’ otherness, as well.

... it is important to remember that in any postcolonial context the colonized subjects see with a double vision, i.e., with the vision of the colonized and colonists, and speak with a forked tongue, speaking as the dominant and the dominated.

Therefore it is important to treat this story within the dynamics of transcultural (consensual and conflictual) hybridity and not as a dialogue between colonist Jesus and colonized woman. What is happening in this pericope perhaps illustrates the typical postcolonial feature of place and displacement: the subaltern Jesus displaces and enters into a colonist space and the doubly subaltern woman moves from her double subalternity to the place of ‘victorious otherness.’ This story also illustrates the postcolonial crisis of identity and the liberative dynamics of reiteration (woman repeating the words of Jesus), the problem of approximation (Jesus approximating a postcolonial posture) and the possibility of different layers of colonialism within the colonized ‘other.’<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid. Quoted from Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 214.

<sup>462</sup> Kwok, *Discovering the Bible*, 77.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>464</sup> Samuel, *Postcolonial Reading*, 85. Kwok argues that Jesus is presented by Mark as the personification of the subalterns who were oppressed by the Roman rulers. Kwok,

Thus, the multiple identities of an individual are extended to complexities in the relationship between Jews and Gentiles as well as to the identification of Jesus in the broader context of the Roman Empire. The woman is a marginalized person by gender and class, and an ethnic and religious other from the Jewish perspective. In terms of culture and language, we do not know for sure if she is inferior or superior to Jesus' status. Jesus was also a Jew but was quite different from other Jews in his belief in God, his understanding of Scripture, and his practice of the Jewish law and traditions. Considering that sameness and difference are ideological constructions and that one's identity is never fixed, for Jesus the woman is the other because she is a Gentile and woman. In contrast, from the woman's standpoint Jesus is a Jew and a male, who has power. Still, from the Roman perspective Jesus and the woman are the same: colonial subjects under the imperial rule.<sup>465</sup>

In short, Jesus and the woman engage each other at a border within the empire, which marks them as the other. Yet, I will show that at this borderland their identities are

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*Discovering the Bible*, 15.

<sup>465</sup> According to Alföldy, speaking the Greek language did not indicate higher social status. He argues, “[A]s regards the inhabitants of the eastern half of the empire, the old prejudices were more deeply ingrained: they were foreign to the Romans through their language, Greek, and through their customs which were considered un-Roman.” Alföldy continues by describing how the Romans discriminated against Syrians and Jews: “Juvenal... felt unhappy in Rome, where the city swarmed with Syrians, as if the Orontes had flowed into the Tiber (3.60ff). Martial spoke with similar disdain of Cappadocians and Syrians (10.76.1ff). Particularly marked were prejudices against the Jews...who were typecast even in the Late Empire as greedy, undisciplined, irresponsible and unpredictable... And there were clear social consequences of this sort of discrimination against various minorities. We seldom hear of Jews with high honours....” Géza Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome*, trans. David Braund and Frank Pollock (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press , 1985), 113. Also see Janet Huskinson, ed., *Experiencing Rome: Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 134.

negotiated. Only after this encounter is Jesus deeply engaged with people in the land of the other by healing the sick and feeding the multitude. On the basis of this socio-historical and geopolitical setting, I shall read the text in its literary context drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu (his concepts of *habitus*, *doxa*, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy) and Michel de Certeau (ideas of strategy and tactic).

### Strategy and Tactic

#### *Jesus' Heterodoxy*

As seen in the narrative structure below, our passage is placed after the story presenting Jesus' argument with the Pharisees and some scribes about the purity tradition of the elders and before the event of feeding the four thousand. Interestingly, all these stories include the language of bread or eating.<sup>466</sup>

- A. Healing of Jairus' daughter (5:21-24; 35-43)
- B. Feeding of the five thousand (6:30-44)
- C. Sea Travel: The disciples' misunderstanding about bread (6:45-51)
  - The dispute about defilement (7:1-23)
- A'. Healing of Syrophenician woman's daughter (7:24-30)
- B'. Feeding of the four thousand (8:1-10)
- C'. Sea Travel: The disciples' misunderstanding about bread (8:11-21)

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<sup>466</sup> “Bread” ( $\alpha\rho\tauος$ ) occurs 18 times in chapters 6-8, as well as in 2:26, 3:20 and 14:22 in Mark. The verb “to eat” ( $\phi\alpha\gamma\varepsilon\iota\nu$ ;  $\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\theta\acute{\iota}\omega$ , “I eat”) also occurs mainly in chapters 6-8. Even the platter on which Herodias’ daughter is given the head of John the Baptist brings up the image of food (6:25, 28). This banquet is in contrast with Jesus’ feeding that follows it (6:34-35). While the former is the banquet of the powerholders, the latter is seen as the meal of the powerless in the wilderness.

First, after healing the daughter of Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, Jesus makes the revived girl eat (5:21-24; 35-43). In our story Jesus again heals a daughter (7:24-30), the daughter of the Gentile woman. In this story, Jesus and the woman argue about who can eat what. Second, the two feeding stories are also parallel. Whereas the feeding of the five thousand occurs in Jewish territory (6:30-44), the feeding of the four thousand happens in Gentile territory (8:1-10). Third, after each feeding of the multitudes, Jesus and the disciples travel by boat. The common theme that one finds in these stories is the disciples' misunderstanding, particularly regarding bread.

At the center of this series of stories, Jesus argues with the Pharisees and some scribes. This argument arises when the latter see some of Jesus' disciples eating with hands defiled, that is, unwashed, and challenge Jesus about this action on their part. A number of English translations do not include the word "bread" (*ἄρτος*) in 7:2 and 5, which the Greek text contains.<sup>467</sup> Thus, this story is also concerned with the issue of eating bread. According to Jewish purity law and traditions, the disciples' hands are most defiled because they not only eat with unwashed hands but also were assisting Jesus as he healed the sick in the market place (6:56; 7:3-5).

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<sup>467</sup> Whereas NIV indicates the word as "food," NASB translates it into "bread." However, NRSV omits the word "bread":

- v. 2 some of his disciples ate (bread) with hands defiled  
(*κοιναῖς χερσὶν, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν ἀνίπτοις, ἐσθίουσιν τοὺς ἄρτους*)
- v. 5b (they) eat (bread) with hands defiled  
(*κοιναῖς χερσὶν ἐσθίουσιν τὸν ἄρτον;*)

In order to understand Jesus' reaction to this challenge from the Jewish leaders, I find Pierre Bourdieu's ideas, such as *habitus* and *doxa*, useful. According to Bourdieu, *habitus* refers to "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures."<sup>468</sup> Individuals in society act in accordance with such internalized systems. This is what Bourdieu calls "the cultural unconscious obedience to rules."<sup>469</sup> In this way, society becomes deposited in persons in the form of dispositions.

When the objective order seems to correspond to subjective aspiration, the natural and social world appears as self-evident. The social order is bounded by tradition, which determines that which "goes without saying" or is taken for granted in the society. Bourdieu calls this *doxa*, according to its literal meaning as "common belief" or "public opinion." The social order is maintained by the system of classification, which reproduces power relations as well as the objective classes divided by sex, age, or position in the relations of production. *Doxa* helps to buttress social limits, the "sense of one's place."<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972; 1977), 72.

<sup>469</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 152.

<sup>470</sup> Bourdieu, 164-65. For the classes disadvantaged by the symbolic order, Bourdieu argues that they cannot but recognize the legitimacy of the dominant classification. Although Bourdieu made a great effort to develop a theory of practice by locating objective structures and human agency within history through the concept of *habitus*, he does not explicitly argue for "the power of subordinated individuals and groups to resist and subvert the dominant objective structures." Joan M. Martin, *More than Chains and Toil: A Christian Work Ethics of Enslaved Women* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 69. Discussing Michel de Certeau's ideas of strategy and tactic, I will discuss the agency of marginalized or minoritized people in the society.

Any challenge to such *doxa*, then, is heterodoxy. If heterodoxy appears, the established order must assert its claims against the heterodoxy in a new orthodoxy. This orthodoxy is upheld by the guardians of tradition, who are compelled to speak in their own defense, being aware of the distinctiveness of their belief and recognizing the existence of other beliefs.<sup>471</sup> This implies that orthodoxy is not equal to *doxa* but simply takes one possible position among others.

In this respect, the idea of defilement and purity is a type of *doxa*, because the Jews take for granted their purity law and traditions. Their system of classification divides the sacred from the profane, and the system places people, things, time and space in their own proper locations. Here defilement signifies that something is misplaced, crossing the socially agreed-upon demarcation, or confusing the arrangement of the social map. On the opposite side, there is the conception of purity.<sup>472</sup>

This system of order is internalized in individuals and forms their practices and dispositions in everyday life, as when Mark comments that the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, observing the tradition of the elders (7:3). Orthodoxy is more than “living according to the tradition” (v. 5). Tradition itself is silent, but there are the guardians of tradition like the Pharisees and the scribes in this text. In order to defend the tradition, they expand “many other traditions” (v. 4) and judge those who deviate from the traditions (v. 5), holding fast to the traditions (v. 8). However, Jesus

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<sup>471</sup> Eagleton, *Ideology*, 157.

<sup>472</sup> Refer to Chapter 6 in Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insight from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993). Malina explains purity and impurity in terms of the cultural map of space and time. In this social arrangement, crossing boundaries determines uncleanness. To maintain these boundaries is to be “clean” (125). Also, see Donaldson, “Multiculturalists,” 86.

challenges this orthodoxy as hypocrisy, because their *habitus* is not the embodiment of God's command (v. 8). Jesus' belief and practice present heterodoxy: he not only critiques orthodoxy but challenges *doxa* itself.

Jesus overturns the symbolic order of the social system. For the Jews, according to David Rhoads, "the skin makes a person a bounded system."<sup>473</sup> Thus, it is important to protect the skin from unclean things entering from outside the body. Hence, unwashed hands mean that the skin is exposed to the defiled. Eating with hands defiled, therefore, pollutes foods, and the unclean food taken in from the outside will defile a person.<sup>474</sup> In contrast, for Jesus, what pollutes a person is not something entering into him or her; this does not defile, because it passes on through the stomach. Jesus' innovative idea is to break the boundary of the body. He asserts that it is the things that come out of the heart that are evil and defile a person (7:15, 18-23). This is the reverse of the microcosm guarded by the skin, because things outside the skin are not unclean. Instead, all evil things from within, specifically, from the heart of a person, are defiled. According to this heterodoxy, some Jewish leaders are described as defiled (3:1-6; 7:1-6; 10:2-9).<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> David Rhoads, *Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 161, 164-65.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>475</sup> Mark also presents the leaders as testing Jesus like Satan (1:13; 8:11; 10:2; 12:15). Yet, these descriptions cannot be used to accuse the Jewish leaders or all the Jews, because in many cases the scene portraying the Pharisees as hypocrites and heartless legalists is exaggerated in hostile fashion, reflecting later polemics between Christians and Jews. Thus, Mark is situated in a certain context in which the tension between Christians and Jews were heightened, but he describes the Jewish leaders negatively from the Christian perspective. Moreover, it is to be noted that Jesus' disciples in the narrative are depicted as having similar problems with their hearts as well (4:14-20; 8:31-33; 14:27). Even the shadow of Satan hangs over these disciples' destiny, which the

Why then is Jesus' argument important? Here "eating" bread with defiled hands is challenged and Jesus breaks the bodily boundary, proposing the heterodox opinion. It anticipates the eating of "crumbs" by the daughter of the unnamed Gentile woman, who might be multiply defiled from the Jewish perspective. The consequence is that the social, as well as symbolic, boundaries are broken, this time not by Jesus' heterodoxy but by the woman's tactical actions or embodied knowledge. The woman seems to understand how it is that Jesus' heterodoxy should be applied to the border situation and how to argue for it.

### *The Woman's Tactic*

As seen in the discussion of the historical and geopolitical context, Jesus comes into the territory of the other. More accurately, the story takes place in a house at the border, where he moves to retreat from the crowd. Yet, he fails to hide himself because the Syrophoenician woman finds him. I will shed light on the woman's action and words using Michel de Certeau's idea of tactic as distinguished from strategy in his discussion of the logic of everyday practice.<sup>476</sup>

Certeau suggests three points of operational differences between tactic and strategy: place, time, and power. First, a strategy seeks "its own place," a place that can

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disciples' hardened heart brought out (4:14-20; 8:31-33; 14:27). Finally, one should not forget that Jesus is also a Jew.

<sup>476</sup> Strategy and tactic are not antithetical or in binomial opposition. They may take place simultaneously in practice of everyday life. By emphasizing tactic, Certau moves attention not only from system to agency but also from the subjects who are their authors or vehicles, focusing instead on "modes of operation." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 1984), xi.

be described as “proper.”<sup>477</sup> It seeks “its own place,” which can be distinguished from its environment. While a strategy strives for “mastery” of such proper places, a tactic is instead “a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus.”<sup>478</sup> A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s places by using, manipulating, and diverting those places.<sup>479</sup> Second, whereas a strategy is “a triumph of space over time,” a tactic strives to seize “opportunities,” making a “clever utilization of time.”<sup>480</sup> Last, the power of strategy to provide oneself with one’s own place sustains a specific type of knowledge. In contrast, a tactic is determined by the absence of power. It is “an art of the weak” who lack their own place and a view of the totality and are limited by the “possibilities of the moment.”<sup>481</sup>

While I have earlier highlighted the example of consumers’ mode of practice as tactic, another example, the distinction between maps and itineraries, is helpful for the later discussion of the trajectory of the displaced body.<sup>482</sup> Mapping is an imperial practice

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<sup>477</sup> Ibid., xix.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 30. Regarding the difference between “place” and “space” refer to F. C. Bauerschmidt’s “The Abrahamic Voyage: Michel de Certeau and Theology,” *MT* 12 (1996), 6-7. While “a place represents a stable order” and two may not occupy the same location, “a space is an event which occurs as a result of an ensemble of operations.” “Space is a practiced place.” Also, see Certeau, *Practice*, 117.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid., 38-39. Cearteaou explains “space over time” this way: a strategy “allows one to capitalize acquired advantages, to prepare future expansions, and thus to give oneself a certain independence with respect to the variability of circumstances” (36).

<sup>481</sup> Ibid., xix, 36-39.

<sup>482</sup> In Chapter 2, I presented Certeau’s idea of tactics which are employed by the consumers, who are massively marginalized but “make” or “do” something through their consumption.

to totalize and control heterogeneous places and motions through sight, and thus it is compared to strategy. In contrast, the itinerary is considered to be tactical in that it is represented by the “discursive series of operations” of pedestrians.<sup>483</sup> When people walk, the street—a geometrical place designed by urban planning—is transformed into a space.<sup>484</sup> While “to walk is to lack a place,” pedestrians walk across wherever they want to go and create their own space evading the totalizing sight of the map.<sup>485</sup>

Similarly, the operations of strategy and tactic are also explained through the practices of writing and reading. Whereas writing is a strategy to occupy a place that resists time by multiplying its production through the expansionism of reproduction, reading is a tactic moving across space.<sup>486</sup> The reader’s space, according to Certeau, “is not *here* or *there*...but [is] neither the one nor the other, simultaneously inside and outside.... In that way, [s]he also escapes from the law of each text in particular, and from that of the social milieu.”<sup>487</sup>

Certeau extends his discussion of the written text to the text of society. What makes this social process of writing possible? First, there is something to be written.

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<sup>483</sup> Certeau, *Practice*, 119, 121. According to Certeau, the map “collates on the same plane heterogeneous places, some *received* from a tradition and others *produced* by observations.” Italics original.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>486</sup> In writing, the temporality of events disappears, so it resists time. One can find this in the history of writing. The text was first written by the literate elite. They had a tool for producing meaning and thus producing reality. Collectively, they composed western history. Ordinary people became the consumers of the production of writing. This is what Certeau calls the “scriptural economy.” See Certeau, *Practice*, 131-53.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid., 174.

What is written can be the Law. Or what is written can be spoken as a normative idea, a text as a model or a fiction. Second, the process needs a tool to write the Law. This is the writing machine. It is a political apparatus in that it functions as “the mechanical system of social articulation.”<sup>488</sup> Where then is this Law written by the writing machine? It is written on the flesh, on the body. This extended writing is the inscription of the Law on the social and individual body.<sup>489</sup> The flesh as material on which the law is inscribed becomes the text through the writing machine.<sup>490</sup> So, for Certeau, “the intextuation of the body corresponds to the incarnation of the law.”<sup>491</sup>

However, the body may resist both being inscribed by the law and conforming to the text. The desire or force to escape being written on by the law is the cry.<sup>492</sup> This cry is not under the rule of the tool of the law (writing), nor does it belong to the flesh (to be

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<sup>488</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 139. I read the law as an equivalent of the social system. See Ibid., 150.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid., 144-45.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>492</sup> Du Bois’ double-consciousness exactly embodies this cry. When “the color-line” is inscribed in black bodies, there are cries resisting the inscription. He states, “The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost.... He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American...” The Sorrow Songs also embodies this cry in their bitter cry of homelessness: “Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house?” W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Book, 1989), 2. However this cry is attached to hope that “sometime, somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins.” Ibid., 187-88, 194. Thus, the cries in the Songs and Du Bois’ double-consciousness, which mean neither here nor there and thus in-betweenness, are tactics. In other words, tactic is the embodiment of the cry.

written). Belonging neither here nor there, it becomes resistance. When the body conforms to the law—in other words, when it identifies itself with a name and is turned into the representation or reservoir of reality or truth, the cry might cease. However, the bodies cry under the power, and the cries mean not only that they are subordinated to the power but also that they do not belong to it. In this the cry of the body for non-belonging, there is a potential for excess. Certeau points to “believing” as “leaving one’s place, being disarmed by this exile out of identity and contract, and thus renouncing possession and heritage so as to be delivered to the voice of the other....”<sup>493</sup> So, the negation of an identity or a site corresponds to the desire to encounter the Other.

We can see that the Syrophenician woman embodies this tactic. First, the immediacy of her action should be noted: “But immediately a woman...heard of him (*εὐθὺς ἀκούσασα*) and came and fell down at his feet” to ask him to cast the demon out of her daughter (7:25).<sup>494</sup> While Jairus asks Jesus, falling at his feet, “Come and lay your

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<sup>493</sup> Michel de Certeau, “The Weakness of Believing: From the body to Writing, a Christian Transit,” in *The Certeau Reader*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 236.

<sup>494</sup> Her hearing is not along the lines of modern people, who get information through the media and networks but instead occurs through direct contact with people. Although she appears in the middle of the Gospel narrative, one can imagine that she might have traveled to Galilee and joined the *ochlos* (3:4, 6-8). Or she must have heard the stories about Jesus in Tyre, because some among the *ochlos* have migrated between Tyre and Galilee. The stories of the *ochlos* have been heard and spread through by word of mouth. She attends to what has been done by Jesus, and she immediately responds to news about his coming into the region (3:8; 7:25). Likewise, hearing is very important in the events of the *ochlos*. First, Jesus in Mark emphasizes listening (to him), especially when teaching the *ochlos* in parables (4:1, 3, 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, [7:16], cf. 9:7; 12:29). The reason he tells the *ochlos* parables is so that they may be able to “hear.” (4:33) Hearing does not necessarily mean understanding, but the *ochlos* is invited to listen to him and understand his words as his disciples are expected to do so (7:14; 8:18). Second, Mark depicts the people or *ochlos* as coming to hear Jesus and to be healed by

hands on her (my daughter)" (5:22-23), the house is not a "proper" place for this foreign woman. Even though the woman has heard of Jesus' reputation of healing the sick, she may suspect that he will not receive her. The Jews kept their distance from the Gentiles because of their impurity. In addition, she is a Gentile *woman*. Her daughter, possessed by a demon in the diminutive form (*δαιμόνιον*), is unclean. Yet, her action is a calculated tactic, urged by the absence of a proper locus. She poaches on the other's place and tries to seize an opportunity. The anonymous Gentile woman—suffering from the oppression embedded in the history of the colonization and likely without a patriarch, and distressed by many different things—embodies tactics, the "art of the weak."

Discouragingly, Jesus refuses her plea, saying, "Let the children first be fed for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (7:27).<sup>495</sup> The benefit is given to the children, not to the dogs. The idea of the people of Israel as God's children is frequently found in the Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, dogs were regarded as unclean

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him (2:1; 6:2; 7:37; 10:47; 12:37). Wherever they heard he was, people brought the sick to touch him, just as the hemorrhaging woman had heard of Jesus and had come to him and touch him (5:27; 6:54-56). Thus, story telling and bodily contact, along with the table fellowship, are important components in the *ochlos* event. Ahn Byung-Mu argues that the *ochlos*-minjung are the one who transmitted the Jesus tradition through rumors. Ahn Byung-Mu, "Transmitters of the Jesus-Event," *CTC Bulletin* (1984/1985), 32.

<sup>495</sup> One may understand Jesus' inconsistent and harsh remarks as originating from his human nature, which does not keep him from prejudice, especially when he, as a Jewish male, comes across a Gentile woman. Although he presented his heterodox idea that broke the bodily boundary shortly before, he preserves the Jewish *doxa* this time when he could have broken the social boundary. He has already walked into the border out of his comfort zone. Others might argue that the words attributed to Jesus reflect "the ethnic, cultural, and socio-political hostility between Jews and their gentile neighbors" (Myers, 204) or the early Christians' struggle with the issue of the Gentiles' inclusion in God's people rather than on the historical Jesus. Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 1991), 183. Schüssler Fiorenza further contends that the woman's role was critical in making the early church move forward in its Gentile mission, but history remembers only male apostles like Paul and Peter in the expansion of Christianity. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 138.

animals and had a negative connotation.<sup>496</sup> Jesus seems to represent the Jewish *doxa* at this time. He toes the clear line that distinguishes the Self from the Other—Jews from Gentiles; the clean from the unclean; male from female; and so on.

Yet Jesus himself has been in contact with Gentiles and the sick, touching and healing and thus was definitely defiled. Moreover, he should have seen otherness in himself. As argued, Jesus, as a colonized subject, speaks the voice of the colonized and colonialists simultaneously.<sup>497</sup> Jesus as a colonized other encounters the woman, who is multiply oppressed, at the border of the territories—the liminal space in which their identities are negotiated. The tense encounter is going to bring about their mutual transformation. In this transformation, however, it is this Gentile woman who first clears the bars and boundaries of the social order.

