JESUS AND THE *OTHERS*:

OTHERNESS AND IDENTITY IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

By

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INTRODUCTION:

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1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and multiculturalism, American Christianity wrestles with the presence of cultural others as they relate to race, ethnicity, gender, and religious affiliation. The Bible and its interpretation in the Christian community are often, if not always, misused to perpetuate negative stereotypes of others—say, women, immigrants, and Jews—in the dominant society. Johannine scholarship in particular has a tendency to reinforce the rhetoric of exclusion prevalent in church settings by emphasizing a dualistic worldview. The present study explores a model for inclusivity, yet to be performed, in the practices of Christian life. It seeks to enhance *tolerance of others* in global Christianity by exploring otherness in solidarity across differences in the Gospel of John.

My research examines the otherness of minor characters in the Gospel of John beyond a hierarchical binary opposition, which draws a clear-cut line between two mutually exclusive terms. Such otherness can be understood as a discursive process through which the dominant group ('us') establishes its own cultural identity by positing a difference, real or imaginary, from

minority groups ('them'). As William E. Connolly puts it, "Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty."[1] Along this line, the term "othering" is referred to as "the act of emphasizing the perceived weaknesses of marginalized groups as a way of stressing the alleged strength of those in positions of power."[2] More than any other historical event, the Holocaust of the Second World War has raised the social and ethical issues at work in the negative conceptualization of otherness. Within the New Testament, John's Gospel is well known for its use of binary oppositions (e.g., life/death, light/darkness, and belief/unbelief). Within such a dualistic framework, the Gospel has been viewed as victimizing the minor characters, notably "the Jews," as part of a strategy to establish Christian identity.[3]

This project challenges this recurring tendency in Johannine scholarship. Drawing upon insights from literary and ideological criticism, I argue that the minor characters in John lend themselves to polyvalent understandings of otherness beyond what traditional scholarship has proposed: otherness *in-between* (Nicodemus), otherness *from within* (the Samaritan woman), otherness *from without* (the Jews and Pilate), and otherness *beyond* (the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple).[4] Such a reading reimagines otherness as ambiguous, internal, external, and

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[1]William E. Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*,
[2] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage, 1978), 5.
[3] On the danger of the constructions of otherness inscribed in the text, cf. Mitzi J. Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles: Charismatics, the Jews, and Women*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 7. Mitzi J. Smith aptly writes: "Constructions of otherness are inscribed in the text, and if we are not careful we accept constructions of others, of otherness, as infallible and pure. Consequently we reinscribe that otherness, the constructed stereotypical and demonized other, into our worlds. This has been particularly true in the case of women and Jewish persons."
[4] On the multi-layered othernesses in John's Gospel, see Ruth Sheridan, "Identity, Alterity, and the Gospel of John," *Biblical Interpretation* 22 (2014): 207-08. Ruth Sheridan aptly notes: "Nevertheless, alterity is multi-layered in the Fourth Gospel. If Judea and the Jews are 'other' to the Romans, the Samaritans are 'other' to the Jews (cf. 4:9). To Jesus and the believing disciples,

transcendent through the examples of the minor characters.[5] This reworking of otherness provides an alternative understanding of the self and the other in a multidirectional, flexible, and interrelated fashion, which can foster mutual understanding in a globalized world.[6]

This project starts by contextualizing my social location as it pertains to the interpretation of John's minor characters and Jesus.[7] As Daniel Patte suggests in the *Global Bible Commentary*,

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'the world' is 'other' (1:10; 3:19; 8:23; 9:39; 12:31; 15:18-19; 16:33; 17:9-19, 25; 18:20, 36); the 'prince of this world' is 'other' (12:31; 14:30; 16:11); and to the light, the darkness (1:5; 8:12; 12:35, 46) is 'other.' Spaces and territories are also 'other': the Diaspora is 'other' (7:35) but is a space that will be incorporated into the symbolic body of believers in Jesus (12:32). Gerizim is 'other' to 'Jerusalem' (4:20). As stated early in this article, people have–and texts project–not one identity but multiple identities, and these identities have contextual relevance."

[5] On the categorization of others—for instance, external other and internal other—in biblical studies, see Lawrence M. Wills, *Not God's People: Insiders and Outsiders in the Biblical World*, Religion in the Modern World (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 1-19; Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles: Charismatics, the Jews, and Women*, 1-10. On the study of the other in classical studies, see also François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 2002); Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). For the study of the other in Jewish studies, see also Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Caroline McCracken-Flesher, *"To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity*, Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985); Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn, *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*, New Perspectives on Jewish Studies. (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Daniel C. Harlow et al., eds., *The "Other" in Second Temple Judaism: Essays in Honor of John J. Collins* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011); Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, Martin Classical Lectures (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[6] Cf. Sheridan, "Identity, Alterity, and the Gospel of John," 209. While this rhetorical invitation has its benefits in terms of the solidification of group identity, it should not be forgotten that it [the Gospel of John] also carries the potential to sustain a vision of the 'other' that is dichotomous and damaging." Rather, my project seeks to shed fresh light into the potential to reimagine the other beyond the limits of the Johannine dualism.

[7] On social location, cf. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, *Reading from This Place*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

no biblical interpretation can ever be separated from the context of the reader.[8] This project derives from my lived experience of othering, of being marginalized, in the wider religious context. I identify myself as a member of a minority group whose experiences have traditionally been marginalized within the othering process of racialization and ethnicization, according to alleged biological or cultural differences, respectively.[9]

As an heir to the legacy left behind by the Western mission movement in East Asia during the early twentieth century, I am conscious of the power relations at work between missionaries and natives in the Korean peninsula.[10] My denomination, the Korea Evangelical Holiness Church, was founded under the influence of American missionaries, a part of the expansionist movement of Euro-Americans all over the world as travelers, missionaries, traders, and colonizers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The power dynamics between the American missionaries and the Korean natives strikingly served to centralize the experiences of the former and to marginalize those of the latter. As a result, the voice of indigenous peoples tended to be suppressed by the voice of missionaries. Against this background, I emphasize the voiceless in both the biblical text and the context of reading. It is the history of the missions in Korea, therefore, that drives me—as a "flesh-and-blood reader"—to engage critically in biblical

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[8] Daniel Patte and Teresa Okure, *Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), xxi-xxxiii. Daniel Patte's observation leads me to contextualize my social location prior to undertaking the journey of finding meaning in the Gospel of John, for no meaning can be created apart from the temporal and spatial constraints of the reader. In effect, all readings are perspectival in the sense that they are subject to negotiation between the two different poles of text and reader in the process of constructing meaning. The reason is that the complex and interlocking context—involving, among others, such factors as gender, race, ethnicity, ideology, and religion—guides the reader toward a certain way of reading the text. In what follows, I start to articulate the social location from which I approach the text of John.

[9] Cf. Uriah kim, "The Politics of Othering in North America and in the Book of Judges," *Postcolonial Theology* 2 (2013): 32-40.

[10] Cf. Felix Wilfred, *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

scholarship as proposed.[11]

As a minoritized reader within a dominant religious-theological context, I highlight colonized others in texts, such as the minor characters in John. This experience with minoritization allows me to critically engage with the otherness of John's minor characters, whom I regard as vulnerable to victimization by way of negative representation within a dualistic framework. The travels of Jesus, the main character in the Gospel narrative, involve encounters with minor characters, who are often marginalized with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, and religion.[12] A dualistic framework of interpretation justifies such asymmetry in the relationship between Jesus and minor characters: on the one hand, Jesus is seen as superior, omniscient, and omnipotent; on the other hand, the minor characters are depicted as inferior, incomprehensive, and powerless. A radical re-envisioning of otherness beyond the confines of binary opposition offers an antidote to such an interpretation of the minor characters in the text.