Her reply to Jesus' ruthless words reveals her tactical subtlety again. She uses the master's language and manipulates it: "You, master, speak of us as dogs. Yes, we are dogs. Yet we will take an advantage from your saying." In both accounts in Matthew and

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<sup>496</sup> Cf. 1 Samuel 24:14; 2 Kings 8:13; Proverbs 26:11; Matthew 7:6; Luke 16:19-22. I do not regard as useful a distinction between dogs as scavengers implied in Jesus' words and "little dogs" like house-pets described in her sayings. Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 234. "Little dogs" ( $\tauὰ κυνάρια$ ) is still a derogative term even if it is presented as little dogs "under the table" ( $\underset{\text{ύποκάτω τῆς τραπέζης}$ ). Kinukawa thinks the woman's response to Jesus indicates cultural difference in attitudes toward dogs. For Jews like Jesus a dog is an unclean animal running outside, but for the woman dogs are domestic animals and thus to be a dog does not mean to be servile. Hisako Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark: A Japanese Feminist Perspective* (New York: Orbis, 1994), 58-59.

<sup>497</sup> Samuel, 85. Rather than seeing Jesus as a colonist who intends to occupy the Gentile territory with his gospel and tests the woman's faith, this position regards him as a colonized other who internalizes the colonial logic or displays the nationalist impulse.

Mark, the woman tactfully changes Jesus' harsh words and reverses her unfavorable situation, making it an opportunity.

Matthew 15:27 "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

Mark 7:28 "Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

However, there are differences. First, while in Matthew's story the Canaanite woman calls Jesus "Lord, Son of David" and worships him, and her daughter is healed by Jesus due to her "faith" (Matt. 15:22, 25, 28), the Syrophoenician woman is shown as calling Jesus "Lord" (*κύριε*). The term "*Kyrios*" is not necessarily confessional; it could simply mean "master" or "sir."<sup>498</sup> It is the same word as that used in the "master's table" in Matthew. So, when the Syrophoenician woman mentions "the table," it is the master's table. She calls him master, but not the Lord to be worshipped. Therefore, in Mark's version of the story, the term "sir" or "master" would be a more appropriate translation. For the Syrophoenician woman, "Son of David" is a designation of Jews; it is their faith. It is not her intention to occupy a Jewish position.

Further, the Markan version better illustrates the dog's place "under the table," focusing on the relationship of the dogs and the children rather than that between the dogs and the master. The Markan dogs do not get something to eat from the master; rather, they get something to eat which belongs to his children. Here the Greek word for dogs is in the diminutive form (*κυνάριον*).

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<sup>498</sup> Contra Tolbert, "Mark," *Women's Bible*, 269.

In addition, although the English translation does not show any difference, the Greek words for children that Jesus and the woman use in Mark are different. When Jesus says, “Let the children first be fed,” the plural form of τέκνον is used. However, when the woman mentions “children’s crumbs,” she replies with the word παιδίον. This word is used in the healing of Jairus’ daughter: “Jesus took the *child* by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha cumi*,” which means, “Little girl, get up” (Mark 5:41). This story ends with her revival and her eating. As if this Gentile woman had been a witness to what was going on in Jairus’ house, she points out that now is the time for the little dogs like her daughter to share such well-being. So, she might be taken as saying, “You already have fed your children with your bread. Is it then right for me (and the Gentiles) to take the leftovers, like the little dogs eating the children’s crumbs under the table?”

The ways she insinuates herself into the physical place and symbolic world of the other, a Jewish male teacher, and takes action to seek life display her tactic and embodied knowing. Just as the place into which she has intruded is not a right place for her, she knows that the master’s table is not the little dog’s place. It is not her desire to sit and eat with the master’s children. Yet, the dogs move around under the table, watching for opportunities to eat the children’s crumbs. Certeau’s illustration captures exactly what this woman’s tactical action exhibits.

It (tactic) must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. In short, a tactic is an art of the weak...a tactic bodily juxtaposes diverse elements in order suddenly to

produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place and to strike the hearer.<sup>499</sup>

The woman's verbal repartee—that is, *λόγος*—is acknowledged by Jesus. Finally, he has her go her way due to her “saying (*logos*),” not her faith.<sup>500</sup> She goes home and finds that the demon—the unclean spirit—has left her daughter and that she is thus clean. Yet, she disappears without a trace in both the subsequent narrative and history, remaining an unnamed Gentile woman. Perhaps she or her daughter might be possessed with unclean spirits again, because demons were in and out of people, particularly oppressed people, in those days. We can surmise that she and her daughter could not insist on their own place in the narrative world, but they might survive by making their space under the table of the power.

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<sup>499</sup> Certeau, *Practice*, 37-38.

<sup>500</sup> I will discuss in the next chapter the characteristics of *logos* represented in Mark. The *logos* is usually given to the mouths of males, but her *logos* strikes the hearer by displacing “the language of a place.”

## The Displaced Body

### *The Wandering Ochlos*<sup>501</sup>

The woman's tactic embodies what Mark means by understanding. Her encounter with Jesus is not just a singular event, but there is commonality as a future potential that she perceives and anticipates.<sup>502</sup> The argument between Jesus and the woman leads the reader to remember that it is not only Jairus' daughter whom Jesus fed first but that he

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<sup>501</sup> Ahn Byung-Mu (1922-1996), a New Testament scholar and minjung theologian, investigated the social characteristics of the *ochlos* (ὄχλος) in the Gospel of Mark. According to Ahn, Mark was the first New Testament writer using the term *ochlos*, as distinct from the term *laos*, used in the Septuagint. In Mark the *ochlos* include the poor, the sick, sinners, and tax collectors. These components of the *ochlos* who gather around Jesus are alienated from the political and religious ruling classes and outcasts from families and communities. Ahn argues that the *ochlos* is not merely a background audience for Jesus but rather the transmitter of the Jesus tradition. The Jesus event was transmitted by the *ochlos*-minjung using the story form of the minjung language, not by the institutionalized church. The minjung bear witness to the Jesus event itself, rather than conveying the *kerygma* or meaning of the events. Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, ed. Kim Yong Bock (Singapore: CTCCA, 1981), 150; "The Transmitters of the Jesus-Event," 26-39; Volkner Küster, "Jesus and the minjung Revisited: The Legacy of Ahn Byung-Mu (1922-1996)," *BI* 19 (2011): 1-18.

<sup>502</sup> Hardt and Negri provide a definition of the multitude as "singularities that act in common." The multitude is singularities in that it cannot be reduced to an identity or into unity. At the same time, the multitude entails commonality in that they pursue communication and collaboration in a common political project. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 105-106. I do not understand Mark's *ochlos* as the multitude that joins class struggles, as Hardt and Negri argue. Rather, I concur with Ahn Byung-Mu's argument that the *ochlos* neither have an established position in their society nor are members of an identifiable economic class. Also, Jesus neither provides a program for their movement nor makes the *ochlos* an object of his movement. Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and the Minjung," 142. However, I see the singularity of the woman among the minjung or the multitude and in the encounter between Jesus and her. Through this encounter, both Jesus and the woman recognize the reality of commonality in which different people (*ochlos*) join to experience the healing and restoration of life.

also fed the five thousand in the Jewish region (6:30-44). The word *χορτάζειν*, which is translated as “feed” or “fill” or “satisfy,” appears only four times in Mark.<sup>503</sup> The following are the passages in which the word is used.

6:42	7:27	8:4, 8
[Jesus feeds the five thousand.]  They all ate and were <b>satisfied</b> ( <b>fed</b> ).	“Let the children first be <b>fed</b> , for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”	[Jesus feeds the four thousand.] “How can one <b>feed</b> these men with bread here in the desert?”  They ate, and were <b>satisfied</b> ( <b>fed</b> ).

In 6:32-43, a large *ochlos* runs on foot from all the cities to see Jesus in the wilderness in a Jewish region. Verses 3:7-8 similarly report that a large *ochlos* came to him not only from Galilee, Jerusalem and Judea, but also Idumea as well as the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. This *ochlos* represents migrating people, whom Ahn Byung-Mu calls minjung. They are “the masses deprived of place where they belong.”<sup>504</sup> Those who came from different places with different ethnicities or faiths are

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<sup>503</sup> The disciples’ response to Jesus’ words on feeding the *ochlos* reflects its grounding on the dominant economic order of market scarcity (6:36). Ched Myers, however, argues that Jesus provides a vision of “abundance,” which is realized when they share available resources. This is the new economic and symbolic order of the community. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 442. Also, see Walter Brueggemann’s essay, “The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity,” *CC* 116, no. 10 (1999): 342-47.

<sup>504</sup> Kim Jin-Ho, “An Attempt at Ahn Byung-Mu Hermeneutics: Focusing on the Concepts of ‘Discovery of Internality’ and ‘Minjung Otherness’,” *Reading Minjung Theology in the Twenty-first Century: Selected Writings by Ahn Byung-Mu*, ed. Yung Suk Kim and Jin-Ho Kim (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013). Ahn states, “If Jesus was the *Wanderprediger*, they were the *Wanderochlos*.” Thus the minjung are wanderers. Ahn, “Jesus and the Minjung,” 142.

in need of Jesus' healing. Jesus heals them, as 3:10 reports: "He had cured many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him."<sup>505</sup>

In 7:24-30 Jesus argues with the Syrophenician woman that the displaced Jews form part of the *ochlos* to be fed. Yet, the anonymous Gentile woman asserts that non-Jews should be included in the *ochlos*. Jesus, who already fed the displaced Jews (6:33-36), can feed the displaced Gentiles. The woman appears to have an inkling that Jesus has already healed Gentiles and has just reversed the order of clean and unclean in the argument with the Pharisees and scribes. The woman's encounter with Jesus demonstrates singularity, but it also points to the commonality signified by the multiplication of bread given to the multitude.

This commonality is to be inclusive, given that the feeding of the four thousand takes place in a Gentile district (8:1, 2, 6). They are the displaced *ochlos* in the land of the Other. Jesus says in 8:3, "If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance." While "the way," ὁ ὁδός, has a connotation of discipleship, Jesus presupposes that he would send them home and is concerned that they could collapse on the way due to hunger.<sup>506</sup> Jesus is keenly aware of the reality of the displaced minjung and takes care of them.

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<sup>505</sup> This implies that in his Galilean ministry Jesus has already been defiled—defiled by these Gentiles and the sick.

<sup>506</sup> The reason "some of them have come a long distance" (*τινες αὐτῶν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἤκαστιν*) is to "seek an intimacy with Jesus," even perhaps to "become his follower," as the verb ἤκω implies. This desire for relationality is realized when Jesus provides food for them.

In short, the reader, like the woman, witnesses the presence of *ochlos*-minjung in Mark. They migrate from here to there—from Gentile territories to the land of Jews, and from place to place outside the Jewish territories. Jesus heals and feeds them, displaced Jews and Gentiles alike. The outcomes of both feedings are described in 6:42 and 8:8: “they ate and were fed.” As Ahn asserts, however, Jesus “passively” stands with the displaced minjung.<sup>507</sup> He is the one who feeds them. After the feedings, he dismisses the minjung (*ἀπολύει*, 6:45; *ἀπέλυσεν*, 8:9). After eating, they are again on the way, coming and going (6:31), and displaced.

I would further argue, however, that it is Jesus who is being fed to the *ochlos*. While Adela Yarbro Collins acknowledges that the feeding stories and the conversations between Jesus and the woman are associated by the metaphor of bread, I raise the possibility that the metaphor of bread also relates these stories of “feeding” to the Last Supper (cf. 14:22-25).<sup>508</sup> The language used in the feeding stories is similar to that in the Last Supper. In the feeding stories Jesus takes the loaves, blesses, breaks them, and gives them to the disciples to distribute them to the displaced. So also in the Last Supper he takes bread, blesses, breaks it, gives it to the disciples, saying, “This is my body.” Thus,

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<sup>507</sup> Myers comments that it is “passive” solidarity, since Jesus does not organize the minjung to agitate for revolution. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 440.

<sup>508</sup> Collins, *Mark*, 367. Ernest Best rejects the view of the feedings as symbolic of the Eucharist, in contrast to the evidence for such an interpretation in the earlier tradition and later in the Gospel of John. Instead, he asserts that food in Mark is “a regular and easily understood metaphor for teaching.” Jesus’ teaching is centered on “the passion and the discipleship which should issue from an understanding of it.” He connects the second feeding story with the Passion not in terms of the Eucharist but of the universal nature of salvation which the Passion story demonstrates. He states, “If Jesus is willing to heal Gentiles, then the church must bring to them the gospel of their redemption” (cf. 11:17; 12:9; 13:10; 15:38f.). Best, *Disciples and Discipleship*, 189, 192-93.

breaking and giving bread signifies the sharing of his own body for many (14:22; cf. 10:45). In this juxtaposition of the feeding of the displaced people and the sharing of his body in the Last Supper, the woman perceives and anticipates Jesus' body as being broken and shared with the *ochlos* and thereby giving life to it, regardless of gender, ethnicity, and religion.

### *Transcorporeality of the Body of Jesus*

In *The Cities of God*, Graham Ward argues that the body of Christ can transcend ethnic, gender, and socio-economic boundaries through the body displaced in his incarnation, transfiguration, eucharist, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.<sup>509</sup> The displacement of Jesus' body through these events made the body permeable, transcorporeal, and transpositional.<sup>510</sup> In this regard, the transcorporeality of Jesus' body is associated with transterritoriality, which corresponds to his trajectory as nomadic.

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<sup>509</sup> Graham Ward, *The Cities of God: Radical Orthodoxy* (London: Routledge, 2000), 83-116. Ward especially relates transcorporeality to the eucharistic body of Christ. While Certeau argues that Christianity was founded upon the loss of the body, Ward instead chooses the word "displacement." "Continually called to move beyond itself," Ward argues, "the transcorporeal body itself becomes eucharistic, because endlessly fractured and fed to others." For Ward, therefore, the body does not disappear but is displaced (92-93, 95).

<sup>510</sup> Here Ward's argument on the displacement of Jesus' body moves toward a christology which is relational and cosmological. I understand that the christological extension of Jesus' displaced body to the cosmological level results from the mixture of his readings of the Gospel of Mark and Ephesians.

Michael Nausner describes Jesus as a borderland person, who has dynamic relation to the land and “challenges the notion of a fixed or stable territory.”<sup>511</sup>

However, the disciples who have followed him on his journey—even the inner circle of Peter, James and John—do not understand Jesus’ life as nomadic. There is a temptation for them to claim a place for Jesus, as on the mountaintop where Jesus is transfigured in the glory of God. Thus, Peter says, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” (9:7). Despite God’s affirmation of Jesus as the beloved Son of God, Jesus does not stick to this identification, with which he could strive for a place of his own from where he could rule over people. Instead, he comes down from the highest place—figuratively and metaphorically—and keeps going on his journey to others, and the ultimate other, that is, death. Even after death on the cross, he does not take any place. This is why Mark ends with the story of the empty tomb. Matthew tells a story in which the resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples and says to them that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him, ordering them to go and make disciples of all nations. Luke and Acts describe Jesus as ascended into heaven after his resurrection and appearance. At the end of Mark, however, Jesus’ body disappears. He has nowhere to lay his body (cf. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58).

While the body of Jesus can be viewed as displaced throughout his life, death, resurrection, and post-resurrection, I argue that his healing and feeding especially make

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<sup>511</sup> The nomad may be thought to be non-territorial, but it means inhabiting an open space and hence territorial. Michael Nausner, “Homeland as Borderland: Territories of Christian Subjectivity,” *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller, et al. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 129.

his body fluid. When his body is touched by the defiled, the boundaries of bodies are transgressed. When the body is consumed like bread and its crumbs by the displaced, it is transferred into life. This is the mystery, which is given to the disciples. Just as the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod is depicted as contagious in Mark's narrative (8:15), so does this mystery embodied in Jesus operate at the boundaries of bodies and across territories.

The disciples are expected to "know" the mystery, because "the mystery of the kingdom of God" has been given to them (4:11). It means that Jesus' body is displaced but still present, granting life to the *ochlos*. The disciples are those who understand and embody the mystery—the permeability of Jesus' body and his nomadic trajectory across territories. Discipleship as "following" Jesus on the way does not seem to apply to the Syrophenician woman, because, after the healing, she does not follow the way of Jesus but fades away. However, she perceives and participates in the life-giving event that occurred through the body of Jesus. This she does not by touching but through her *logos*, which brings about the healing of her daughter—the daughter eats the crumbs of bread, the body of Jesus. Furthermore, the woman and her daughter embody his nomadic trajectory as well as the mystery of the body.

I want to stress two significant spatial notions in understanding the transcorporeality of the body: the border in which Jesus and the woman encounter one another; and the transterritoriality that the displaced *ochlos* and the displaced body of Jesus demonstrate. First I elucidate the meaning of the border as a space of encounter, negotiation, and transformation. I will deal with displacement on the plane of transnationality in the next section.

As I have argued, I have read the text from the viewpoint of the border, rather than as affirming the inclusion of Gentiles into Christianity or justifying a Christian mission to the Gentiles. The margin is not a dead end, but a space where the other also belongs. Certeau describes the frontier as “two bodies in contact”:

This is a paradox of the frontier: created by contacts, the points of differentiation between two bodies are also their common points. Conjunction and disjunction are inseparable in them. Of two bodies in contact, which one possesses the frontier that distinguishes them? Neither. Does that amount to saying: no one? The theoretical and practical problem of the frontier: to whom does it belong? ... The frontier functions as a third element. It is an “in-between”—a “space between.”<sup>512</sup>

Thus, boundaries emerge as privileged fields of encounter, where differences and commonalities are continuously negotiated.<sup>513</sup> Nausner suggests the more modest notion of “negotiating at” boundaries rather than “transcending” boundaries because the language of transcending could have colonial implications.<sup>514</sup>

Considering the border this way provides a different picture of the encounter between Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman. At the border of Tyre, which is also the border of Galilee, Jesus and the anonymous Gentile woman have a cultural contact.

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<sup>512</sup> Certeau, *Practice*, 127. Depicting stories as spatial trajectories embedded in everyday practice, particularly everyday tactic, Certeau discusses spatial notions such as space and place, map and tour, and boundary and frontier (115-30).

<sup>513</sup> Nausner, “Homeland,” 122. While Ward highlights the displaced body of the Christ and its implications for Christian embodiment, Nausner focuses on the construction of Christian subjectivity as negotiating at boundaries. However, Ward and Nausner actually develop similar arguments of the fluidity of Christ’s body or Christian embodiment.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid., 131.

Despite the power dynamics involved in the characterization of Jesus as a colonized “other” who internalizes the colonist posture, the relationship between Jesus and the woman is not one-directional, like that of master and servant or of the savior and the saved. Hyunju Bae explains this transformative event in terms of a “creative relationship”:

Jesus emerges as a figure of relationality who does not impose himself, nor flee from the difficulty of negotiating with the other as well as the “pain of breaking.”... Jesus is cast as “the open-minded listener” who accepts the other’s criticism of his ethnocentrism and prejudice, which taints his own vision, and allows himself to be transformed by the other’s challenge.<sup>515</sup>

The border is a creative space where the self and the other are encountered and where transformation can occur.<sup>516</sup> While the lives of the woman and her daughter, which have been under confinement due to defilement and illness, are transformed into life and

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<sup>515</sup> Hyun Ju Bae, “Dancing around Life: An Asian Woman’s Perspective,” *ER* 56 (2004): 390-403, 401.

<sup>516</sup> Kinukawa argues that such mutual transformation is brought about when Jesus is defiled. She reads this story from the context of Koreans living in Japan as “inside others” and suffering from Japan’s racial exclusivism. For a long time, those Koreans had to conceal their identity by using Japanese names, because of severe discrimination by the Japanese based on the myth of a single-race nation with pure blood. This religious concept of blood purity leads Kinukawa to place the story of the woman within the discussion of cultic purity and social separation in the cross-racial community in Mark. According to her, the woman challenges the exclusive ethnic zones existing around Christian communities at the time of Mark by making Jesus cross the racial barrier between Jews and Gentiles. Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus*, 60, 62-65. Donaldson asserts that the boundary-crossing of Jesus was possible because of his defilement: Jesus not only crossed the border and went into the most despised, unclean territory, but also was defiled by the woman, and more exactly, by her daughter who is possessed by an unclean spirit. Donaldson, “Gospel Haunting,” 100.

liberation, Jesus moves beyond Jewish *doxa* and across various boundaries toward the restoration of life of all othered and displaced people. He is neither a colonist nor a nationalist. His body is not confined to being a gendered Jew.<sup>517</sup> After the encounter with the woman, the mother of a “little dog,” Jesus traverses the border, not to occupy or dominate the other’s land for his mission but to continue to do his life-giving ministry for the colonized others—other others on his side. His movement is tactical, like the woman’s posture and path. To conclude, when one discerns the potentiality of the border as the space of territorial, cultural, and bodily contacts between people in transterritorial and transnational flux, the force of their movement and the agency of their bodies come into view.

### Transnational Appropriation

#### *Transnational Trajectory of the Body*

Globalization sought to remove barriers to free trade and to integrate national economies. It opened paths for people to move from the peripheries to the centers with their resources and capital—their money, labor, and ideas.<sup>518</sup> Darren Marks points out that globalization creates an abstract space in which globalized agents such as legal or

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<sup>517</sup> Ward, *Cities of God*, 102.

<sup>518</sup> If we were to distinguish transnationalism from globalization, the former might be seen as placing more emphasis on human activities and social institutions that extend across national boundaries. However, I use these related terms interchangeably, since I see both material and discursive forces imposed together upon mobile subjects.

economic governance bodies are everywhere and nowhere at the same time.<sup>519</sup> This is shown in the case of any trade organization, which has “headquarters” but is also enacted in all its locations. In addition, as the old nation-states did, these multinational corporations treat all peoples and places as the same.<sup>520</sup> Thus, global capitalism is another form of imperial domination.

Yet, some scholars like Arjun Appadurai pay attention to the cultural dimensions of globalization rather than its economic reality. Globalization causes not only exchanges in goods, products, and capital across geopolitical terrains through multinational corporations but also movements of information, knowledge and culture.<sup>521</sup> These global cultural flows create a variety of landscapes, of which the ethnoscapes—the landscapes of persons—are most essential.<sup>522</sup> Navigating agents—such as tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest-workers, and other groups and persons—transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities in increasing numbers.<sup>523</sup> These migrating people

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<sup>519</sup> Darren C. Marks, “Living in a Global World and in a Global Theological World,” in *Shaping a Global Theological Mind*, ed. Darren C. Marks (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 1.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>521</sup> Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, eds., *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 7-8.

<sup>522</sup> According to Appadurai, these global cultural flows create a variety of landscapes such as ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes. These phenomena of shifting landscapes can be viewed in terms of “deterritorialization” as cultural dynamic. Deterritorialization is related not only directly to transnational corporations and money markets but also to ethnic groups, sectarian movements, and political formations. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 49.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., 3.

invent their homelands while changing their group loyalties.<sup>524</sup> Thus, the landscapes of group identity are no longer bound to certain territorial locations. Cutting across conventional political and social boundaries results in the mobilization of differences.<sup>525</sup>

Appadurai's theory of cultural globalization is useful in understanding transnationalism not only as accelerated by impersonal forces but also as involving human phenomena as well.<sup>526</sup> Also, while global economic forces promote sameness, the landscapes of *ethne* created by the fluctuation of people highlight differences. However, as mobile subjects and non-mobile subjects do not gain equal advantage from global cultural flows, there exists a class stratification linked to global systems of production.<sup>527</sup> As Aihaw Ong argues, the imagination as social practice cannot be viewed as "independent of national, transnational, and political-economic structures that enable, channel, and control the flows of people, things, and ideas."<sup>528</sup> Therefore, it is necessary

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<sup>524</sup> Mass migration, along with electronic mediation, promotes the imagination of people and thus the invention of homelands. Accordingly, tensions occur between the irregular and fluid shapes of population flows and communities of imagination. Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 10-11.

<sup>525</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 3.

<sup>526</sup> David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung distinguish transnationalism as impersonal forces from diaspora as the fundamentally human phenomenon. Thus, they find the latter useful in discussing the concept of religion and spirituality in Korean America. David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, eds., *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 8-9. Cf. Kandice Chuh and Karen Shimakawa, eds., *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University, 2001).

<sup>527</sup> Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, 10-12.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid., 11.

to consider these mobile subjects within the existing power structures, not as essentialized diasporic subjects.

The political economic structure, fortified by “globalization from above,” causes impoverishment, mass migration, urban and rural displacement, violence, and media manipulation.<sup>529</sup> Human bodies are treated as a means for profit and as devoid of inherent dignity or sacredness. Considering this material reality, the initiatives of “globalization from below,” as the counterpart of “globalization from above,” demand solidarity in people’s movements, organizations, and citizen associations—a solidarity which is extended to a global scale.<sup>530</sup> Yet, one may see the homogenization of people in this “globalization from below.” Paradoxically, what causes such global networks of solidarity and mutual empowerment is human vulnerability. What inspires life in the material and discursive reality of global forces is the possibility that vulnerable bodies unceasingly encounter the Other across territories, not that they forge themselves into a discrete body of people or occupy their own territories.

It is into this space that I bring insights from my project of *phronesis*, highlighting the significance of the body and its encounter with the Other in the midst of movements of people. Such movements across national borders can be viewed from various perspectives. An ideological stance would discern spirituality at work in the material and discursive conditions of such movements and, in turn, perceive postcoloniality embedded in such spirituality. This spirituality, which constitutes a significant part of the agency of

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<sup>529</sup> Wanda Deifelt, “Globalization, Religion and Embodiment: Latin American Feminist Perspectives,” in *Shaping a Global Theological Mind*, ed. Darren C. Marks (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 42.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid., 48.

displaced bodies both in the ancient and in the modern world, is mostly out of sight of globalization, whether such globalization be politico-economic, cultural, or even “from below.”

In her article titled “A Transnational Approach to Religion,” Kwok Pui-lan highlights a different religious landscape emerging beyond the North Atlantic by pointing out popular religiosity in East and South Asia and anticipating a feature of Global Christianity in Africa and Latin America.<sup>531</sup> Kwok argues, “Globalization has brought about disruptions and disjunctions, but it also provides impetus for developing new religious forms and for renegotiating identities in a world in flux.”

While concurring with her approach to religion as closely related to “the larger forces of political economy, cultural changes, and impacts of globalization,” I would prefer to use the term spirituality rather than religion, since in this new landscape sometimes religion functions as fortifying national identity while at other times religious fundamentalism resurges as a counter-hegemonic formation in another part of the globe. Yet, the displacement and migration of people embody spirituality when these bodies encounter the Other and are themselves othered in the midst of such fluctuation. This encounter among the displaced is perceived as a space where mystery operates.

In these migration and border encounters, one does not have to be anxious due to differences. No one is coerced to be the same. Relationality does not remove differentiation. The margin is not a place that is occupied by only the side that has more

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<sup>531</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, “A Transnational Approach to Religion,” *Patheos* (09/06/10), <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/Transnational-Approach-to-Religion?offset=0&max=1>.

power; rather, it is a space where both sides, and even strangers from the outside, can be vulnerable and open to the other and negotiate their identities, needs, and desires. The mystery of Jesus' broken, shared, and disappearing body does not hinder dialogue with those displaced or marginalized others, but rather promotes sharing common goods and working together for the liberation of the oppressed and the peace and wellbeing of all humanity.

### *Agency of Nomadic Subject*

Interpreting Mark 7:24-30 with special attention to Jesus' transcorporeality and transterritoriality throws light upon the phenomenon of movements of peoples across borders in the present transnational setting. Although transnationalism as a modern concept cannot be directly applied to the ancient world of the Gospel, a postcolonial reading of the text helps the reader perceive the transhistorical and crosscultural reality in which colonial or postcolonial subjects encounter the Other within the empire. This reading arises from a twofold context: the context in which I find myself, joining in the flow of migrating people forced out of their homes, communities, and countries; and the context of engaging the singularity of the woman, her voice, and her contact at the border.

Although my context appears to be one of voluntary displacement, global forces have taken me into the confluence of displaced people, as my social location moved from South Korea to the U.S. This has caused me to experience what it is to be the Other. I had never conceived of my whole personality—the Self—in terms of race before I decided to live temporarily as a foreigner in the U.S. This is not an individual experience, but a

collective one, because “minority individuals are always treated and forced to experience themselves generically.”<sup>532</sup> Hence, I obtained a new group identity—an Asian woman. I lost my real name, like the Greek, Syrophoenician woman. Since I brought some capital with me, I, as an outsider, earned membership in the American academy. However, I am not pure enough to be an insider in this western guild; instead, the pressure for “exotic purity” is overwhelming. As Liew argues, Asian and Asian American biblical scholars risk creating a self-exoticizing enclave within the academy.<sup>533</sup>

What does it mean that I read the story of the Syrophoenician and Jesus in this context? What do Jews and Gentiles, the border and the empire, have to do with me as an Asian biblical woman scholar in the U.S.? As I keep listening to the Syrophoenician woman, I find her voice embodied in me. I do not find my own place in this tradition, no, nor do I advocate my own place. The universe is centered on the western. “The table” is a symbol of hegemony. The master’s table is the western regime in the academic tradition. I cannot win against universal power. However, I should survive, not returning home and not creating a new regime. I cannot bleach the color from my body. It is enough that the cry already has been inscribed in my body. When the laws of male lordship, racist dominion, religious hegemony, and language mastery are engraved on my body, it cries. Is this cry too frail? Is this woman’s self-designation of “dog” servile? I say it is not.

In the construction of sameness and otherness, power relations are exercised, since the self is formed, reformed, and transformed by defining who the other is, in other

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<sup>532</sup> Vincent B. Leitch, *Cultural Criticism, Literary Theory, Poststructuralism* (New York and Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1992), 93.

<sup>533</sup> Tat-siong Benny Liew, “Reading with Yin Yang Eyes: Negotiating the Ideological Dilemma of a Chinese American Biblical Hermeneutics,” *BI* 9, no. 3 (2001), 315.

words, by delimiting who is included or excluded. People ask around the table: “Do you want a seat at the table? Do you want your own table? Do you want to change the main table?”<sup>534</sup> Upon reading the story of the Syrophoenician woman, the tactic of minorities, performed at borders that the marginalized come across, is to eat the children’s crumbs. There is resistance. There is hope. Taking the master’s table is not the dream of the marginalized. They do not and will not have their own table. Rather, they use the table with a double-tradition and a double-consciousness.<sup>535</sup> Ultimately, they want to share the table with all the Selfs and all the Others.

Joining in her vision, in which she anticipates the burgeoning of the Jesus movement across bodily and territorial boundaries, my relationship with the Jesus at the border, which is singular, is also transformed. Jesus is no longer the master or the oppressor. He is liberated and a liberator, whose body is broken and shared with the transnational minjung and whose trajectory is nomadic; the body freely touches the displaced. Being haunted by the mystery, therefore, I catch sight of socially fragmented

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<sup>534</sup> These are real questions raised in a colleague’s hermeneutics class that had racial minorities as well as whites as members. They also remind us of Kwok’s questions, which I have already cited: “Should we treat the Other as the same, include the Other in the same, or displace the same with the Other?” Kwok, *Discovering the Bible*, 77. I acknowledge that there are many additional others, not only in terms of race, ethnicity, and nationality, but also in terms of gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, age, and class.

<sup>535</sup> Wan argues that, unlike Jewish Americans or Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans do not possess a homogeneous tradition, but multiple traditions. Since the Bible is received through the refraction of a multiplicity of circumstances and contexts in the Asian American experience, all these traditions play equally constitutive roles. In other words, tradition as a hermeneutical category is an inherently unstable and ambiguous concept for Asian American biblical scholars. Sze-Kar Wan, “Betwixt and Between: Towards a Hermeneutics of Hyphenation,” in *Ways of Being, Ways of Reading: Asian-American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Mary F. Foskett and Jeffrey K. Kuan (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006), 137-51.

and transnationally displaced *minjung*, those deprived of human dignity and rights, and their bodies, which are affected, targeted, and exploited by global economic forces and imperial power.

Furthermore, such a border experience changes the understanding of discipleship. Mark shows that knowing or even confessing that Jesus is Son of God is not the notion of discipleship. Insiders are those who are touched by the mystery and embody it. Discipleship means to conform to his nomadic life. The encounter of mystery and the subsequent transformation may happen in unexpected places, like the border between the colonized lands of Tyre and Galilee. Disciples may be those whom people do not think that they are disciples, such as the anonymous foreign woman.

This woman, according to Bae, embodies the qualities of awakening or “inner freedom” and active receptivity, which represent the Asian anthropological ideal of personhood. While her inner freedom does “not allow anyone outside to rule her inwardly” but instead pursues the sustaining of life, her receptivity is the practiced wisdom of responding “in a clear vision of reality.”<sup>536</sup> Her knowing is comprised of attentiveness, embodiment, and relationality.<sup>537</sup> She knows what is going on around the

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid., 398-99. This is what Bae call a “hermeneutics of compassion in detachment.” Ordinary Asian women live extraordinary lives in stormy history. They live their life as active agents who transform curse into blessing and metamorphose stone into bread. Furthermore, such receptivity and relationality are fundamental for the people of Asia, who live the everyday reality of religious pluralism (402).

<sup>537</sup> See also the case of the hemorrhaging woman, who approaches Jesus speaking only in her mind (5:28). Although her voice, which speaks the whole truth after healing, is not heard in the narrative, she has known the truth in her body. The mystery of his body is passed on to her body. In silence, the boundaries between genders and between purity and pollution are broken. In the next chapter I will discuss more about these qualities of embodiment, particularly found in Asian and Asian American women’s experience.

world, how life is given and nourished against the power of death. This is *phronesis*—embodied wisdom. The discipleship of *phronesis* takes place in the border encounter—“the encounter of two human beings who meet with bare face for the sake of life and human dignity.”<sup>538</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has reread the story of the Syrophoenician woman focusing on the encounter of colonial subjects at the border. While a majority of scholars interpret the passage from ecclesiocentric and missiological perspectives, a postcolonial reading regards both Jesus and the woman as colonized others living in imperial colonies. At the border, the *doxa* held by Jesus as a Jewish male and his double vision as colonized and colonist are transformed by the woman’s embodied tactic and *phronesis*. Experiencing the transformation of alienation and death into solidarity and life, the woman envisions this Jesus event as flourishing across bodies and territories.

As she declares, the body is touched by the displaced *ochlos* and thereby transposed. That body is displaced to the extent that it is consumed by others and, in the end, is absent. However, the abject and fluid body of Jesus resists the empire’s control of bodies as well as the manifestation and territorial expansion of the empire. The body of the mystery neither advocates any fixed identification nor occupies any territory, but moves around and restores the marginalized, eluding the vigilant empire. Accordingly, religious institutions, nation-states, and transnational entities are not aware of this

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<sup>538</sup> Bae, “Dancing around Life,” 403.

presence and the work of the mystery, because the mystery intervenes while withdrawing, hiding, and disappearing. In contrast, displaced people perceive the reality recreated by the broken and absent body and recover their agency employing tactics. The elusive nature of the mystery, which is present but not easily perceived, allows the permeability of not only Christian embodiment but also its social boundaries. The disciples of Jesus, who discern the movement of the mystery, continue the work of Jesus by participating in the life-giving events at borders and following his nomadic life.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PASSIVE BODY (Mark 7:31-37)

#### Introduction

This chapter explores how the deaf and mute man in Mark 7:31-37 is represented in relationship to Jesus and in the context of the Empire. The attention of the interpreters has centered primarily on Jesus and his miraculous healing rather than the man. While in 7:24-30 the *logos* of the Greek woman (Ελληνίς) resulted in contact on the part of Jesus with people in the Other's territory, which redounded to their benefit, the man in this story presents total silence and passivity. Because of such characteristics, the man easily disappears from the reader's awareness. He is not in plain sight. There are only a few things that the reader knows about him from the text. He lives somewhere on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, near the Decapolis (7:31). He is deaf and has an impediment in his speech (*κωφὸν καὶ μογιλάλον*, v. 32). Some people brought the man to Jesus; Jesus acts; and the man was healed. Nothing the man does is reported. Can the only thing we learn from this text be that Jesus conducted a medical or magical practice prevalent in the ancient Mediterranean world in order to heal the deaf and dumb man? In contrast to such a reading, I am concerned with the man's physical condition as represented by both the metaphor of the shackle of his tongue (*ὁ δεσμὸς τῆς γλώσσης αὐτοῦ*) and Jesus'

engagement with the man as neither magical nor coercive healing but as a transcorporeal and intersubjective event.<sup>539</sup>

In Mark's Gospel the reader frequently encounters linguistic others, such as those who are mute and silent as well as those who cry out and vociferate. The society views these subjects as unclean, feminine, or irrational. In turn, their abnormality indicates what is normal in the societal order. However, the deaf and mute man, who is portrayed as completely passive, resists the distinction between normal and abnormal by speaking "rightly" ( $\delta\rho\theta\omega\varsigma$ ) without any words.<sup>540</sup> One might say that discipleship is to know and proclaim who Jesus is and what he has done. Not for everyone, however. Although the passive and silent man does not meet this definition of discipleship, he is one of those who experiences the mystery of Jesus' body and "understands."

My interpretation of the unit will proceed as follows: First, I will discuss how language is involved in the construction of the Self and the Other in imperial(istic) logic. Based on historical, anthropological and ideological considerations, I will examine the political implications of abnormal speech acts and how the image of the shackle operates in Mark. Then, I will further explore themes of speech/preaching and silence utilizing the categories of sexuality and gender. Furthermore, I will describe Jesus' healing of the man as a somatic engagement that generates intersubjectivity and understanding. Lastly, I will

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<sup>539</sup> While many Western scholars explain this healing of Jesus in terms of the Greco-Roman context, where such magical or medical practices were widespread, a postcolonial perspective on Jesus' healing might argue that Mark's Jesus is presented as domesticating and coercively curing indigenous peoples. See Chapter 4, the second part of its third section, and the fourth section of this chapter.

<sup>540</sup> This Greek adverb implies action "in conformity with a norm or standard." BDAG, 722. Thus, it can be translated as "rightly," "correctly," or "normally," though most English translations have "plain(ly)."

reread the story in light of Asian Americans' experience regarding language, body, and (inter)subjectivity. This rereading of the unit will assist in listening to the silenced voices and invisible presences at the margin of society as well as in the text.

## Empire and Language

### *Empire and Linguistic Others*

Mark describes the event as occurring after Jesus had healed the Syrophenician woman's daughter at the border with Tyre. Then, he proceeds from the region of Tyre (*ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὁρίων Τύρου*), by way of Sidon, to the east side of the Sea of Galilee (*διὰ Σιδῶνος εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας*), through the region of the Decapolis (*ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ὁρίων Δεκαπόλεως*, 7:31). Some scholars argue that the route that Mark describes may be geographically nonsensical.<sup>541</sup> Malbon maintains, however, that the “foreignness” of

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<sup>541</sup> Sidon is located to the north of Tyre, and the region of the Decapolis lies east and south of the Sea of Galilee, but Jesus seems to move from Tyre to the Sea through Sidon and the region of the Decapolis. Donahue and Harrington argue that Mark depicts Jesus as compassing the whole of the southern Phoenician territory. John Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 239. Collins also stresses that the itinerary was deliberately “made roundabout,” presuming Syria-Palestine as the origin of the Gospel or the spread of the Jesus-movement in those regions. However, she further claims that the healing of the deaf man occurs in “a primarily Jewish region.” She seems to argue so because the place where Jesus finally arrives is the Sea of Galilee. Yet, since the location is the east side of the Sea, there is no reason to argue that this district is a “primarily Jewish” region. Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 369. Her argument on behalf of the region as Jewish may have affinity with Lohmeyer’s view of Galilee in Mark’s time. According to Lohmeyer, the separate regions of the Decapolis and the Galilee were the united home of the Jewish-Christian community. Thus, ““Galilee’ is not to be taken strictly as the west area of the Sea, but as including the territory around the Sea.” Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus: Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), 99; Willi Marxsen, *Mark*

the cities and areas is more significant in Mark than the precision of the actual locations.<sup>542</sup>

Jesus' entry into foreign territories may be viewed as an act intended to cross the boundary between Jews and Gentiles, so that the kingdom of God is expanded to and incorporated by the Gentiles. Yet, such an interpretation does not fully account for the Roman Empire and its imposition on the colonies of Palestine and adjacent regions, which surpasses the presence of any other power dynamics among the colonies themselves. On the other hand, Marxsen emphasizes that the event in this story takes place “in (*ἀνὰ μέσον*) the Decapolis, which at least still *borders* on the Galilean Sea.”<sup>543</sup> I argued in the previous chapter that a border is a place in which identities are negotiated. Thus, our passage is not just the story of Jesus healing a Gentile man but describes another border-encounter between the colonized, who share complex histories of peoples and lands in the empire.

I have already discussed that Mark describes Jesus as a colonized other, who internalized the colonial logic. After the encounter with the Syrophoenician woman, however, he was transformed and traversed the border. Our story, therefore, describes how this transformation and traversing of the border is specifically manifested. In other

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*the Evangelist: Studies on Redaction History of the Gospel*, ed. J. Boyce (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 67.

<sup>542</sup> Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 41.

<sup>543</sup> Marxsen, *Mark*, 70. Italics mine. However, for Marxsen, this connection with Galilee points to Mark's combining of traditions (of Gentile territories) and his redaction (on Galilee) rather than to a geopolitical notion of the border between Gentile territories and Galilee.

words, it demonstrates how Jesus continues his life-giving work for other colonized others.

On the other hand, we need to explore the context in which the deaf and mute man is located and how his identity is constructed. While it is difficult to establish an exact list of the ten cities of Decapolis, those Greek cities can nonetheless be considered in terms of the Roman imperial context as well as their relationship with the Jews. Since Macedonians and other Greeks occupied the region of Jordan, these Hellenistic cities had constrained relationships with Jews to the west. For example, the Jewish King Alexander Janneus waged war on the Decapolis several times, imposing Jewish customs and annihilating Hellenistic culture. The Roman intervention led by Pompey in 64 and 63 B.C.E. put an end to the troubles of the Decapolis cities. The cities were incorporated into the common law of the Roman province, although they remained Greek cities not only in origin and institutions but also in culture.<sup>544</sup>

As argued earlier, this element of Greekness was part of the Roman imperial identity. The Roman Empire sought to form a trans-imperial identity based on Greek *paideia* (education) as well as Roman *humanitas* (culture or civilization). To reiterate, the Empire executed its local control over Greek cities by providing a new cultural identity for the trans-empire community of the elite. Thus, *paideia* required the elites in Greek cities, as well as those in the center of the empire, to have an excellent command of Attic Greek and be equipped with rhetorical and literary forms and techniques, along with

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<sup>544</sup> Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, “Decapolis,” trans. Stephen Rosoff, *ABD*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 116-21.

other classical knowledge.<sup>545</sup> Accordingly, the non-elites' lack of education, culture, and language signified their inferiority and cultural otherness.

In this Roman imperial context, the deaf and mute man is a marginalized subject in a colonized land. His deafness and muteness means the deficiency of language, which functions as a cultural capital. A further examination of the imperial-colonial construction of peoples' identities through language highlights this man's status as a linguistic other.

The notion of "barbarian" is an example of how language, along with other cultural elements, constitutes otherness. When Herodotus writes, "βαρβάρους δὲ πάντας οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι καλέουσι τοὺς μὴ σφίσι ὁμογλώσσους" ("The Egyptians call all barbarians those who have not the same language with themselves"), he assumes that "other peoples see all peoples other than themselves as barbarians."<sup>546</sup> Virgil says in the *Aeneid*, "Defeated barbarians are as different in language and appearance as in costumes and arms."<sup>547</sup> While obviously language is just one indication of status as a barbarian,<sup>548</sup> it is an

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<sup>545</sup> In this construction of cultural identities, therefore, the polarity was not based on the distinction between elite Greeks and elite Romans, who shared privilege in terms of status and culture, but between elites and non-elites in their own cities. Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (London; New York: Loutledge, 2009), 19, 21. To the Romans, Alföldy argues, even those who resided in the eastern part of the empire and spoke Greek were others. See the previous chapter, n. 465.

<sup>546</sup> Herodotus, 2. 158, quoted from Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 263.

<sup>547</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8.722-23.

<sup>548</sup> According to Isaac, the Other in antiquity includes women, slaves, children, the elderly, or disfigured people. Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 4.

essential element in otherizing people.<sup>549</sup> Patrick Geary argues that the term “barbarian” was “an invention of the Graeco-Roman world, projected onto a whole spectrum of peoples living beyond the frontier of the empire....”<sup>550</sup> Rome’s system of territorialization and classification substantiated the barbarian identity of peoples, allowing history to them only when they came into contact with the civilized world.

Another example of the relationship between language and identity/body construction is found in the rhetorical practice through which the empire constructed the masculine self. Roman rhetoric searched for “the symbolic implications of the very virile authority that is everywhere presumed in Roman life.”<sup>551</sup> What Roman rhetorical theorists were concerned about is “a potential collapse into illegitimate effeminacy.”<sup>552</sup> It

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<sup>549</sup> This tendency can be also found in 1 Corinthians 14:11 and its English rendition. Paul says, “If then I do not know the meaning of the sound, I will be a foreigner ( $\beta\acute{α}\rho\beta\alpha\rho\varsigma$ ) to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner ( $\beta\acute{α}\rho\beta\alpha\rho\varsigma$ ) to me” (NRSV).

<sup>550</sup> Patrick Geary, “Barbarians and Ethnicity,” in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, ed. G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 107, cited in Elizabeth Bartman, “Ethnicity in Roman Portrait,” in *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Erich S. Gruen (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 229.

<sup>551</sup> Erik Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 18. Quintilian asserts, “... today a rather more violent form of delivery has come into fashion and is demanded of our orators: it is well adapted to certain portions of a speech, but requires to be kept under control. Otherwise, in our attempt to ape the elegances of the stage, we shall lose the authority which should characterise the man of dignity and virtue.” *Inst. Orat.*, 11.3.184, *Quintilian IV*, The Loeb Classical Library, ed. H. E. Butler (London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1922), 349.

<sup>552</sup> Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity*, 62. For example, Quintilian contends, “The orator needs a strong (*forti*) and enduring voice rather than one which is soft and sweet” (11.3.23). The orator’s *fortis* voice represents virility, manliness, and penetration, whereas *phonascius* has a soft and tender voice that signifies effeminacy. Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity*, 81-82, 133. Because of the threat of effeminacy, castration must be refrained.

is striking to see how this dominant rhetorical practice constructed the body—the masculine body—and secured the social status of those privileged men by excluding others: “... physical robustness is essential to save the voice from dwindling to the feeble shrillness that characterizes the voice of eunuchs, women and invalids.”<sup>553</sup> This is only an example of how the dominant language practice constructed the body, controlled sexuality, and created pathology. Moreover, this masculine linguistic self is represented in terms of territory: “... the good man in his charmed circle [‘the man of city’] is also always a man on the attack, actively protecting his exclusive territory.”<sup>554</sup>

While Rome created “barbarians” outside of the Roman territory to defend the imperial identity, the Roman rhetorical tradition “aspires to the condition of the law of the symbolic” by constructing masculinity at the center of the empire.<sup>555</sup> I turn now to the symbolic system, which represses certain linguistic subjects.

### *The Other in the Symbolic System*

In the similar way that the Roman Empire built its self-identity, Jews developed the code of holiness to preserve social order and national identity.<sup>556</sup> This system of classification based on cultural values such as purity and defilement is a process of

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<sup>553</sup> *Inst. Orat.*, 11.3.19. Quintilian explains, therefore, how the orator should maintain his sound voice because, for instance, the unsound throat, like the “cracked” instrument, produces the “broken” voice (11.3.20).

<sup>554</sup> Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity*, 83.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>556</sup> David Rhoads, “Social Criticism,” in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 157.

making the Self. The Self is secured by creating the Other and by establishing boundaries between the Self and the Other. The unclean sustains the clean. Honor makes sense only when shame exists. I argue that such a classification system also applies to language practice.<sup>557</sup> If holiness presupposes wholeness and set-apartness, as Mary Douglas suggests, the lack of wholeness in speech—as indicated by convulsed crying, dumbness (*ἀλαλος*, 7:37) and by impaired speech (*μογιλάλος*, or hollow speaking *μογγιλάλος*, v. 32)—is uncleanness or pollution.<sup>558</sup> Using a foreign language defiles the set-apartness of the ethnic or national identity.

A modern appropriation of the relationship between defilement and language is found in Julia Kristeva's work on "abjection."<sup>559</sup> Kristeva argues that filth causes abjection not because of its uncleanness but because it disturbs identity, system, and order.<sup>560</sup> She acknowledges Mary Douglas' contribution to relating secular filth to sacred defilement by highlighting that the self of each social group, which is clean, is established when the "simple logic of excluding filth" is promoted to "the ritual level of defilement."<sup>561</sup> Yet, Kristeva goes further in developing the idea of defilement in relation

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<sup>557</sup> The Mishnah often groups deaf-mutes with "imbeciles and minors." This reflects the humiliating social position of deaf-mutes among ordinary people in the ancient Mediterranean world. Menahoth, 9.8; Hullin, 1.1; Rosh Hashanah, 3.8. Quoted in Wendy Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 243-45.

<sup>558</sup> In Mark 9:25, therefore, the "dumb and deaf spirit" is depicted as the "unclean spirit" (*τὰ πνυμεύμα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα*).

<sup>559</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

<sup>560</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid., 65.

to the “symbolic system.” She states, “Defilement is what is jettisoned from the ‘symbolic system.’ It is what escapes that social rationality, that logical order on which a social aggregate is based, which... constitutes a *classification system* or a *structure*.<sup>562</sup>

While Mary Douglas discusses the symbolic system in terms of religious restrictions as reflecting social divisions or contradictions, Kristeva, based on Levi-Strauss’ structural anthropology, sees a society’s symbolic system as related to the order of language as a common and universal code.<sup>563</sup> For Kristeva, language is crucial to the determination of subjectivity.<sup>564</sup> While the Symbolic is associated with authority, order, fathers, repression, and control, with the conscious and the surface of language, the “semiotic” as a different subjective structure can still exist within the symbolic order.<sup>565</sup> The semiotic in which the feminine is located disrupts or subverts the Symbolic while remaining as the repressed form in the Symbolic.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Italics original. *Ibid.*, 65-66. The term “symbolic system” derives from the “Symbolic” in Lacan’s psychoanalysis, and is linked to the order of language in its universality in Levi-Strauss’ structural anthropology.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>564</sup> Keith Green and Jill LeBihan, *Critical Theory & Practice: A Coursebook* (London-New York: Routledge, 1996), 249.

<sup>565</sup> Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 67. Green and LeBihan, *Critical Theory*, 249, 266.

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*, 249. Thus, the co-existence of the Symbolic and the semiotic makes identity unstable, that is, a woman cannot “be” on a deeper level. However, her construction of semiotic female language and world could be criticized in that it renders the rational to men and reserves for women such traditional arenas as the emotive, the intuitive, the trans-rational, and the privatized. Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 129-30.

From these discussions of the dominant symbolic order and its system of classification, which draw boundaries between purity and defilement and between self and other, I should like to highlight this aspect: While language reflects and buttresses the order, there is a space in which the subjectivity of those repressed by the dominant system operates within the system. The repressed are called by various names—irrational, abnormal, or feminine. In Mark’s story, these irrational, abnormal, or feminine repressed are particularly represented with regard to their speech acts. Such different ways of speaking are attached to degrading social values, which means that, through social construction, those speaking subjects were regarded as linguistic others.

The problem is that we do not have access to records from the people who did not speak normally. Instead, we have access only to the popular view of language and speech in the ancient Greco-Roman world, particularly the view of literate elites.<sup>567</sup> Accordingly, it is necessary for the reader today to reconsider the values embedded in the accounts of speech acts attached to illness, madness, uncleanness, and foreignness.

On the other hand, one needs to be cautious of a literary elitist tendency to postulate that the style of the New Testament texts is heavily influenced by or even

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<sup>567</sup> This problem is similar to the question that arises from Foucault’s investigation of madness. Loomba rearticulates the question: “How might one recover voices that have been deemed not worthy of social circulation,” such as voices of insane people? Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 2006; 2009), 38. This kind of issue may be raised in any area of New Testament studies. For example, Harland argues, “Generally lacking are literary sources representing the perspectives of the peasantry; most sources available for Palestine, perhaps with the exception of some strata of the synoptic Gospels, represent elite perspectives on economic and other conditions, perspectives that were sometimes characterized by a negative view of the peasantry or ‘people of the land’ (*am-ha-aretz*).” Philip A. Harland, “The Economy of First-Century Palestine: State of the Scholarly Discussion,” in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*, ed. Anthony J. Blasi, Jean Duhaime, and Paul-André Turcotte (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002), 523.

compatible with Greco-Roman rhetoric. Ben Witherington, for example, argues that ancient biographies were exercises in persuasion, using storytelling and speeches to accomplish their aims. Emphasizing that Greek was the *lingua franca* of the empire in the first century and the language of commerce, he maintains, “If you were selling something or hawking a particular new message for mass consumption, it had better be offered in Greek and with rhetorical skill in order not to merely inform but persuade.”<sup>568</sup> This may be true inasmuch as one can find rhetorical techniques in the New Testament writings that are introduced in classical rhetorical handbooks and one can assume that on some occasions some audience members might have been familiar with the public speeches of rhetoricians as part of life in Greek cities.

However, one should also acknowledge that the New Testament is written in *Koine* Greek, the language of common people, not classical Greek; that the stories or letters in the New Testament, including the Gospel of Mark, were performed orally to whole communities of people<sup>569</sup>; and that the majority of the audience for such performances was not literary elites. These aspects encourage us to be concerned with the ordinary ways of speech and communication. The audience might even have included many people who did not normally speak, as Mark’s Gospel itself demonstrates. Thus, the primary way to read the Gospel is not in light of the Aristotelian tradition, which

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<sup>568</sup> Ben Witherington III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009), 23.

<sup>569</sup> Horsley argues, “...communications in the ancient world, especially among subjected peoples, were predominantly oral.” Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, xiii.

views rhetoric as the most natural, effective, and reliable mode of reasoning, while other ways of communication are viewed as irrational and unstable.<sup>570</sup>

The authors of *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric* assert that the definition of rhetoric as persuasion—the effort to change people and things—is a conversion or conquest model of human interaction.<sup>571</sup> This Western male-dominated model of communication, which emphasizes the speaker acting on the audience, does not fit some cultures and some groups of people. For example, in slave culture interpersonal communicative forms often exist as the only way to transmit forbidden information, rather than for formal public speaking. That is, the rhetoric of African Americans is represented more by informal speech acts than by public speeches and consists of efforts to “get over” or survive in a Eurocentric world. This way of communication may furnish a way to understand the speech acts of those linguistic others present in Mark and provide an alternative explanation of the secrecy motif in Mark.

The model of rhetoric as persuasion also does not fit women’s experiences of interaction or the values women bring to their interactions. While traditional conceptions of rhetoric and rhetoricians are exclusionary and elitist as a result of the great-speakers

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<sup>570</sup> For instance, from the Aristotelian perspective, analogy is an unstable means of argument. See Chapter 10, “An Unending Conversation,” in Sonja K. Foss, Karen A. Foss, and Robert Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1991). The third edition of the book removed this last chapter. Instead, it adds chapters on bell hooks, Jean Baudrillard, and Michel Foucault.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid. Public persuasion as a conscious part of the Western elite male’s legacy from ancient Greece and Rome to the present is not the universal form of speech. Although some scholars stress the oral and aural dimensions of Gospel transmission, such orality is still focused on the role of preserving the tradition or the dominant patterns of message (e.g., preaching about who Jesus is) and does not consider the audience an active party in the exchange of communication.

model of rhetoric, the public realm is not where most women's speeches occur.<sup>572</sup> Public rhetorical space is certainly not the site of the discourse that most women consider significant in their daily lives. Since women have no such rhetorical history, employing rhetorical analysis based on classical rhetorical tradition in interpreting the Gospel text excludes women's language experience and the value it places in communication in the private realm.

In short, linguistic subjects are multiply othered in historical and ideological layers, which include the Roman imperial construction of the Self through language, the Gospel author's consciousness of the power of language, the elitist literary approach in biblical interpretation, and logocentrism in Western philosophical tradition. Therefore, my reading of the Gospel seeks to explore how the rational order of language suppresses the subjectivity of the marginalized notwithstanding how the agency of those subjects still operates.

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<sup>572</sup> Pointing out Maud W. Gleason's argument that masculine values are attached to rhetoric, Liew maintains that Paul, along with his bodily abjection as a colonized Jew, is feminized due to his rhetorical deficiencies in the dominant culture of the Roman Empire. Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Redressing Bodies in Corinth," in *Paul, Colonialism, and Ethnicity: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. Christopher D. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 140, citing Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

## The Shackle of the Empire: Madness or Muteness

### *Abnormal Speech Acts in Mark*

Some types of speech acts that can be viewed as abnormal are observed in Mark.<sup>573</sup> I shall examine two such types, madness and muteness, both of which are related to political oppression, even though the former is depicted as caused by unclean spirits. The first one is vociferous speaking, which the Greek words *βοάω*, *κράζω* and *ἀνακράζω* represent.

The term *βοάω* is used to describe John the Baptizer, whose character is primarily related to speaking or preaching, since the narrator introduces him as the *ἄγγελος*, the messenger. He is even identified as “the *voice* of one crying (*φωνὴ βοῶντος*) in the wilderness” (1:3). John’s crying voice delivers the proclamation (*κηρύσσων*) of a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins as well as of Jesus and his baptizing in the Holy Spirit. The intensity of the word *βοάω* is assumed, as seen in Jesus’ final crying out

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<sup>573</sup> Some Markan scholars deal with themes related to speech acts with regard to both silence and proclamation. William Wrede first formulated the thesis of the messianic secret as the theological construction of early Christians in Mark. In this interpretation the secrecy motif is related to the issue of speech, since Jesus appears to give injunctions to silence. In addition to this charge to silence, the silence of the women at the empty tomb in Mark 16 is discussed by some feminist scholars. Thus, various types of imposed or innate silence can be observed in the Gospel. In contrast, the proclamation of the kingdom message and Jesus’ work is affirmed as positive from the point of view of the narrator and the implied author. While confirmation and proclamation are valued, there are also speech acts, such as crying out, which are considered an indication of uncleanness in the text. Although some research deals with unclean spirits or demon-possession in relation to Jesus’ miracles and power, the way in which they speak is given little attention by scholars.

(ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, 15:34). While Jesus' loud crying voice is generated by the execution on the cross, John's crying voice causes his own arrest (*τὸ παραδοθῆναι*, 1:14). No cause other than the crying out of preaching appears in this first chapter. Later, in chapter 6, it becomes clear that how he spoke and what he spoke about brought about his imprisonment (*ἔδησεν αὐτὸν ἐν φυλακῇ*, 6:17) and even beheading. It turns out that his decapitation resulted from a speech against Herod, who had taken his brother's wife Herodias in marriage. Although Mark describes John as crying out, it is interesting to see Josephus' accounts of John's eloquence, which is depicted as having brought violence upon him as one voicing public criticism and threats to the couple's honor.<sup>574</sup> John's speech was not only against their marriage relationship as a public shame but also a political threat.

In addition to *βοᾶ*, Mark uses the word *κράζω*, the act of crying loudly, ten times out of the 56 times it is used in the New Testament. In Mark this word sometimes describes the supplication or acclamation of a suppliant or of crowds.<sup>575</sup> In all other cases, it always expresses the cry of those possessed with demons. In 1:23-28, a man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue in Capernaum cried out. Here the man's cry is associated

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<sup>574</sup> In *Ant.* 18.5.2, Josephus states, “Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late.” Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities XVIII-XIX*, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. Louis H. Feldman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>575</sup> The boy's father in 9:24; Bartimaeus in 10:47-48; and the crowd shouting “Hosanna” in 11:9 and 15:13, 14; cf. *ἀνακράζω*, disciples in 6:49.

with an unclean spirit (*ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ*) in opposition to the holy one (*ὁ ἅγιος*) of God, who destroys “them.”<sup>576</sup> When Jesus rebukes the man, the one who cries with a loud voice (*φωνῆσαν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ*, v. 26) is the unclean spirit, not the man. The spirit convulsed him and came out of him. The spirit finally obeyed Jesus (v. 27). Mark 3:11 also describes the crying (*ἔχραζον*) of unclean spirits, which recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Furthermore, in 5:1-20 the Gerasene demoniac cries loudly (*κράζων*, v. 5; *κράξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ*, v. 7). His uncleanness is made more obvious by his living in the tombs and injuring his body, his multiple identities, and the incorporation of the unclean spirits into the herd of pigs, all of which are regarded as unclean as well.

In these stories, the individuals’ high-pitched cry or scream is a sign of uncleanness, because their voices are related to demon-possession and the one who speaks is the unclean spirit within them. Malina and Rohrbaugh explain some of these actions in terms of “abnormal behavior” and “madness,” as described by a late Israelite document describes.<sup>577</sup> Such abnormal behavior indicates involvement in “abnormal relationship” with unclean spirits.

Interestingly, they speak the truth insofar as these disorderly voices commonly announce that Jesus is the Son of God. Plato acknowledges that there are certain types of divine madness, and in these cases those possessed by divine beings can speak truth.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>576</sup> While Mark describes the unclean spirit that possesses as singular, the man—actually, the spirit—identifies himself or itself as plural.

<sup>577</sup> Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, eds., *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 164-65.

<sup>578</sup> E. R. Dodds, *The Greek and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 64-65, 76. Plato mentions four types of divine madness: prophetic, ritual, poetic

Despite being possessed by “unclean” spirits, these persons recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus prohibits such public recognition. This scene has been traditionally read in terms of the secrecy motif. In this interpretation, Jesus’ injunction is intended to keep his identity secret, because it is not yet the time when Jesus’ identity is to be revealed. Until the event of Jesus’ death and resurrection is realized, such early revelation may mislead people regarding the true identity of Jesus as the suffering Messiah.

However, if we consider that the times of Jesus or Mark were conditioned by Roman imperial occupation, the claim that Jesus is the Son of God, a title only attributed to the emperor, emerges as quite a dangerous one. Those possessed with unclean spirits declare what should not be spoken. To tell this truth may cause political oppression. As I shall argue with regard to the Gerasene demoniac in the following section, the disturbing cry of the demon-possessed is viewed as not only ritually unclean and socially abnormal but also as politically unacceptable. The prohibited words can be spoken only outside the symbolic order, that is, by those defiled. The mad speak of the irrational.<sup>579</sup> Thus, they can be dismissed.

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and erotic madness. In a Dionysiac ritual in the Archaic Age, divinely intervened madness is ritually treated, and its social function is essentially cathartic. It purges the individual of those infectious irrational impulses and relieves them by providing them with a ritual outlet. The demon-possessed in Mark are not classified as any of these types of divine madness but instead are described as similar to the ordinary kinds of madness caused by disease. Yet they are depicted as telling the truth.

<sup>579</sup> Loomba cites Foucault to explain how madness is related to the dominant system and its production of knowledge: madness “as a category of human identity is produced and reproduced by various rules, systems and procedures which create and separate it from ‘normalcy’. Such systems form what he called ‘the order of discourse,’ or the entire conceptual territory on which knowledge is formed and produced.” Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 38.

The second type of abnormal speech is the repression of speech, also brought about by political oppression. Unclean spirits cause not only convulsive cries but also muteness. In 9:1-29 it is the mute and deaf spirit that possesses the boy (*πνεῦμα ἄλαλον*; *τὸ ἄλαλον καὶ κωφὸν πνεῦμα*, vv. 17, 25). Here a speech impediment is attached to uncleanness as well. The unclean spirit also cries out and convulses the boy terribly (*κράξας καὶ πολλὰ σπαράξας*, 9:26). The spirit robs him of speech and rages by screaming. Therefore, it is quite plausible that the deaf and mute man's illness in 7:31-37 is also related to unclean spirits or uncleanness.<sup>580</sup> However, here we have a real cause, yet still symbolic, that made him mute. Mark uses the expression, "the shackle of the tongue" (*δεσμὸς τῆς γλώσσης*). By Jesus' healing, the shackle of his tongue is released and his ears are opened. A careful reader can see that the same imagery of shackle appears in other stories of the Gospel.

### *The Image of Shackle*

According to Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, it seems to be Mark's literary device that Jesus' fame is spread by a person or persons, whether unsolicited or commanded, in

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<sup>580</sup> Matthew 9:32-34 and 12:22-24, a deaf man and a blind and deaf man whom people bring to Jesus, are described as demoniacs (*δαιμονιζόμενον*). Here the deaf are also mute, because according to Matthew, when the demon is cast out these men speak. In contrast to Mark's story, Matthew highlights the reactions of the crowds, who show a favorable attitude toward Jesus, and of the Pharisees, who are hostile, instead of the details of the healing miracle itself. Rymond F. Collins, "Jesus' Ministry to the Deaf and Dumb," *Mel. Th.* 35 (1984): 12-36, 16. Adolf Deissmann supports the view relating the man's muteness to demon-possession when he argues that in popular belief the tongue of the mute man was "bound" by some demon. *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, Lionel R.M. Strachan (trans.) (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 304-307.

an area that Jesus will later traverse or that persons come to Jesus from the regions that he will later enter.<sup>581</sup> Both the story of the Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20) and that of the deaf and mute man are examples of this. The land of the Gerasene was located on the east side of the Galilean sea, and the exorcised man went on to proclaim in the Decapolis.<sup>582</sup> These two events occur in Gentile regions around the Decapolis (5:20; 7:31). Both characterizations of the demoniac and the deaf and mute man may be read as depicting how colonized subjects were affected by the imposition of the Roman Empire, though in different ways.

Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20)	Deaf and dumb man (7:31-37)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People bound him with fetters and chains (<i>διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν πολλάκις πέδαις καὶ ἀλύσεσι δεδέσθαι</i>), but he broke them in pieces (v. 4).</li> <li>- He cries out with a loud voice (<i>χράξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ</i>); he speaks out (v. 5).</li> <li>- He (they in him) beg(s) Jesus (<i>παρεκάλει</i>, v. 10).</li> <li>- Jesus drives out an unclean spirit by speaking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- His tongue is bound with the fetter (<i>ὁ δεσμὸς τῆς γλώσσης αὐτοῦ</i>, v. 35)</li> <li>- He has an impediment in speech (<i>μογιλάλον</i>); he is silent (v. 32).</li> <li>- People bring him and beg Jesus (<i>παρακαλοῦσιν</i>, v. 32).</li> <li>- Jesus heals him by penetrating, spitting, and touching.</li> </ul>

<sup>581</sup> Malbon, 27.

<sup>582</sup> Herman C. Waetjen, *A Reordering of Power: A Sociopolitical Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 4-15. After healing the Gerasene demoniac, Jesus sends him back to his home, atypically commanding the healed person to announce what the Lord has done for him. The Gerasene proceeds to do so in the Decapolis (5:19-20). Like other scholars, Waetjen argues that this story reveals the beginning of the Christian mission in the countryside of Gerasa and its continuation by the proclamation of the demoniac.

- After Jesus' exorcism, he is in his right mind (*σωφρονοῦντα*, v. 16).
- After Jesus orders him to tell people how much the Lord has done for him, he proclaims (*ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς*, v. 20).

- After Jesus' healing, he speaks rightly (*ὀρθῶς*, v. 35).

- People proclaim that Jesus has done all things (*πάντα πεποίηκεν*, v. 37), even though he charged them to tell no one.

Shackles cannot bind the demoniac (*οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι*, v. 3): he breaks them in pieces, bruises himself with stones, and cries out without cease. Along with many elements symbolizing impurity according to the Jewish cultural code mentioned above (tombs, swine and unclean spirits), the story of the demoniac also calls to mind “the Roman military occupation of the territory” through the use of the term “Legion,” a division of Roman soldiers.<sup>583</sup> Thus, the demon represents Roman military power.<sup>584</sup> Ched Myers, therefore, argues that “Mark appears to acknowledge the reality that ‘no one had the strength to subdue’ the demon of Roman military occupation.”<sup>585</sup> The frantic status of the demoniac may be related to mental illness in situations of political oppression.<sup>586</sup> Fetters and chains may, physically or metaphorically, represent oppression

<sup>583</sup> Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 1992, 1988), 191.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid., 192. For Myers, it is also evidence of “the concrete experience of the Roman scorched-earth campaign of reconquest” that the residents of the Decapolis appear to worry about the expulsion of the legion.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid., 426.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid., 192-94. Myers introduces a political interpretation of the text similar to that given by Paul Hollenbach (“Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study,” *JAAR*, 49/4 (1981): 567-88) and Gerd Theissen (*The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, London: T. Clark, 1983), stressing exorcism as public symbolic action of political repudiation.

under the empire. However, Jesus is depicted as stronger and able to “bind” and destroy the “strong man” ( $\tauὸν ἰσχυρὸν δῆστη$ ), Satan and the “ruler of demons” (3:22-27). Hence, when Jesus releases the binding—the shackle—of the Gerasene demoniac, it signifies the dismantling of imperial power.

Scholars discuss the fetters and chains ( $πολλάκις πέδαις καὶ ἀλύσεσι δεδέσθαι$ , 5:4) as symbols of the formidable grip of the empire in the story of the Gerasene demoniac but do not see such symbolism in the shackle ( $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμός$ ) holding the deaf and dumb man’s tongue (7:35).<sup>587</sup> While severe oppression generates mental disorders like schizophrenia or insanity in some cases, it causes repressed silence in other cases.<sup>588</sup> The shackle as a symbol of oppression has bound the deaf and dumb man’s tongue for a long time.

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<sup>587</sup> Scholars relate the shackle to magic practiced in the ancient Mediterranean world, rather than considering it against the background of the Roman imperial context. Collins argues that the “bond” ( $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμός$ ) represents “‘a uniquely Greek form of cursing’ and is usually translated ‘binding spell’.” She also cites from Hall, who maintains that “the bond of the tongue” is the technical term of magic. Collins, *Mark*, 372; John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* (Naperville, Ill.: A. R. Allenson, 1974), 17, 81-82. As mentioned earlier, Deissmann stresses the point of the “figure” in this figurative expression based on inscriptions on Attic binding-tablets: the man is “fettered” by “daemonic influences.” Deissmann, 304, 307. I do not deny such evidence, but, if by Jesus’ healing “daemonic fetters were broken, a work of Satan undone,” there is no reason to regard the work of Satan as caused only by magical curses and not related to imperial power.

Often the imagery of fetters and prison appears in the New Testament and refers to or represents the penal system within the Roman Empire and in its colonies. See the terms used:  $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμεύω$  (put in chains, 3),  $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμιος$  (a bound, prisoner, 16 times),  $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμός$  (bond or fetter, 18),  $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμοφύλαξ$  (jailer, 1),  $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμωτήριον$  (prison, 4),  $\delta\epsilon\sigmaμώτης$  (prisoner, 2),  $\delta\epsilon\omega$  (bind, imprison, 43), and  $\phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\chi\eta$  (prison, 42),  $\phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\chi\zeta\omega$  (imprison, 1),  $\phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\xi$  (guard, 3), and so on. A majority of the usages demonstrate how the language of the penal system, which is operated by the ruling class and the empire, prevails in the New Testament.

<sup>588</sup> The Gerasene man who is possessed by an unclean spirit is portrayed as having multiple identities: he is “many” ( $\piολλοί$ , 5:9); “He begged him eagerly not to send them

Whatever this symbolic expression “the shackle of the tongue” may mean, it is clear that it connotes power from outside restricting that part of the body which is primarily related to the ability to express oneself and communicate with others.<sup>589</sup> Language is not neutral, but a means to implant the dominant values and order on the individual and the social bodies. In the Greek city where the deaf and mute man lives, people use Greek, a language that represents the symbolic order of the empire as well as imperial identity. However, the man does not share that dominant group identity: he is lost in the language and suppressed in the order. He is not only a physically disabled person but also a politically subjugated, socially alienated, and psychologically repressed being.

Similar to the demoniac’s case, Jesus releases the shackle from the deaf and mute man’s tongue, which may refer to control by unclean spirits. The identification of the Legion affirms the possibility that these unclean spirits and their ruler, Satan—who bind one’s person, body, or tongue—represent not only spiritual but also political power. Furthermore, as noted, Mark suggests that it was primarily John’s act of preaching and speech that brought about his binding in prison (δέ Ἡρώδης... ἔδησεν αὐτὸν ἐν φυλακῇ, 6:17).

To summarize, my reading of these stories illuminates three aspects of speech acts in Mark. First, the crying out of the demon-possessed is attached to uncleanness and

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out of the country” (v.10); “and they begged him, ‘send us to the swine, let us enter them’” (v. 12).

<sup>589</sup> This kind of restraint is familiar to Koreans, who were oppressed under military dictatorships for a long time. The military government deprived people of the freedom of expression and gathering. If one sang or even enunciated what was prohibited by the government, one was detained or imprisoned. Such a fetter not only bound the body in prison but also applied to the tongue of the people living everyday life.

madness. Second, muteness and crying out are not totally unrelated symptoms but may have the same cause, since “abnormal” speech acts such as dumbness or raving hysterics are likely to occur under oppressive conditions. Third, the image of binding or shackle—at work in all three cases of John, the demoniac, and the deaf and mute man—suggests not only spiritual possession but also political oppression as social conditions at work in Mark’s time. In such circumstances, colonized subjects are abnormalized or repressed, but have agency.

### Speech and Silence

#### *Preaching and Silence*

Laura Donaldson compares the characterizations of the Gerasene man and the Syrophoenician woman’s daughter. Donaldson maintains that anti-colonial interpretations miss the point of indigeneity as well as that of gender.<sup>590</sup> Concerning indigeneity, Donaldson argues that demon-possession may possibly denote the ecstatic state of a shaman, as seen in indigenous cultures. Accordingly, descriptions of Jesus’ exorcism of the demon-possessed in the Gospels may represent a colonial “ideology of coercive curing.”<sup>591</sup> In terms of gender, she highlights the difference between the demon-possessed daughter and the possessed Gerasene man. According to Donaldson, stereotypical male and female attributes are ascribed to the characters of the two stories under the

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<sup>590</sup> Laura E. Donaldson, “Gospel Hauntings: The Postcolonial Demons of New Testament Criticism,” Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia (eds.), *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 103.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

designation of “the colonized,” so the Gerasene man possesses hyper-masculinity, screaming at the top of his voice with vigorous action, while the demon-possessed daughter is silenced and invisible.<sup>592</sup>

Her observation is plausible, but I see in the story of the deaf and mute man a male character who is outside this gender stereotype and is instead feminized. Both this man and the Gerasene demoniac are male characters, but differently sexualized. As can be observed in my comparison of the two stories above, the deaf and mute man’s agency is critically weakened by appearing to be without words, even after the healing of his muteness: he does not properly respond to Jesus but is merely able to enunciate. He is presented as a subject only in the narrator’s report to the effect that he spoke plainly. His passivity becomes distinctive when he is compared to other characters in Mark.

In Brian Blount’s argument on preaching as one of the most significant events of God’s intervention in Mark, the exorcised demoniac and the healed deaf and mute man are put together, along with the cleansed leper (1:45; 5:20; 7:31). According to Blount, these unnamed males, who are transformed by Jesus, represent examples of

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<sup>592</sup> Ibid., 103.

interventionist preaching.<sup>593</sup> I contend, however, that the deaf and mute man is not presented as preaching.<sup>594</sup>

	1:44-45	5:19-20	7:36-37
The sayings of Jesus	“...Go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing...”	“Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.”	Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one, but more he ordered them,
The responses of the healed	But he went out and began to proclaim ( <i>κηρύσσειν</i> ) it freely and to spread the word,	And he went away and began to proclaim ( <i>κηρύσσειν</i> ) in the Decapolis how much Jesus has done for him.	(No response) [the more zealously they proclaimed it ( <i>ἐκήρυξσον</i> ).]
The responses of people	So that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.	And everyone was amazed.	They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.”

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<sup>593</sup> Blount employs a cultural interpretation of Mark in the context of the African-American church and African American society. According to him, Jesus initiated preaching beyond geographical and ethnic boundaries, and this must have encouraged a believing community of Jews and Gentiles, which was persecuted for its engagement in a Gentile mission. Brian K. Blount, *Go Preach!: Mark's Kingdom Message and the Black Church Today* (New York: Orbis, 1998; 2006), 98. For Blount's definition of preaching, see n. 57 in the first chapter of this dissertation. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, the language of boundary-crossing through God's universal intervention, that is, preaching, might have an imperial connotation.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid., 95-96. Other commentators observe the tension between the private healing and the commands to the public and explain that this ambiguity is a result of the combining of tradition (7:32-25) and Mark's redaction (7:36-37). Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 241; Collins, *Mark*, 374.

In the cases of the leper and the demoniac, Jesus' sayings are delivered as direct speech, the healed persons preach, and their preaching results in particular responses on the part of people. In the last story, however, Jesus speaks to people—not specifically to the deaf and dumb man. The “they” whom Jesus charges in indirect speech may include him. Those addressed preach. After their proclamation, people’s response is put in direct speech, whereby it becomes clear that the healed man does not speak in his own voice but is just spoken of by others. Others speak for him!

In addition to the deaf and dumb man’s lack of such expected speech—that is, preaching, his passivity is highlighted by the fact that Jesus’ actions of healing are more detailed than in other healing scenes. In most cases, Jesus heals the sick or the possessed by his spoken word, or at most touching or taking the person by the hand. Yet, here the healing is performed by a series of actions.<sup>595</sup> First, Jesus takes him aside from the crowd privately (*κατ’ ιδίαν*, 7:33). While this private setting may be related to the secrecy motif, Mark’s term *ιδίος* almost always denotes intimacy or exclusivity in the relationship between Jesus and his disciples.<sup>596</sup> Next, the actions that Jesus does to cure the man are detailed. While Jesus usually heals the sick by means of touch (5:25-38; 6:53-56), here he

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<sup>595</sup> Luke does not report this story, and Matthew gives just a general statement that Jesus heals the disabled like the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others (*έτέρους πολλοὺς*) in 15:29-31. Matthew has an inclination to cut down the scenes in which Jesus has physical contact with the sick, as seen in Matthew’s omission of the story of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 and in the parallel passages of Mark 1:29-31 (Matt. 8:14-15; Luke 4:38-39), 6:5 (Matt. 13:58) and 9:25-27 (Matt. 17:18; Luke 9:42).

<sup>596</sup> See 4:34 (x2); 6:31, 32; 9:2, 28; 13:3. There are some cases where Jesus takes a few disciples or persons aside for teaching and healing (5:40), but he never heals a person privately like this.

inserts his fingers into the deaf and mute man's ear (cf. Luke 11:20; John 20:25).<sup>597</sup> Such an action is striking, if one considers that Jesus was only asked to lay his hand upon him. In the Roman context, "any form of bodily penetration could readily be understood in sexual terms."<sup>598</sup> This does not necessarily mean that one should consider Jesus' action as having sexual connotations, but the imagery of penetration fortifies the deaf and mute man's passivity in the representation of his sexuality, in contrast to the demoniac's hyper-masculinity.<sup>599</sup>

Jesus' action of spitting and touching the man's tongue may also be understood along the same lines (cf. 8:22-26; John 9:6). The problem in this case arises from a consideration of the other side of the concept of sexuality, based on the active-passive model in the Greco-Roman society. If the man is penetrated and thus passive, then Jesus is supposed to be understood as a penetrator. This view may correspond to that of seeing Jesus' healing or exorcism of Gentile persons as coercive or his ministry in Gentile territories as a triumphal Christian mission. However, as I have highlighted both with regard to the border encounter between Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman as colonized subjects within the empire and with respect to his nomadic trajectory alongside

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<sup>597</sup> This action is the only case in which Jesus uses his fingers for healing. The term κωφός is related to auditory capacity, since Jesus puts his finger into the man's ear, while the term μογιλάλος indicates difficulty in speaking. For the latter, Collins argues that, because as a result of the healing the man speaks "rightly," he is assumed to have had an impediment in speech rather than being a mute. Collins, *Mark*, 370.

<sup>598</sup> David Tombs, "Prisoner Abuse: From Abu Ghraib to the Passion of Christ," Linda Hogan and Dylan L. Lehrke (eds.), *Religion and the Politics of Peace and Conflict* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 186.

<sup>599</sup> I will argue below that Jesus is also represented as penetrated, especially in the Passion narrative.

the displaced *ochlos*, I understand his healing of the deaf and mute man as an intersubjective event through the embodiment of mystery, as I will discuss below.

What I should point out regarding the deaf and mute man here is that, although he is presented as passive and voiceless, in his understanding and enunciation his agency operates, as the result of the healing and through the work of mystery. While power and presence, and preaching prevail in Mark, it is also the case that the invisible are present and the voiceless speak in silence, as represented by women in Mark, as we will see in this next section.

### *Speaking in Silence*

Not only does political control cause muteness, but patriarchal domination also impresses silence upon women. In an honor-shame culture, if a woman speaks in public, it is considered shameful. The cultural norm is the tendency to silence women. In such a culture, in which women's silence is ordinary and seen as natural, the Syrophoenician woman's voice is distinct, insofar as she wins the debate with Jesus, "because of this word" ( $\deltaι\alpha\tau\omega\tau\omega\lambda\gammao\varsigma$ ).<sup>600</sup> As is the custom, however, women are suppressed in an andro-logocentric system.

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<sup>600</sup> In the Gospel, Jesus silences the evil one, the chaotic power, the healed, and the disciples, but not women. The purpose of his silencing is "not to make him known" (3:12). Although scholars have related such scenes to the so-called messianic secret, there is no reason to approach this topic only in terms of a christological concern. Jesus' injunction against speaking about him may simply mean the negation of public recognition through proclamation. At the narrative and discourse levels, however, in most cases "Mark" silences women. There are some women who speak, but their speech is rarely seen as affirmative. The only positive example of a woman having her voice is the Syrophoenician woman. Herodias and her daughter have their own voices, but they are shamed by their speech. In addition to the shameful status of Herodias' marriage, the

Peter's mother-in-law quietly serves Jesus and his company shortly after being healed (1:30-31). The hemorrhaging woman speaks internally, "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well" (5:28). Mark only presents her voice in this manner of inner speaking and passes over in silence her words in speaking "the whole truth (*πᾶσαν τὴν ἀληθειαν*)" (5:33). The daughters of Jairus and the Syrophenician woman do not have their own voices. While Jairus speaks for his daughter, the mother is silent, despite the daughter's presence in the story (5:35-43). Following Jesus' denunciation of the scribes, who are depicted as devouring widows' houses, a poor widow appears and quietly puts two copper coins, everything she has, into the temple treasury (12:41-44). The anointing woman's silence is obvious in the midst of the controversy voiced by the men around her (14:3-9). The women who followed Jesus from Galilee even have to choke down their sobs, seeing Jesus on the cross from afar (15:40-41). Finally, the women ask each other how they will be able to enter Jesus' tomb in spite of the stone. Their silence is viewed pejoratively, because the young man orders them to go tell (*εἴπατε*) the disciples and Peter but they say nothing to anyone (*εἴπαν οὐδὲν οὐδενὶ*, 16:3, 7-8). How can one see agency in the silence of these subjects?

Nevertheless, these women speak in and through their silence. In Mark, the only individuals who follow Jesus' example are Peter's mother-in-law (*διακόνει*) and the women who followed and served (*ἡκολούθουν αὐτῷ καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ*) Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (1:31; 10:45; 15:41; cf. 1:13). Jesus states that he came to serve others (*ἥλθεν... διακονῆσαι*), which means to "give his life as a ransom for many." The

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daughter's bold speech demanding John's head may be considered as shameful. The slave girl in 14:66-69 is not a significant character in the narrative.

women embody this *diakonia*, but in silence. Although “the whole truth” the hemorrhaging woman speaks of is not heard, it is the truth that she has known in her body (*ἔγνω τῷ ἐν σῶματι*, 5:29, 33).<sup>601</sup> The Syrophoenician woman argues that Jesus can heal her daughter, as if she perceived the events of the breaking and sharing of Jesus’ body. When she finds her daughter healed, it means that the daughter is one of those who shares his body in silence (7:30). The anointing woman anticipates Jesus’ death and his absence through the sign-action (14:8). What we see in this brief explanation of the stories is that, despite their silence, the agency of the female subjects operates through embodying the mystery of Jesus’ body. They “understand,” but not merely based on their knowledge of Jesus but rather on a relationship with “a single figure,” Jesus Christ, whose body is displaced throughout his life and death, by touching, eating, and living this body.

It is often tempting to regard breaking silence as necessary for liberation or speaking as the only presence that counts. The later editors of Mark’s Gospel could not accept an ending with the women’s silence, so they added that Mary Magdalene goes and tells (*ἀπήγγειλεν*) the disciples that Jesus is alive and has been seen by her (16:10-11). Jesus also appears in another form (*ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ*) to two disciples and thus makes them speak (*ἀπήγγειλαν*) to the rest of the disciples (vv. 12-13). Then, he appears

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<sup>601</sup> Certeau states, “It is the body that is responsible for a truth (of which it is unaware).” Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fables*, Michael B. Smith (trans.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 5, 8. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, Musa Dube sees Africa as suffering from HIV/AIDS in this hemorrhaging woman. In this female body, suffering engraved and suffering people are connected. As Africa has knowledge of its own world before domination, the woman’s body knows itself in silence, despite past oppression and present silencing.

(ἐφανερώθη) once more to the eleven disciples and reproaches them for their unbelief and hardness of heart (ἀνείδισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν), which is considered to be the fundamental problem of their discipleship (v. 14). Finally, Jesus says, “Go into all the world and preach (κηρύξατε) the gospel to the whole creation.” One of the signs (σημεῖα) that will accompany those who believe is speaking in new tongues (γλῶσσαις λαλήσοθσιν καιναῖς, v.17). After Jesus’ ascension, they preach everywhere (ἐκήρυξαν πανταχοῦ), while the Lord works with them and confirms “the word” (τὸν λόγον) by the signs (σημεῖα) that attend it. Instead of absence and fear, the Gospel ends with the presence of the Lord and the power of *logos*.

In these added descriptions, all the tensions are cleared. Mary Magdalene represents the women, who were afraid and silent, and speaks out. Jesus is not absent but present. The disciples’ unbelief and hardened heart are finally cured. One may be reminded of the deaf and mute man, whose tongue has been released from the shackle. While he had no voice even after healing, now he might be one of those who will speak in new tongues.<sup>602</sup> This Gospel ends with preaching not with silence. The ending is full of voice, *logos*, and preaching. The later editors of Mark resisted the notion of absence and silence, which represent the disciples’ misunderstanding and failure.<sup>603</sup> However, if the

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<sup>602</sup> The word γλῶσσα is used only 7:33, 35 and 16:17 in Mark. In the latter, tongues may mean “new languages” but can also imply tongues such as that of the deaf and mute man healed by Jesus.

<sup>603</sup> Robert Fowler maintains that Matthew is a similarly resistant reader of Mark in that “fear is swallowed up by joy, and silence is overcome by proclamation” (Matt. 27:62-28:20). Ambiguity and mystery is replaced by clarity and certainty. Robert M. Fowler, “Reader-Response Criticism: Figuring Mark’s Reader,” Anderson and Moores (eds.), *Mark & Method*, 83-88.

Gospel ends in silence and absence, would it make no sense? My argument has been consistent in this regard: the voiceless can speak in silence, just as Jesus is present in absence. Those silent subjects and Jesus are connected through embodiment.

### The Passive Body

#### *Somatic Engagement and Passivity*

Traditional interpretation understands Jesus' healing of the deaf and mute man in light of medical or magical conventions of the ancient Mediterranean world. In this view, Jesus is a miracle worker or exorcist.<sup>604</sup> However, I propose an alternative view with which to explain this particular way of Jesus' healing. I have already argued in the preceding chapters that Jesus transgresses the bodily boundary by touching the sick and reverses the symbolic order. Jesus both touches and is touched by defiled people. Yet, in the healing of the deaf and mute man, who might be affected by unclean spirits, Jesus' action involves more than touching the surface of body. He puts his fingers into the man's ears and spits and touches his tongue. Rather than understanding this set of actions against a context in which magical treatment was broadly exercised, I maintain that it underlines Jesus' deep involvement in defilement. Furthermore, his intimate bodily contact with the man generates intersubjectivity.

In addition to cultural anthropology's idea of purity and defilement, a Pentecostal perspective in conjunction with Disability Studies proposed by Amos Yong is helpful to

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<sup>604</sup> Collins, "Jesus' Ministry to the Deaf and Dumb," 29.

illuminate Jesus' action of healing.<sup>605</sup> Although Yong applies the terms “somatic engagement” to Luke’s narrative, the concept can also describe the interaction between Jesus and the deaf and mute man in Mark.<sup>606</sup> Yong argues that God’s revelation to human beings is wrought through “the multiple sensory modalities of the human constitution.”<sup>607</sup> He stresses “the power of touch,” which challenges modes of ministry, ecclesial structures and practices, and communal forms of life that privilege seeing and hearing at the expense of touching and feeling.<sup>608</sup>

Seeing, hearing, and understanding comprise the notion of discipleship in Mark, but, in a logocentric society or in the symbolic system, somatic-sensory cues may be an alternative or even subversive way of communication and engagement among those who are invisible and voiceless. Especially, the release of the shackle that has bound the man’s tongue implies that Jesus has overcome the oppressive power. Then, what Jesus’ somatic

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<sup>605</sup> Amos Yong, “Many Tongues, Many Senses: Pentecost, the Body Politic, and the Redemption of Dis/Ability,” *Pneuma* 31 (2009): 167-88. The fundamental idea of Pentecostal healing is that “God touches human bodies, restores human psyches, reconciles the psychosomatic dimensions of human life, and reconciles human beings.” Thus, the revealing and saving work of the Spirit, which the embodied and somatic-sensory ministry of Jesus demonstrates, also manifests itself in “the palpability, tactility, and embodied expressivity of Pentecostal worship” (182).

<sup>606</sup> In fact, Mark, unlike Matthew and Luke, underlines that Jesus’ hands are the agent of doing miracles. People in his hometown are astonished, asking, “What deeds of power are being done by his hands?” (6:2) Matthew 13:55 says, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power?” Luke omits these words.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid., 182-83. Cultural anthropologists outline three modes making up human beings: emotion-fused thought (eye-heart), self-expressive speech (mouth-ears), and purposeful action (hands-feet). Out of these three, the last outward human behavior covers human actions upon the world of persons and things. Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insight from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 73-75.

<sup>608</sup> Yong, 183.

engagement with this suppressed man engenders intersubjectivity as well as healing. Jesus is infiltrated into the defiled subject to the extent that both bodies are ejected from the symbolic order. With this man, Jesus is and becomes an Other.

Additionally, Jesus' last action in this engagement creates a sense of otherness. Jesus looks up to heaven (*ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν*) and sighs (*ἐστέναξεν*), saying “Ephphatha” (*ἐφφαθά*), which means, “Be opened!” (*διανοίχθητι*, v. 34).<sup>609</sup> While scholars argue that such an utterance of a foreign word is to be attributed to Hellenistic conventions, I interpret this particular action as causing God’s intervention. The action of Jesus’ looking heavenward is familiar to the reader. In the scene of Jesus’ baptism, he sees the heavens opened (*εἶδεν σχιζομένους οὐρανούς*) and then the Spirit descending upon (into) him (*τὸ πνεῦμα... καταβαῖνον εἰς αὐτόν*). What follows is a voice from heaven (1:10-11). Another place presenting this same posture toward heaven is the story of Jesus’ feeding of the multitude: “He looked up to heaven (*ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν*), and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them...” (6:40). In these events Jesus’ posture toward heaven causes the descent of the Spirit, the multiplication of food, and the healing.

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<sup>609</sup> When Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter in Mark 5:41, he used an Aramaic word. Here, again, he speaks a strange word. This practice was regarded as having magical power, which was a common motif of Hellenistic miracles. Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel, Mark’s World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989, 1996), 186. Smith argues that *talitha koum* circulated even “without translation as a magical formula.” Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 95. Regarding the origin of *ephphatha*, however, Collins contends that, while this word is regarded as Aramaic, the expression *ephphatha* and a description of techniques for healing are viewed as inconsistent because their “origins lay in the conflation of a Palestinian narrative about an exorcism and a Hellenistic tale about a wonder-worker.” Collins, “Jesus’ Ministry to the Deaf and Dumb,” 29.

The nature of these events, however, is not explained in terms of glory and power. As the affirmation of God in heaven turns into silence (1:11; 15:34; cf. 9:7; 11:25), the intervention of the Spirit is not the indication of splendorous coronation but instead anticipates the battle with the satanic power (1:12-13). The bread with which Jesus feeds the multitude hints at the breaking and sharing of his body. In our story, Jesus' looking heavenward brings about a silent and mysterious intervention in the body of the man, amid exceedingly zealous preaching (*μᾶλλον περισσότερον ἐκήρυξσον*; 7:36; cf. 10:48; 14:31). Jesus' looking toward heaven and his following actions are distinguished from the attitude of the Pharisees who seek a sign from heaven (*σημεῖον ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανὸν*, 8:11).<sup>610</sup> Jesus sighs deeply in his spirit (*ἀναστενάξας τῷ πνεύματι*) about their different view of heaven as the source of signs and wonders (cf. 13:22). Now Jesus turns his eyes heavenward with a sigh (*ἐστέναξεν*) and with the word *εφφαθα* (7:34). This action highlights his yearning for God's intervention, while expressing solidarity with the linguistic other.<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> This difference makes it clear that for Jesus heaven is the source that empowers him to work for the multitude and the sick, not a source for miracles.

<sup>611</sup> Some manuscripts, such as D 0131 *f<sup>3</sup>*, have *ἀνεστέναξεν* for *ἐστέναξεν*. Mark describes Jesus as sighing twice in his Gospel. Jesus' sigh is an expression both of his anguish about the present generation, which the Pharisees represent by seeking a sign, and of his sympathy for the other, who is excluded from the generation's dominant system. His use of foreign language such as *talitha koum* and *ephphatha* may not be really foreign for Jews in Jesus' time, but both in the narrative world and in the time of Mark this local language delivers a sense of otherness against the dominant language system. Tolbert also points out that for Mark's audience who spoke in Greek those Aramaic words might have sounded foreign or esoteric. Tolbert, 186. Malina states that while Greek and Semitic dialects were the usual languages, the common language was Common Greek throughout the area as part of the Roman Empire. Malina, *The New Testament World*, 10.

Later, Jesus once again employs strange words, which actually are not foreign to him (it is his tongue!). This time the words are accompanied not by sighing but by crying out (ἐβόησεν/ἀφεὶς...φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, 15:34, 37). With this cry, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*” (cf. Psalm 22:1), Jesus becomes a total other from people, as well as from God, because God the father is silent to the cry of his son, who also remains a stranger to the people.<sup>612</sup> Jesus becomes completely the Other at the most critical moment of his life, as his whole life demonstrated his being othered by being with many others—those unclean and outcast.

Moreover, Jesus is depicted as passive in the Passion. At one point, he described himself as having the power of binding “the strong man,” but now he is bound, just as John the Baptizer was (6:17; 15:1). In the binding, Jesus is also symbolically with those bound, such as the Gerasene demoniac and the deaf and mute man. Moreover, Jesus is passively delivered, again like John (1:14; and 3:19; 9:31; 10:33; 14:10, 42; 15:1, 10, 15; cf. 13:9). Furthermore, he is penetrated in many ways: by peoples’ gaze and mockeries (10:34; 15:20, 31, ἐμπαίζειν; vv. 15:17, 19-20); by being scourged (15:15, φραγελλώσας; cf. 10:34, μαστιγώσουσιν); by being forced to wear the color purple and a crown of thorns (15:17); by being struck on the head with a reed (15:19, ἔτυπτον). Jesus, who used his

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<sup>612</sup> According to Fowler, while the characters in the story mistake Jesus’ cry in Aramaic as an appeal to the prophet Elijah, only the (implied) reader understands the meaning of the cry, because Mark provides the Greek translation: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Fowler, 73-74. It is also the case for our passage. When Jesus says “*Ephaththa*” in the healing of the man, the word has different effects. The characters in the story see that Jesus’ use of the word causes healing, not necessarily knowing the meaning of the word. As scholars argue, they might be familiar with the power of such esoteric words for healing. On the other hand, the reader understands what the word means, because of the Greek rendering (ὅτι ἐστιν διανοίχθητι, “that is, ‘Be opened’”) and sees how the word exactly comes into effect.

spit for curing, becomes the object upon which people spit (7:33; 8:23, *πτύειν*; 10:34; 14:65; 15:19 *ἔμπτύειν*). Finally, by being crucified the body of Jesus becomes abject (15:25).<sup>613</sup>

Although Mark 15:28 does not appear in most English translations, the majority of the manuscripts include the quotation from Isaiah 53:12 LXX: “and the scripture was fulfilled which say, ‘and he was reckoned to be among the transgressors’ (*καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων ἔλογίσθη*).” The transgressors are those who are outside of the law, order, and the system. It may be more accurate to say that Jesus is transgressed. Jesus is, as he appears, passive and abject. He dys-appears and finally disappears.<sup>614</sup> Despite this absence of the body, it is present through his somatic engagement with the voiceless, the powerless and abject

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<sup>613</sup> Perkins argues that the abject body in Christian discourse functions to challenge the social perspective, denigrating some people as contaminated, disgusting, and unworthy because of their close association with the body and its disgusting aspects. Citing Kristeva’s idea of the abject body—“the body falling away into the cadaver” that provides a “horrifying spectacle,” Perkins maintains that Christian writings on the resurrection emphasize “the oozing demise of the body as proof that this material body is precisely what the Lord promises to raise up, since the soul need no raising.” Thus, resurrection discourse, along with the concept of the abject body, functions as social statement. Perkins, 93, 100-101.

<sup>614</sup> See Chapter One, the section “Critical Terms” (1). The body disappears: As Jesus’ divine power is underscored in his healing, his human body recedes from our perceptual field even though his healing is best characterized as bodily contacts and actions, such as taking (*κρατέω*, 1:31; 5:41; *ἐπιλαμβάνομαι* 8:23), raising (*ἐγείρω*, 1:31; 9:27) and touching (*ἀπτομαι*, 1:41; 7:33 8:22; 10:13) the sick by the hand, and laying a hand upon the sick (*ἐπιτίθημι*, 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). In addition, Jesus is presented as embracing children in his arms (*ἐναγκαλίζομαι*, 9:36; 10:16). Moreover, his body is touched by the sick (3:10; 5:27, 28, 30, 31; 6:56). (2) The body dys-appears: The palpability of this body becomes patent only when his body is problematized as his Passion unfolds. In addition to the bodily penetration outlined above, his body is taken and becomes the object of capture (*κρατέω*, 3:21; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 49, 51; *ἐπιβάλλω*, 14:46). (3) Ultimately, the body disappears: The body that was visible and palpable in the Passion is absent in the final scene of the original Gospel.

subjects. It is therefore mystery that the absent body engenders intersubjectivity among those transgressed.

### *Understanding and Intersubjectivity*

In Chapter One, I described the concept of “understanding” in Mark as the embodied perception of an encounter which brings about intersubjectivity and interrelationality. Consequently, the intersubjectivity of bodies in contact implies such embodied knowing. In reading the story of Mark 7:31-37, my attention is drawn to Jesus’ somatic engagement with an other, not to Jesus’ magical or technical healing of the ill person. In this intersubjective engagement, I see the man as achieving the understanding that Jesus called on his disciples to have. I will now demonstrate that such understanding and such intersubjectivity through embodiment are subversive.

When Jesus looks up to heaven and sighs, exclaiming *Ephaththa*, the man’s ears (hearing, *αὐτοῦ αἱ ἀκοαὶ*) are said to have been “opened” (*ἡνοίγησαν*, v. 35) and the shackle of his tongue removed (*ἐλύθη*). The words *διανοίγω* and *ἀνοίγω*, as well as *λύω*, are in the passive form. The opening of hearing is a symbolic expression for “understanding” (*συνίημι*) in Mark’s narrative.<sup>615</sup> Such understanding (*σύνεσις*) is rooted in the heart (*διάνοια*, and also *καρδία*), and thus “understanding” and “opening (of hearing)” are related to the heart. This sense of “opening” or “understanding” stands apart from the pursuit of rational reasoning or the mastery of knowledge. Such understanding,

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<sup>615</sup> Collins argues that the word *κωφός* in 7:32 and 37, which can be rendered “deaf” only or “deaf and dumb,” is metaphorically used to present those who are without knowledge in ancient Greek writers as well as in the Bible. Collins, “Jesus’ Ministry to the Deaf and Dumb,” 12-36, 13.

which is equivalent with faith and is also given by God, constitutes the concept of discipleship in Mark's narrative (4:40; 8:21; 12:28-34).<sup>616</sup> The nature of this understanding ("being opened") corresponds to Jesus' saying, "To you has been *given the mystery* of the kingdom of God..." (4:11).

In addition to the passive nature of the man's understanding, another element peculiar to this story is that such understanding occurs in silence. Here again the secrecy motif appears when Jesus charges people to tell no one. Yet, the proclamation of what Jesus has done is unpreventable. People speak even more eagerly—in direct speech—about Jesus' deed not only for this particular man (*κωφὸν καὶ μογιλάλον*) but for the deaf and mute (*τοὺς κωφὸν καὶ ... ἀλάλους*)—even about "all the things" he has done (7:37). In stark contrast, the man who is now able to hear and speak is quiet. Although it is stated that he speaks rightly (*ὁρθῶς*), what he speaks is not heard in the text.

I argue that this silence, in the midst of enthusiastic proclamation, functions to resist the stabilization that language seeks and to obscure the boundary between the normal and the abnormal. First, preaching or proclamation signifies the desire of Mark or the early Christians to transmit the gospel—the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which represents a counter-testimony to Roman imperial power. Jan Assman states that

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<sup>616</sup> Likewise, in the Old Testament tradition "understanding" is the property and gift of God (1 Kgs 3:9; Dan 2:21). See Behm and Conzelmann in Kittel and Friedrich, *TDNT* 4:963–67; and 7:888–96. See the uses of *νοέω* (perceive) in 7:18; 8:17; 13:14 and *συνίημι* (understand) in 4:12; 6:52; 7:14; 8:17, 21). See Jin Young Choi, "The Misunderstanding of Jesus' Disciples in Mark: An Interpretation from a Community-Centered Perspective," Nicole W. Duran, Teresa Okure, Daniel M. Patte (eds.), *Mark: Texts @ Contexts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 63. Like the deaf and mute man, the blind man at Bethsaida is able to clearly see due to Jesus' healing (8:22–26). The deaf and dumb man's hearing ability and the blind man's recovered sight bracket the scene in which the disciples are described as lacking such an understanding.

language has two formalizing functions in everyday life: communication and transmission.<sup>617</sup> Concerning the latter function, he states, “a formalized utterance is a carrier of memory, a mnemonic mark in being both an element of tradition and memorable for future recourse.”<sup>618</sup> For Assman, therefore, formalization in speech and language is related to “stabilization,” which makes meaning permanent.<sup>619</sup> When an utterance is formalized, it becomes a text. Mark repeats and thereby transmits what Jesus has done not only through the narrator but also through the preaching of those who are healed by Jesus, such as the cleansed leper and the healed demoniac. The former preaches and shows the priest that he has been cleansed; the latter preaches and tells his community that he has been restored to his “right mind” (*σωφρονοῦντα*, 5:15). Those healed return to the status of the normal.<sup>620</sup> They clearly proclaim and transmit the truth about Jesus the Messiah and the Son of God. We have also seen this desire to transmit the tradition and present power in the extended ending of the Gospel.

Oral culture in Rabbinic Judaism witnesses to the desire expressed in anxiety in oral culture. Martin Jaffee argues that anxiety about the preservation of the Torah as attained by transmission based in human memory—that is, Torah in the Mouth—in rabbinic culture is closely associated with anxiety about guarding the identity of the

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<sup>617</sup> Jan Assmann, “Form as a Mnemonic Device,” *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark*, Richard Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper, and John Miles Foley (eds.) (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 72.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> In this respect, it is said that Jesus not only heals physical illness but also recovers the social relationships of the healed persons whose illness had brought alienation from the family, the community, and the society.

discipleship communities of rabbinic learning.<sup>621</sup> Oral tradition was the possession of an elite circle of men, and thus the loss of Torah meant a loss of manhood and self.<sup>622</sup> This rabbinic cultural identity was facilitated by excluding three groups of people: Gentiles, undisciplined Jews, and women. Torah in the Mouth was the border marker between Israel and the rest of humanity, but a Jewish man or woman who was ignorant of Torah in the Mouth was also regarded as a Gentile.<sup>623</sup> Not only the female but also the feminine were rigorously excluded from the male discursive domain of the discipleship circle, since those ignorant or nonobservant of Torah, the so-called ‘ammey ha-’arets, were placed in opposition to maleness and thus were feminized. What is interesting in Jaffee’s argument is that the feminine is not a passive presence which the disciple actively dominates through his own masculine mastery, but rather it is “embodied in social others—undisciplined Jews and their women as actively hostile, aggressive agents” which threaten the disciples’ anxiously cultured identity as a Jew and a man.<sup>624</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Martin S. Jaffee, “Gender and Otherness in Rabbinic Oral Culture: On Gentiles, Undisciplined Jews, and Their Women,” *Performing the Gospel*, 21-23. Considering the limitation of literacy as well as the scarcity of the written text, “Torah in Mouth” became part of the divine gift of Torah, distinguished from the “Torah in Script.”

<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 24, 42. Similarly, in the Greco-Roman rhetorical culture, Gunderson argues, “Both the memory of rhetoric and the rhetoric of memory conspire to reproduce masculine authority.” Erik Gunderson, *Declamation, Paternity, and Roman Identity: Authority and the Rhetorical Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29.

<sup>623</sup> Jaffee argues that the gendered logic applied to women creates ambiguity. While women are excluded in the transmission of Torah, “in the monotheistic rhetoric represented by Torah in the Mouth as a symbol of revelation, Jewish women are gendered as male only to the degree that they are conceived collectively as part of the people Israel over against the feminized Gentile nations...Theirs, however, is a thoroughly derivative maleness, extended to them only in a formal sense because of their inclusion in the polity of Israel.” Jaffee, 30.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid., 34.

The masculine mastery of a body of knowledge and its transmission as well as the subsequent exclusion of the feminine other are not the mark only of rabbinic oral culture. Any logo(s)centric culture has this tendency. Mark’s Gospel is not an exception, at least on the surface level, since its emphasis on *logos* reflects the subject people’s desire to make meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ persistent through the formalized utterance—preaching.<sup>625</sup> However, silence tells a truth, just as Jesus is present in absence. As silent women embody truth, so does the healed deaf and mute man speak the truth in silence.

The man is admitted to the symbolic system or the social rationality by acquiring language and even speaking “rightly.” Nevertheless, his ability to enunciate is not locked in the formalization of the *logos*. What he says is not integrated into the tradition, but rather his silence suggests resistance to transmitting the Truth. Instead of making his speech part of the text, his body becomes a text in which the touch of Jesus and the trace of his life—the mystery—is embodied. Not necessarily making his voice heard and his speech known, he speaks “rightly.” While “formalized” or “normalized” speech transmits the truth and tradition, unformalized utterance or even silence can also demonstrate a truth through embodiment. Silence does not mean ignorance or anomaly. The absence of a record in history does not indicate that there was no event. He is not involved in making the Tradition, but he lives tradition. He knows, understands, in his own way.

Therefore, the fact that the man speaks in silence as a consequence of Jesus’ healing obscures the boundary between normal and abnormal. Jesus does not simply transfer the man from the status of abnormality to that of normality by his healing; rather,

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<sup>625</sup> In this regard, preaching and silence as contrasting and co-existing themes in Mark correspond to the presence and absence of Jesus, respectively.

he blurs boundaries and challenges the norm that distinguishes between the normal and the abnormal. While Jesus' healing is predominantly viewed as the manifestation of the divine power, my reading illuminates different aspects of his healing. The healing as somatic engagement is subversive in two ways: first, politically, in that it is the act of struggling against the power that restricts the body and human conditions, and, second, socially, in that it is the act of transgressing bodily boundaries and of solidarity with the transgressed. Moreover, it is subversive because intersubjectivity and knowing through embodiment cannot be captured by the dominant order. In this sense, "mystery" is the coded language of subjected people.

### Postcolonial Corporeality and the Inscription of Language

#### *Feminization of American Asia*

It is not my intention to uphold the binary opposition between Western *logos* and non-Western or Asian silence but rather to propose a reading of the text in the Asian American context. Just as a reading that highlights knowing and proclaiming Jesus' divine power as the essential features of discipleship should be contextualized in Western andro-logocentric culture, so does my reading lead me to see overlapping characteristics between the deaf and mute man and Asians in the U.S. As the man in our story is presented as silent and passive, so have Asians in the U.S. been silenced and feminized.

The West has conquered not only physical territories in the form of colonial-militaristic imperialism, but also minds, selves, cultures in the form of modernist,

rationalist, and liberal “civilization,” and its concomitant imperialism.<sup>626</sup> Thus, modern colonialism has coercively instituted “enduring hierarchies of subjects and knowledges,” dividing the colonizer and the colonized, the scientific and the superstitious.<sup>627</sup> In this construction of the Self and the Other, the traditional conceptualization of gender has been applied to account for the West’s sense of economic and political superiority over Asia by projecting the latter as a “diametrically opposed feminine Other.”<sup>628</sup> In this way Asian men and women are collectively feminized.<sup>629</sup> While the feminization of Asian Americans is related to U.S. economic and political motives, the history of Asian immigration witnesses to the fact that cultural assumptions about the eccentric religious

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<sup>626</sup> Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 15.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid.

<sup>628</sup> I have already cited gender stereotypes attached to the West and Asia from Jinqi Ling, “Identity Crisis and Gender Politics: Reappropriating Asian American Masculinity,” in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Cheung (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 314.

<sup>629</sup> Of course, there are different views of Asian American cultural politics. Thus, Asian American male writers such as Frank Chin, Jeffrey Paul Chan, and Ben Tong accuse some female writers such as Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan of “feminization” with respect to Asian American men who have struggled against the “racist stereotype of the dominant white culture.” Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 76. On the contrary, Asian American feminist writers argue that this Chinese nationalism repeats the oppression that Asian Americans have suffered by promoting belligerent masculinity and imposing oppression upon Asian American women, as well as other non-dominant groups. Patti Duncan, *Tell This Silence: Asian American Women Writers and the Politics of Speech* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), 131-33. Yet, the feminine construction of Asians, and also Asian descendants in the U.S. context, is not a new idea, but can be traced back to Orientalism, the study of the Orient. According to Said, Orientalism enforced the binary opposition between Europe and the Orient. While colonized people are irrational, barbaric, sensual, and feminine, Europeans are rational, civilized, sexually controllable, and masculine. Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 45.

practices or immorality of Asians facilitated the enactment of prohibition laws against such immigration, which in fact was based on economic reasons as well.<sup>630</sup>

Along with the imposition of gender and religious stereotypes upon Asian Americans, I maintain that language is also used against the feminized other. Asian silence in the U.S. context characterizes the passivity of Asians and earns for them a collective attribute as the feminine. The monolingualism that the U.S. has fostered constitutes a homogenous national identity.<sup>631</sup> The flip side of this phenomenon is the imposition of English on “foreign” bodies/tongues, which effects their sense of identity as unstable, because only a mastery of language attests to authentic American identity.<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake* (Boston: Shambhala Publication, 1992), 76.

<sup>631</sup> This scheme may be seen at work in the bill (HB 2281) that Arizona passed in 2010 to ban the teaching of ethnic studies in public schools. According to this bill, any courses or classes focusing on an ethnicity and advocating ethnic solidarity are illegitimate and even understood as threatening the national identity (“the overthrow of U.S. government,” “resentment toward any race and class”). See Hee-Jung Sernity Joo and Christina Lux, “Dismantling Bellicose Identities: Strategic Language Games in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *DICTÉE*,” *JTAS* 4, no. 1 (2012): 3. Loomba also argues, “Language emerges not as the creation of the speaking subject; rather the subject becomes so only by schooling his [sic] speech to a socially determined system of linguistic prescriptions.” Language constructs subjects. Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 36.

<sup>632</sup> Concerning the corporeal effect of language imposition, Certeau’s idea of the body as a social text, explained in Chapter Four, is again helpful. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 1984), 131-53. Exploring the history of writing, he illuminates how writing replaced speaking in the Europe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and how this shift from an oral to a “scriptural economy” has influenced the body and its subjectivity. The text began to be written by the literate elite. They had a tool for producing meaning and thus producing reality. Collectively, they composed western history. Ordinary people became the consumers of the production of writing. Here I highlight language as a societal law, which is inscribed on the body. I discussed above how, when this law is engraved and the body becomes the text, the body cries. I regarded this cry as an act of resistance. This corporeal experience and subjectivity are powerfully expressed in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). While Asian American

Hence, language is an apparatus with which to construct and secure the Self by doing violence to the Other's body, identity, and history. As Sneja Gunew demonstrates, English writes on the body as a technology of subjectivity and a disciplining of bodies.<sup>633</sup>

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee* demonstrates how the cultural colonialism of language imposition and acquisition has had an impact upon her identity and body.<sup>634</sup> Cha, a one-and-a-half generation Korean who immigrated to the U.S. at eleven, senses that she belongs to neither America nor Korea. Her identity is fluid in the in-between

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male writers of literature have spoken about the gendered imposition brought upon them, Asian American female authors, doubly marginalized by colonialism and patriarchy, have captured their identity crisis in the inscription of language on the body.

<sup>633</sup> While English itself does not automatically convey an imperial or colonial charge, it is not neutral, because it can function not only to transmit dominant values but also as a disciplinary system which inscribes oppressive rules and regulations on the foreign bodies. Sneja Gunew, *Haunted Nation: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms* (London: Routledge, 2004), 51-52.

<sup>634</sup> *Dictee* has received critical attention from literary, postcolonial, and feminist critics. Especially because of its disjointed style, shifting perspectives, fragmented stories, and challenge to authorities, *Dictee* is regarded as a postmodern literary work. For critics in biblical studies and theology, see Tat-Siong Benny Liew, *What is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics: Reading the New Testament* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 115-32; and Min-Ah Cho, "The Body, To be Eaten, To the Written: A Theological Reflection on the Act of Writing in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee*," in *Women, Writing, Theology: Transforming a Tradition of Exclusion*, ed. Emily A. Holmes and Wendy Farley (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2011), 183-206. Liew and Cho, who share immigrant and feminist concerns in reading *Dictee* with me, also recognize language issues in the text. However, while Liew focuses on intertextuality based on the multiple traditions which has Cha live with, Cho is immersed in the topics of writing and the body of Christ from a theological perspective. Both of them understand that Cha resists religious authorities through either intertextuality or writing. While critics approach *Dictee* and its various topics from different perspectives, I pay more attention to the orality of language and the relationship between the corporeal dimension of language imposition/acquisition and the postcolonial and minority immigrant experience as a female subject.

space.<sup>635</sup> Language plays a significant role in the disruption of identity caused by multilayered cultural colonization. This disjunction is not only accompanied by psychological symptoms but also illustrated as having physical effects, as the course of her language acquisition manifests a “cracked tongue,” “broken tongue.”<sup>636</sup> She writes, “To bite the tongue. Swallow. Deep. Deeper. Swallow. Again even more. Just until there would be no more of organ. Organ no more. Cries.”<sup>637</sup> It is not only her experience but also that of her mother, who was born in Manchuria to first-generation Korean exiles during the Japanese occupation of the country. Cha recalls her mother’s childhood, “The tongue that is forbidden is your own mother tongue. You speak in the dark. In the secret. The one that is yours. Your own. You speak very softly, you speak in a whisper. In the dark, in secret. Mother tongue is your refuge. It is being home. Being who you are. Truly.

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<sup>635</sup> Resisting any solid identity in terms of nationality, blood relation, race, gender, class, and so on, Cha claims “Tertium Quid neither one thing nor the other.” Cha, *Dictee*, 13. However, such hybridity is further complicated by the Japanese colonization of Korea, the Korean War, and the later political uprisings in the country. Born in 1951, Cha lived in the aftermath of Korean War. In 1962 her family moved to Hawaii and then to Northern California. Thus, Cha questions the idea of “universal history” and “fixed identity.” Duncan, *Tell This Silence*, 131. Cha, *Dictee*, 75.

<sup>636</sup> Like Cha, who represents the instability and disruption of immigrant identity through continuously changing multiple voices, Maxine Hong Kingston also depicts the corporeal effect of language acquisition. The protagonist in *The Woman Warrior*, who is the authorial self, realizes that silence goes with being a Chinese girl. And her shameful dumbness cracks her voice in two. What is inscribed on her tongue is not only the law of imperial language but also that of patriarchy, as shown in her mother’s cutting of her frenum at an early age to suppress her ability to speak. Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005). 165-66. Gunew uses the example of Eva Hoffman, a Jew in Poland who later moved to Vancouver in her teens. Hoffman speaks of linguistic corporeal violence this way: “My voice is doing funny things. It does not seem to emerge from the same part of my body.” Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*, (New York: Dutton, 1989), 121-22. Gunew, *Haunted Nation*, 62.

<sup>637</sup> Cha, *Dictee*, 69. Cha acquired English as the second language and later another foreign, imperial language, French.

To speak makes you sad. Yearning.”<sup>638</sup> The daughter is united with her mother in broken tongues, dislocated hearts, and fragmented memories. Calling her mother and yearning for the refuge of her mother tongue, she cries, “I speak another tongue, a second tongue.”<sup>639</sup>

Moreover, Cha connects with other women, such as a Korean sacrificial heroine Yu Guan Soon and Joan of Arc, by reclaiming their bodies—though fragmented—and weaving their suffering and resistance into a story, not History. Cha argues, “To the other nations who are not witnesses, who are not subject to the same oppressions, they cannot know.”<sup>640</sup> The words of violence and oppression written upon the bodies of subjected people are “unfathomable” for the colonizer, whose official History takes for granted the dehumanization of another nation or race. Cha implies that knowledge is not formed from the official history but from the experiences of subjects, which are incomprehensible and indescribable.<sup>641</sup>

For Cha, therefore, historiography serves not to give information or instruct, but to uncover fragmented memories, bodies, and cries. What is important is thus the act of writing itself.<sup>642</sup> Writing is to inscribe wounds and pains in the body, resisting the rule of

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<sup>638</sup> Cha, *Dictee*, 45-46.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>641</sup> Hence, I grasp the notion of knowledge in *Dictee* as existing along the line of the haunting that I dealt with in Chapter 3.

<sup>642</sup> Spahr cites Trinh to stress the significance of writing as an act in itself rather than as instrument, “Writing thus reduced to a mere vehicle of thought may be used to orient toward a goal or to sustain an act, but it does not constitute an act in itself. This is how the division between the writer/the intellectual and the activists/the masses becomes

grammar or “conformity to the norms.”<sup>643</sup> I prefer to describe Cha’s writing as a speech act—the act of speaking with broken, foreign tongues, which is a visible reminder of oppression and fragmentation. Her writing performance, which embodies the speech act on paper, represents, however, not only the split identity of the linguistic and feminine other but also her subjectivity. This subjectivity reclaims the bodies, identities, and histories of those multiply marginalized by colonialism, patriarchy, and normativity, but “what is reclaimed is a liminal collection of fluids and borders” through the act of speaking and the cry of the body, particularly the female body.<sup>644</sup>

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possible.” Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 16. Juliana Spahr, *Everybody’s Autonomy: Connective Reading and Collective Identity* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001), 119, 121.

<sup>643</sup> Trihn, *Woman*, 17.

<sup>644</sup> Spahr, *Everybody’s Autonomy*, 149. Cha demonstrates historical consciousness by engaging with colonial, anti-colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial histories and discourses to evoke political advocacy. June argues that the writings of some women from ethnic communities like Cha’s often employ the symbol of the female fragmented body “marked by the wound, the mutilation, or the scar”—historical traumas of a person or community. The body functions as “an active agent in remembering history” and as connecting women (12). Concurring with Butler, she argues “the body, while it is socially constructed, is not a passive site of inscription, but rather, is an active and performing agent” (11). Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Thus, *Dictee* is a piece of postmodern literary work which does not lack historicity, as Jameson argues in his critiques of postmodernism. Fredrik Jameson, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Poster (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 125; Pamela B. June, *Fragmented Female Body and Identity: The Postmodern, Feminist and Multiethnic Writings of Toni Morrison, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Phyllis Alesia Perry, Gayl Jones, Emma Pérez, Paula Gunn Allen, and Kathy Acker* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 7.

### *Agency of Voiceless Voice*

“To Make a Speech in Such Tongues.”<sup>645</sup> I find Cha’s *Dictee* helpful for the discussion regarding the various elements related to language in Mark 7:31-37, such as muteness, silence, foreign language, translation, proclamation, *lingua franca*, and enunciation. Moreover, her interlacing of language with history and the politics of identity and body, based on her colonial and minority immigrant experience, helps to illumine my reading of the story of the deaf and mute man as a linguistic and feminized Other.

The man emerges as multiply marginalized in the colonized territory, in which the dominant forms of culture and language practice are imposed: he is a male, but not an elite; he is expected to be masculine, but appears to be passive; he is not only physically disabled, but also regarded as ritually unclean and socially abnormal; he inhabits a Greek city, but one which has been colonized; and, finally, Greek culture grants him privilege, but he cannot speak Greek. He is a subjected person in the system of power.

Interpretations are also apt to reinforce his marginalized status by silencing his voice or forcing him to speak. Such interpretations stress only Jesus’ power to heal the man or demand him to proclaim Jesus’ powerful deeds. Rather than letting the silenced man speak out, however, I am attentive to his silence and the act of speaking itself. Attending to this silenced subject means also listening to him as he reclaims his agency in his own way. Moreover, I understand that Jesus cures the man not as a miracle worker or doctor but as another Other, who brings healing and liberation of the whole person and in doing so evinces his solidarity with the oppressed.

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<sup>645</sup> Cha, *Dictee*, 17.

When the man is brought to Jesus for healing, he is silent and passive. His deafness and dumbness was problematic, so that his body became a thematic object—thus, he dys-appears.<sup>646</sup> His muteness is loud enough to call attention from people. Ian Buhanan argues that speech act structures “our sense of belonging to the extent that it becomes invisible or transparent as a medium of interaction.”<sup>647</sup> The more language is invisible or inaudible, the more easily one experiences being at home.<sup>648</sup> Yet, the man’s voicelessness is more visible than voice because of his otherness. This otherness is never an abstract notion but points to an embodied, historical, and political presence. As Cha’s broken and cracked tongue signifies the fragmented body, identity, and history, so do the man’s closed ears and his shackled tongue disclose his condition of exclusion and oppression.

Jesus’ use of the foreign expression in the healing of the deaf and mute man displays his alliance with this suppressed man. The two of them joined as linguistic others in the territory where the imperial language is spoken. Rather than considering Jesus’ utterance of “*Ephphatha*” as an esoteric spell or an incantation practiced in the ancient world, I recognize the subversive power of his word and Mark’s translation. According to Vicente L. Rafael, translation involves a political dimension, because it

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<sup>646</sup> Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 77, 86.

<sup>647</sup> Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage, 2000), 96.

<sup>648</sup> For example, foreignness of language makes the speaking subject feel detachment from home in a way that different tongues and even voicelessness turn visible. In other words, when my speech act is visible because of the foreignness of language, I feel I lack a sense of belonging.

requires a process of determining either approval or avoidance of social order.<sup>649</sup> Thus, translation “points to a separation between the original meaning and the received meaning that allows room for various subversions.”<sup>650</sup>

In our story, Mark translates the Aramaic word *ephphatha* into a Greek word, meaning “Be opened” (*Ἐφφαθα*, ὅ ἐστιν Διανοίχητι). The effect of translation is that other characters, while they recognize neither the meaning of the foreign word nor the translated meaning, only see Jesus’ act of enunciating. While the reader also does not know the original meaning of the word, however, she is expected to grasp the meaning of “being opened” as equivalent to “understanding.” The reader faces the critical question that the translation raises: Who is the one who knows? While Jesus’ use of the foreign word exhibits his solidarity with the man in otherness, Mark’s translation provides space for the inversion of social and symbolic order, insofar as the mystery is secretly given to this multiply marginalized man in the midst of loud-voiced proclamation. What he knows is unspeakable, because those who do not experience the same oppression and the radical relationality that brings Jesus unto death do not know.

Just as what the cured man knows is unfathomable, so now he speaks rightly but is silent. His voice is not heard; this time, he disappears. However, if one has attended to his silence, she engages in his act of speech: without voice he speaks rightly—not to say something, proclaim, or propagate, but just to speak. To resist. It may be the imperial

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<sup>649</sup> Rafael states, “It draws boundaries between what can and cannot be admitted into social discourse even as it misdirects the construction of its conventions.” Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 211. Cited in Spahr, *Everybody’s Autonomy*, 136.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid.

language that now he is able to speak.<sup>651</sup> He questions *ortho-lalia*. As Cha speaks in a foreign tongue and broken tongue, the man speaks or is forced to speak rightly the language that is still strange to him. For both Cha and the man, speaking is an act of crying. Their enunciations, as well as that of Jesus, are an act of resistance. Such an act demonstrates that they “make speech in such tongues.”

The Western Self has created language and the system of knowledge and has thereby constructed the Other. The othered subjects are forced to know and speak but only within the dominant system. Accordingly, they are represented as incompetent, inferior, or abnormal. However, the law is not always successful in making itself inscribed on the othered body. The body imitates the law, but the law is not fully incarnated because the body resists its rule. Outsiders often disrupt the language system and change the meaning, making meaning for only themselves while using the master’s language. They still speak, even though what they speak is hardly heard. The event of enunciation remains, though what they say is not reported. The speech act continues. What is spoken is still open.

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<sup>651</sup> This reminds me of the speech act of “talking back” on the part of postcolonial feminist biblical scholars. While Dube maintains that the Bible is a colonial text since it has been used to “subjugate other races and nations,” she stands for *claiming back* the liberative power of the Bible by postcolonial people, since “the oppressed can *talk back* to the hegemonic powers in women’s and other marginalized’s own language, that is, in the language of the Bible.” Musa Dube, “Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations (Mt 28:19 a): A Postcolonial Perspective on Biblical Criticism and Pedagogy,” in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998), 229, 232. Donaldson also points to “the capacity of the Bible’s indigenous characters to *talk back*, albeit silently and indirectly, to the subjugators.” Donaldson, “Gospel Hauntings,” 105.

## Conclusion

While a traditional reading of Mark 7:31-37 focuses only on Jesus' healing of the deaf and mute man, I have attempted to listen to the man, who remains silent, even after his shackled tongue has been released through the power of Jesus' touch. To attend to this silent subject, one needs to be aware of how the empire attempts to construct the Self and the Other by way of language as societal law. In both the biblical world and our contemporary society, where one is constrained to speak "normally" and where speaking "eloquently" is acclaimed, speaking subjects who display either madness or muteness are labeled as unclean, defiled, feminine, or irrational. While such abnormality is socially constructed, my interpretation of the shackle of the man's tongue suggests that political oppression also causes those symptoms. Moreover, I have argued that, despite corporeal violence through the imposition of the law upon bodies, these linguistic others have agency.

Jesus' healing of the man under restraint displays his solidarity through somatic engagement, as he also demonstrates in his own passivity in the Passion. Among those transgressed, along with Jesus himself, there are subjects who embody the transcorporeality of the mystery that Jesus' broken body makes possible. Through silence or broken tongues they resist transmitting the truth and thus making their body the text. Cha's text—both the writing and the body—as a speech act bears testimony to the subjectivity, resistance, and connectivity of Asian American women's bodies or feminized Asian bodies in the U.S. Such experience is interrelated with other bodies, memories, and histories through fragmentation, suffering, migration and resistance, providing a

hermeneutical lens for reformulating the question of discipleship in Mark. I have also shown how the embodied speech in silence of the women in Mark, alongside the deaf and mute, declares the experience of Jesus' transcorporeality.

Although the proclamation of Jesus' identity and powerful deeds is seen as a sign of discipleship, it is still true that the mystery works through touching and connecting bodies—the bodies suffering and silent at the margins and cracks of society. In the end, the question of discipleship is not who are the true disciples; it is, rather, whether we have the eyes to see where these events of embodiment are happening, the ears to hear those who speak in silence, and the heart to understand the unfathomable.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This study sets forth a novel interpretation of Mark by focusing on the theme of discipleship from an Asian and Asian American feminist perspective; in so doing, it engages with Markan Studies, an area of study long in the hands of Western interpreters. My aim is not to advance an antithetical position to this history of interpretation but rather to bring to the fore the contextual and ideological nature of this tradition by offering an alternative interpretation from a different social-cultural location and raising a different set of historical questions.<sup>652</sup> Whereas historical-critical interpretation of the Gospel attaches great importance to the topic of christology, with corresponding emphasis on understanding discipleship as knowledge, I contend that it is embodying the mystery of Jesus' body that is essential for discipleship.

I developed this thesis as follows. In the first chapter, I raised the question of discipleship by way of a critical review of the scholarly literature on the topic. In so doing, I discussed a number of critical terms related to discipleship, which I then went on to explore in the subsequent analysis of the texts under consideration. In the second chapter, I began by problematizing the primacy of method, particularly the historical critical method, and then outlined a variety of theoretical frameworks upon which I would draw in formulating my proposed Asian and Asian American hermeneutics. In the

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<sup>652</sup> R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Orientalism, Ethnonationalism, and Transnationalism," *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark Brett (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 423.

next three chapters, I proceeded to analyze the Markan texts in question from this perspective. I highlighted such issues as the following: the Roman Empire's construction of the Other; the reaction of early Christians as colonial subjects to imperial-colonial politics; the representation of Jesus' body and the agency of his followers; and postcolonial appropriations of interpretation. In this final chapter, I should like to summarize the findings of the various chapters and then address various implications and ramifications of this approach to discipleship in Mark.

### Summarizing the Findings

#### *Chapter 1*

I described the main objective of the project as undertaking a different approach to the theme of discipleship, which the Western tradition of interpretation had grounded in the notion of autonomous reason. As point of departure, I began the critical review of the scholarly literature with an assessment of William Wrede's influential work. His theory regarding the "messianic secret" had been a "further crushing blow to the trust in Markan historicity" which had predominated in the liberal "lives of Jesus" of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>653</sup> However, Wrede was no different from his precursors insofar as he too argued that Jesus had lived a non-messianic life and that Mark's text reflected the early Christians' post-Easter experience. Subsequently, Schweitzer asserted that the mystery of the kingdom of God could not be identified with the secret of the messiahship of Jesus. It

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<sup>653</sup> John G. Cook, *The Structure and Persuasive Power of Mark: A Linguistic Approach* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 52-53.

was not possible, he argued, to discover what Mark had meant by the mystery of the kingdom.<sup>654</sup> After all, Schweitzer also sought a “correct” and “genuinely ‘historical’ interpretation of the mystery of the Kingdom of God,” maintaining that Jesus in Mark 4:23 implied a concealed, “supernatural knowledge concerning the plans of God, which only those who have ears to hear—that is, the foreordained—can detect.”<sup>655</sup>

While the knowledge of the kingdom mystery was limited in Schweitzer’s reading, the tension between the mystery and the secret was dissolved in the ensuing historical-theological interpretations. A majority of these associate the question of discipleship with christology, reconstructing the historical situation of Mark’s time and highlighting the negative portrayal of the disciples as failing to understand Jesus’ identity. In literary and narrative studies, however, such failure on the part of the disciples, a literary device of Mark, is viewed as surmountable. Whether discipleship is understood as failed (historical studies) or fallible (literary studies), it is taken to mean following Jesus based on christological knowledge and one’s autonomous will. Such historical-theological construction and literary characterization of the disciples in Mark presuppose that there is objective meaning behind the text and coherent meaning in the

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<sup>654</sup> Schweitzer argues that the transformation of the kingdom mystery into the messianic secret is one of the weakest points in Wrede’s theory. According to Schweitzer, Wrede’s interpretation of Mark 4 was forced to adjust to the theory of the veiled messiahship. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1910; 1959), 346.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid., 356. For Schweitzer, knowing ( $\gamma\iota\pi\omega\sigma\xi\epsilon\nu$ ) is God’s gift. Along with his thoroughgoing eschatology, this argument reflects the critical context after the World War II.

text, respectively. These approaches, however, do not take into account the Roman imperial context in which the Jesus movement or event occurred.

In contrast, sociopolitical and sociocultural interpretations highlight the role of the disciples in the kingdom of God, which is realized through socio-political engagement. Aware of the political implications of discipleship in an imperial context, these approaches need to consider that colonial subjects are not always resistant, but can also accommodate to the imperial logic and practice. Feminist interpretation as another engaging reading seeks to restore women's role in early Christianity or represent the women disciples as ideal. However, a feminist critical approach could be developed without essentializing women's experiences, attending instead to the frameworks of empire as well as of patriarchy.

Postmodern interpretations highlight paradox and ambiguity in discussing boundary issues in Mark. A deconstructive approach to the boundary between insiders and outsiders reorients the question of who are true or failed disciples. Despite such indeterminacy, postmodern interpretations tend to make mystery something to be deciphered. At the same time, "deconstructed" disciples are critically devoid of agency. For a postcolonial interpretation of Mark, however, the disciples' lack of agency is not due to literary deconstruction, but rather to the fact that colonial politics cause oppression by duplicating imperial domination. Other postcolonial interpretations construct disciples as subalterns who resist the empire or are ambivalent, both duplicating and disrupting the imperial ideology.

Based upon the critical examination of the scholarship, I presented overarching themes related to discipleship in Mark. While the topic of discipleship is subordinated to

christological questions in historical-critical and other interpretations, I argue that the term “understanding”—and its cognate equivalents such as “perceive,” “see,” and “hear”—are different from rational knowing. Such understanding means grasping Jesus’ presence in absence, particularly in a situation in which the Roman Empire exercises its vast power by constructing the imperial body. Jesus’ body—broken, crucified, and absent—is opposed to the imperial body; yet, when it is touched and consumed by others, it is fluid. Through this encounter and interaction, bodies are connected and such embodiment causes intersubjectivity. In this way the mystery of Jesus’ body operates in and disrupts the presence of the empire. Discipleship, then, may be seen as embodying the mystery rather than knowing who Jesus is.

## *Chapter 2*

While I argued in Chapter 1 that discipleship was not to be defined as rational knowing of Jesus and autonomous following of him, I contend in chapter 2 that method, particularly historical criticism, does not secure an objective meaning of the text, but instead that the interpreter, her perspective and use of interpretive tools, is most important in this regard. This critique of the primacy of method is supported by the arguments of three biblical critics regarding criticism. First, Dale B. Martin emphasizes the interpreter’s critical reflection on the language and practices of faith in the act of interpretation, acknowledging the limitation of the historical critical method. Second, Stephen D. Moore questions the preoccupation of Biblical Studies with objective methodology itself from a “post-methodological” position. Finally, Fernando F. Segovia examines the development of paradigms of interpretation and criticizes historical

objectivist investigation in terms of its particular mode of discourse. These scholars share a critical position on historical criticism in particular and scientific methodology in general as representing imperial European ideology rooted in the Enlightenment.

The attempt of Western interpreters to advance the knowledge of the historical Jesus or Christ through scientific method influenced an understanding of discipleship as knowledge of Jesus' identity. I seek instead, as Sugirtharajah proposes, a culturally informed reading of the Gospel, as a text written in the Roman imperial context from a postcolonial perspective. In this regard, the postcolonial optic suggested by Segovia is demanding not only in light of the transhistorical reality of imperial-colonial relations involving both the first century and the present but also because it corresponds to Mark's emphasis on the vision ("seeing" as "understanding") of the disciples in the imperial-colonial context.

This optic is at work in three theoretical frameworks that I employ to approach Mark. First, Postcolonial Studies provide insights into how the colonial identity and body are formed through the construction of knowledge (Said) and how haunting as a form of cultural memory disrupts such colonization (Bhabha). These ideas are of help in discovering the construction of imperial and colonial bodies by Rome and the reaction of colonial subjects as seen in Mark's description of Jesus' broken and absent body. Second, Feminist Studies expound the construction of the female body and its agency in the symbolic system. A postcolonial feminist perspective expands the discussion of gender to subalternity and the feminization of Asian descendants in the U.S. This discussion of the female, feminine, and othered body brings attention to the repressed body and the feminization of colonial subjects in Mark. Lastly, Postcolonial Feminist Biblical

Criticism also deals with the topics of the woman's body as the subject of knowing and its agency in connecting displaced and invisible bodies. This kind of knowing—embodied, relational, spiritual—is not only a significant theme in understanding discipleship but also a way of approaching to Mark.

Hence, the hermeneutics of *phronesis* represents an integration of what I read in (front of) the text and how I read it from a postcolonial feminist perspective. A biblical hermeneutics is not a disinterested individual endeavor to interpret the text objectively but a power-involved communal practice of constructing the text and (re)producing meaning and knowledge, as feminist and womanist biblical hermeneutics demonstrate.<sup>656</sup> Korean feminist hermeneutics in particular highlight embodied aspects of such a reading practice, which is centered on life sustained by relationality.

The phronetic reading of Mark emerges from my corporeal experiences in colonial and postcolonial contexts as well as dispositions fostered in my multi-religious and communal culture. In the Western philosophical and hermeneutical tradition, *phronesis* as practical knowledge is distinct from *sophia* as theoretical knowledge. While

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<sup>656</sup> Daniel Patte, as a male, Euro-American, critical exeget, acknowledges the collective nature of what such an identification represents—domination and exclusion by means of “morality of knowledge (criticism)” and asserts that their exegeses are “interested.” According to Patte, however, this hegemonic group is heterogeneous, in which he finds himself among an emerging group of “androcritical” scholars. An androcritical perspective highlights accountability, striving to “speak with others,” rather than “speaking for others” or even “listening to others.” This self-reflective essay was published in 1995, but the guild has not been changed and resists admitting their Euro-American androcentric interpretation as “contextual.” Daniel Patte, “Acknowledging the Contextual Character of Male, European-American Critical Exegeses: An Androcritical Perspective,” *Reading from This Place*, vol. 1: *Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 35-55. For a comprehensive discussion of ethical accountability in multidimensional critical exegesis, see Daniel Patte, *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

in this tradition *phronesis* is not involved in interpretation as the ontological event of understanding but only functions to distinguish true from false interpretation, I argue that understanding (principle) is not separate from moral discernment (process), but rather that understanding and practice can simultaneously take place based on relationality. This also applies to the theme of discipleship. “Understanding” in Mark signifies not objective knowledge of Jesus but establishing an ethical relationship with the “single figure” of Jesus, who was executed on the cross by the imperial power—as if I were haunted by him at this historical juncture. Moreover, interpreting—understanding and performing—such a text entails an ethical commitment to what such a reading calls for in the present postcolonial context.

### *Chapters 3–5*

Based on these theoretical frameworks and the performative hermeneutics of *phronesis*, I proceed to interpret three stories that describe colonial subjects’ perceptions of and encounters with Jesus, all of which take place at boundaries and margins, namely, Mark 6:45–52, 7:24–30, 7:31–37. These events involve Jesus and the disciples or Gentiles and take place in the context of the empire.

I organize these chapters in fivefold fashion. After brief introductions, a first section examines the Empire’s construction of the Other in terms of the body, territory, and language. The second and third sections explore the colonial subjects’ ambivalent responses to the imperial power, along such lines as presence and absence, strategy and tactic, speech and silence. The fourth section discusses the body of Jesus as represented in Mark—an elusive, displaced, and passive body. The fifth section intervenes in the

postcolonial, Asian American context with the question of the agency of the subjects, who are phantom-like, nomadic, and voiceless.

### *Chapter 3*

Chapter 3 analyzes Mark 6:45-52, the story in which the disciples see the *phantasma* of Jesus walking on the sea. While previous interpreters argue that the disciples' vision of Jesus' ghostly appearance represents a misunderstanding of his identity, I viewe such a vision as a haunting through which the colonial past returns by way of the disfigured body of Jesus in the repressed form of social memory. This paradoxical form of Jesus' presence in absence disrupts the imperial presence.

For this reading I investigate how Rome created an imperial ideology of presence not only through political, social, and legal expedients but also through cultural and cultic devices. I further investigate how the empire sought to build a trans-imperial identity by hierarchizing bodies through the legal system. I contend that Mark competed with this trans-imperial identity, paradoxically, by commemorating the crucified body of Jesus among the lowly, thus evoking the occluded past.

As some interpreters maintain, however, Mark resists and replicates the imperial power by depicting Jesus as having divine authority and power, as Mark 1:1 makes especially clear. I show how such is the case in the sea travel stories, particularly 6:45-52, in which the illustration of Jesus' power and his manifestation on the sea assimilate the imperial language and ideas of power, functioning thereby to decenter imperial domination.

On the other hand, the awareness of Jesus' absence emerges in critical defiance of imperial presence. Whereas some scholars maintain that belief in the *parousia* was a form of theological reasoning that sought to cope with the historical reality of Jesus' absence, others argue that the *parousia* represents a colonial mimicry of power in imperial politics. Alternatively, I propose that absence is the counterpart of colonized subjects to imperial presence. In this respect, the sea travel stories not only represent Jesus' presence and power but also disclose a sense of his absence through the metaphor of bread. Ironically, the presence of bread rouses Jesus' followers into the reality of his absence, which incites fear and anxiety.

I further argue that Jesus' phantasmic body, which is an elusive presence negating any identification, resists the imperial construction of the body by manifesting itself as a porous body and evading the imperial presence. Accordingly, the disciples' vision of Jesus' ghostly presence, which is accompanied by emotional disturbance, does not merely imply their misperception but rather constitutes a haunting, which arises from the symptomatic social memory of the violent history regarding the abject body.

Postcolonial theories of haunting and its affective dimension provide helpful insights regarding the formation of the body and identity of the early Christians in the context of imperial-colonial politics. The haunting figure contravenes colonial desire, which seeks to establish the early Christians' cultural identity by assimilating the imperial identity, by reclaiming instead the placeless place and boundless identity of the colonial subjects. Haunting functions thereby as a space for a retrieval of colonial history as well as an alternative way of knowing based on a singular relationship with the phantasmic figure of Jesus.

In place of the traditional interpretation of Mark 6:45-52, which focuses on Jesus' miracle or epiphany and the disciples' failure to understand, my reading is concerned with the representation of Jesus' body as a *phantasma* in the imperial-colonial context. The disciples' vision of the *phantasma* and the affect it causes do not mean a failure of discipleship but rather a call for embodying the broken and boundless body of Jesus and establishing an ethical relation with other histories that haunt the present.

#### *Chapter 4*

Chapter 4 deals with Mark 7:24-30, the story of Jesus' healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter. Traditional interpretations highlight the character of the woman as a Gentile and/or her role in helping Jesus expand his mission to the Gentile territory. Historical critical studies maintain that the story reflects Mark's historical context, in which the Christian mission reached out to the Gentiles or the tension between Jews and Gentiles was heightened. I read the story, however, as a border encounter between two colonized subjects in different social locations but under the same rule of the Roman Empire. My interpretation concentrates on how the body and movement of Jesus are perceived through the woman's *phronesis*.

Whether the Gospel of Mark reflects the historical context of northern Palestine or southern Syria, I argue that such a situation, in which ethnic and religious dynamics and identity politics were at work among Jews and Gentiles, was contingent on the imperial occupation. Thus, geographical markers such as "the other side" and "borders" not only denote the estrangement between the Jewish and Gentile regions but also import

geopolitical complications that generate intersectional identities and cultural complexities.

Not only the category of *hellenis* assigned to the woman in the text but also the positions of interpreters on such identification demonstrate how identity is constructed and how different factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, culture, and religion are involved in this construction. Thus, her identity as a *hellenis* can variously indicate her status as a Gentile in relation to Jews, as a member of the upper class in Greek culture, as an oppressed woman, as a religious other, or as a woman with multiple identities—depending on who it is that identifies this woman. This ideological, constructive position of identity also applies to Jesus. From a postcolonial perspective, I highlight the point at which the woman and Jesus encounter each other as colonized subjects, in addition to complexities present in each of the two identities as well as the dynamics at work between them.

The two scenes—Jesus’ debate with the Jewish religious leaders regarding Jewish purity law and his argument with the woman—display this problematic of intersectional identities. First, Jesus presents heterodox ideas regarding Jewish *doxa* on the purity law and traditions. Then, he appears to hold an orthodox opinion regarding the social system, which creates various boundaries and separate places. I see Jesus’ inconsistency as the ambivalent attitude of a colonized and colonial subject. The woman’s challenge of Jesus with the use of minority tactics results in mutual transformation in this encounter between others.

In addition, I argue that the woman’s tactic embodies “understanding” as a notion of discipleship in Mark—what I see as *phronesis*. She perceives commonality in this

singular event of feeding and life-giving and envisions the burgeoning of the displaced *ochlos-minjung*, including Jews and non-Jews across territories, being brought back to life. The broken and shared bread in the feeding events and the Last Supper signifies the transcorporeal and transpatial body of Jesus.

As the woman's *phronesis* anticipates that this singular encounter between Jesus and the woman at the border, which is relational and transformative, will be expanded across territories, my phronetic reading searches for the trajectory of the broken body among transnationally displaced people today. The mystery that operates through the nomadic trajectory of Jesus' body connects and redeems disjunctions and fractures caused by the empire. The empire's control of identities, bodies, and territories, as in ancient times, is still pervasive, but what discipleship calls for is spirituality to discern this nomadic life of the mystery as well as relationality and interconnectedness in border encounters.

While previous interpretations have focused on Jesus' Gentile mission, crossing the boundary between Jews and Gentiles, along with the woman's virtue and strength, my reading extends the field of vision to the terrain of the Roman Empire, which attempted to construct identities and bodies. Conjoining with the woman's *phronesis*, discipleship is a call to perceive, through the singular encounter with the broken body of Jesus, the commonality of Jesus' life-giving movement among the displaced bodies in the transnational context.

## *Chapter 5*

Chapter 5 addresses Mark 7:31-37, the story of Jesus' healing of the deaf and mute man. I provide a fresh reading of the text in contrast to its usual interpretation in Markan Studies, which has read it as the story of another healing, this one in the Gentile region, in light of Greco-Roman medical or magical convention. My interest, instead, is on how the man is represented as a linguistic other, whom the empire produced and Mark also often stages, and how Jesus stands as a passive subject in solidarity with the man. This chapter discloses the man as one of those who "understand" in Mark in spite of his silence and passivity.

The chapter explores how language represents the societal law that Rome implemented to construct the Other within and outside of the empire. Despite his Greek location, the man is an other, like the Syrophoenician woman and also Jesus, in the colonized land. He lacks the language that the transimperial elites possess and is deprived of masculinity from the Roman rhetorical viewpoint. However, the infatuation of interpreters with an elitist rhetorical approach to the Gospel, which is rooted in the logocentrism of Western philosophical and religious tradition, reinforces the othering of linguistic others like the man in the story.

In contrast to such dominant interpretations, I observe the speech acts that are perceived as ritually unclean, socially abnormal, or politically threatening in Mark. These present madness sometimes and muteness at other times, but both symptoms are caused by the oppressive condition of empire, as seen in my examination of the image of the shackle operating in Mark's narrative. Just as the empire's shackle can bind one's body,

so does it restrict one's tongue. The deaf and mute man stands as repressed in this symbolic order of the empire represented by language.

This fact is distinct when the man is contrasted with other characters who preach after their healing, insofar as his voice is not heard but instead others speak for him. In addition, he is depicted as passive in Jesus' healing, and this passivity is viewed as feminine. Similarly, most of the women in Mark are silent, and such silence comes to a climax in the silence of the women at the end of the Gospel.

Jesus' healing of the sick and the unclean, however, represents his involvement in defilement, which causes intersubjectivity. Through this somatic engagement, Jesus stands with the transgressed, yearning for God's intervention in abject situations in which displaced people suffer. Furthermore, in his own Passion Jesus is passive and his body is penetrated. In this somatic engagement and intersubjectivity engendered by Jesus' corporeal contact, understanding eventuates on the part of the man. Just as Jesus' solidarity with transgressed bodies is subversive, so his act of enunciation, along with his silence, resists andrologocentric normativity, which seeks to stabilize the dominant order by transmitting the truth and controlling the body.

I read this story in the context in which Asian descendants in the U.S. are othered and feminized. The imposition of language—the social law inscribed upon the Asian bodies—has corporeal effects, but such wounds and pains in the tongue and the body do not dictate conformity to the norm. Instead, the body exercises its agency through the act of enunciation with such a broken tongue. Embodied knowing occurs when these othered bodies are connected.

This reading suggests an alternative view of Jesus' healing as somatic engagement, which fosters intersubjectivity with and among those voiceless and invisible, conscious of the imperial construction of the Other through the symbolic system. In consequence, the question of discipleship replaces a christological inquiry concentrated on Jesus' magical power. Such a reading witnesses to the effect that the repressed body—the Asian female and feminine body in the postcolonial American context—can know the mystery and that silence can poignantly speak of it.

### Implications and Ramifications of Project

Having summarized my findings, I return to the themes outlined in Chapter 1 in order to situate my work in Markan Studies. This project could cover neither all the scholarship on Mark nor all the theories with which I engage in intersectional fashion. For a minority reader of the Bible in the context of the academy in the U.S., both the text and the interpretive tradition constitute the ground on which I stand, yet I do so at the margins. Accordingly, I perform an embodied and situated interpretation, using minority tactics across disciplines, traditions, and cultures and delving into such topics as the imperial construction of the body, colonial responses to the empire, and postcolonial ramifications.

To reiterate, the Roman Empire attempted to create the Self in opposition to the Other on a trans-imperial scale by constructing hierarchical bodies, territorializing identities, and controlling these bodies through the imposition of a symbolic system. The way the early Christians as colonial subjects reacted to this imperial presence and power

was ambivalent. While mimicking the imperial logic in presenting Jesus' power, they also contradicted its presence by representing Jesus as present in absence. Although Jesus seems to act in strategic fashion in opposing his own Jewish tradition of orthodoxy as well as in acting from a nationalist impulse, his life ultimately exhibits the trajectory of the nomadic, and thus his movement becomes tactical. Whereas the preaching of the gospel in Mark is a way of competing with the propaganda of the human emperors, silence also functions to demonstrate colonial subjects' resistance to imperial imposition through the act of enunciation.

In this imperial-colonial reality—in which the unhomely, placeless, and voiceless experience of colonial subjects is intensified—the body of Jesus is represented as phantasmic, consumed, and passive. These representations draw upon the social memory of Jesus' executed body on the cross. Henceforth, the disfigured body returns as a haunting presence to those who live unhomely lives. The broken body is embodied when it is shared by the displaced. The passive body in the Passion signifies Jesus' solidarity with the transgressed and voiceless. Jesus' somatic engagement engenders embodiment of the mystery and thus intersubjectivity. I believe that this is what Mark means by “understanding”—what I also call *phronesis*—as a dimension of discipleship.

I bring this phronetic reading of Mark regarding discipleship to the present postcolonial context, where the bodies of Asian and Asian Americans are represented in certain ways—specifically, as feminized and paganized. The question behind this project is what comes into view when such a feminized and religious other reads the Gospel. The reader sees the phantom-like presence among nomadic subjects and hears voiceless voices the broken tongues speak. I, the reader, do not claim that Asian minorities, or I,

are the true disciples. Rather, the reader strives to perceive the life-giving event of Jesus' body among vulnerable bodies in the transnational flow and flux and to grasp mystery, though it is incomprehensible. While Western interpreters read the text in their own turf of the imperial world, which is rarely problematized, the present is also an ideological reading, one which resists such a hegemonic reading from a minority perspective. Thus, this phronetic reading performs and embodies resistance.

I admit that there are limitations in this reading. First, I am aware that this kind of project is prone to binarism, drawing lines between the West and the Rest or between the Self and the Other. I have pointed out, however, that such lines of demarcation are not determinate, as in the following instances, among others: Mark's concomitant assimilation and resistance to the empire; a view of Gentile others in Galilee or Galilee as Gentile; the nature of borders as an in-between space.<sup>657</sup> Despite the ambiguous characteristics of any binomial, in reality unequal power relations are inevitably present and continue to cause oppression and marginalization, as power produces discourse and knowledge. Therefore, this project would benefit from further elaboration on the issue of how the interpreter's awareness of the hybrid nature of imperial-colonial relations can coincide with her commitment to liberation in the act of interpretation.

Second, it may be also asked how a hermeneutics could stand for Asian and Asian Americans. When one uses the expression "Asian and Asian American hermeneutics," she cannot escape the ultimate accusation of homogenizing Asians and Asian Americans separately, and also altogether. Moreover, she appears to represent a

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<sup>657</sup> Likewise, I am an other to Westerners but may be viewed as one of them to indigenous Asians. I am markedly feminine to Westerners but not so much feminine to other Asian women with regard to my participation in this male-dominant guild.

totality by her racial or national identity. I acknowledge that the hermeneutics of *phronesis*, which is proposed by a Korean woman resident in the U.S., is a branch of many existing and possible Asian and Asian American hermeneutics. Although an “essentialist” position may at times be strategically necessary, as seen in feminist practice, to politicize such marginalized subjects as a group, the subject should be regarded as unstable and heterogeneous and a diversity of viewpoints should be held.<sup>658</sup>

Additionally, this hermeneutical task should be in conversation with other minority hermeneutics such as African American and Latina/o American hermeneutics. Such dialogues are imperative, not only because of a general call for collaboration as a response to minoritization in the biblical guild but also because the construction and representation of a racial minority is in correlation with the identity formations of other minority groups. Thus, the proposal of this Asian and Asian American hermeneutics should be open to endeavoring to cross “the ‘color line’ in order to work out a disciplinary coalition or alliance with transformation in mind.”<sup>659</sup>

Lastly, this hermeneutical project on Mark’s Gospel comprises a perspective of Asians in the U.S. but also would bring insights from broad Asian contexts on a global scale. Such inclusion of broad hermeneutical horizons would not only function to

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<sup>658</sup> In this regard, Ling’s articulation of subjectivity is helpful: “subjectivities have to emerge from complex and contested processes of differentiation and renegotiation of discourses.” Such disruption-negotiation requires that “the negotiating parties move toward and at least mutually acknowledge their respective power positions.” Jinqi Ling, “Identity Crisis and Gender Politics: Reappropriating Asian American Masculinity,” in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Cheung (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 325.

<sup>659</sup> Randall C. Bailey, Tat-sion Benny Liew, and Fernando F. Segovia, eds. *They were All Together in One Place?: Toward Minority Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 5.

demystify the text of Mark as “part of the Greek and Roman foundation of the West” but also enrich Markan Studies with different historical questions of discipleship which are raised in different socio-cultural contexts.<sup>660</sup>

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<sup>660</sup> Ibid., 29.

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