The point to be acknowledged is that minor characters in John serve to define the Johannine community as its conflicting image. Indeed, the most salient discursive tendency observed in the understanding of minor characters in Johannine Studies is that they are often

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[11] On the flesh-and-blood reader, see Fernando F. Segovia, "Toward a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora: A Hermeneutics of Otherness and Engagement," in *Reading from This Place, V 1: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 57-74. According to Fernando Segovia, "the flesh-and-blood reader" is the real reader located in a specific context. Contrary to the implied reader, a hypothetically constructed reader created in a vacuum, the flesh-and-blood reader has his/her social, historical, cultural context. To put it another way, the flesh-and-blood reader engages with the text in pursuit of meaning, drawing on his/her social and cultural location.

[12] On the travel motif in John's Gospel, see "The Journey(S) of the Word of God: A Reading of the Plot of the Fourth Gospel," *Semeia*, no. 53 (1991): 23-54; Musa W. Dube, "Batswakwa: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)?," in *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, ed. Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube (Boston: Brill, 2000), 150-62; "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)," in *John and Postcolonialism: Travel, Space and Power*, ed. Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey Lloyd Staley (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 51-75.

imagined as the others in relation to the Johannine community. That is to say, the Johannine community can define itself by othering minor characters. Operative in the process of othering is a representational dialectic of inclusion and exclusion. By means of such a dialectical framework, the Johannine community constructs a clear-cut boundary to differentiate itself from the others represented by minor characters in such a way as to attribute negative features to them and further victimize them. At the same time, the representational dialectic entails an asymmetrical relation of power between Jesus and the minor characters by placing the former at the center and the latter in the periphery. As suggested above, the dualistic *Weltanschauung* provides a rationale for justifying the victimization of John's minor characters on a fundamental level.

Nonetheless, it is my contention that minor characters in the Gospel of John can be reconstructed as challenging and destabilizing the dualistic *Weltanschauung* rather than becoming its victims. I further argue that the minor characters undermine the hierarchical structure based on binary oppositions embedded in the Gospel. A both/and framework concentrates on the ambiguity of the minor characters, which challenges and destabilizes John's dualism by enabling them to cross the boundaries drawn within an either/or framework. I go on to claim that the minor characters subvert the imperial-colonial structures within the context of first-century Judaism and the Roman Empire, sometimes turning them upside down and at other times blurring them. Last but not least, I argue that the multiple constructions of otherness deriving from the minor characters make both personal and communal identity subject to an ongoing process of transformation. This implies that the identities of the Johannine characters (both minor and major) and community in the Fourth Gospel (FG) constantly change, influencing and being influenced by each other. Therefore, I present a dialogical exploration of

the otherness of minor characters and the identity formation of Jesus in conjunction with a fresh construction of the Johannine community.[13]

In the section that follows, I offer a critical review of modern Johannine scholarship in terms of otherness and identity, drawing particular attention to how the minor characters have been marginalized along the aforementioned lines. In doing so, I seek to design a new, multidisciplinary approach that sees otherness as a leitmotif of the FG.

2. History of Scholarship

I shall trace how Johannine scholarship up to the present has discussed the characterization of the minor figures in the FG in order to delineate my position within the critical conversation. Toward this end, I shall map out how Johannine studies has engaged a wide range of interpretive approaches: historical, sociocultural, literary(-theological), and ideological.[14] I shall proceed to outline these in order to explain which approach, or combination of approaches, I see as most suitable for my project of reinterpreting the minor characters from the margins.

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[13] It should be kept in mind that the construction of identity and otherness of John's characters mutually influences and is mutually influenced by the construction of identity and otherness of the "flesh-and-blood reader." Cf. Sheridan, "Identity, Alterity, and the Gospel of John," 195-96. "Yet the psychoanalytic structure of the text also bears fruit in the reader's response and plays a role in shaping the reader's identity. The reader's emphatic engagement with the protagonist of the story allows him or her to likewise confront the Other vicariously through the story. Recent research in cognitive narratology demonstrates that readers empathize with characters in a story because their perception of the *fictional* nature of the story allows them to suspend disbelief to a point where they are not "suspicious" of the motives of the novel's characters as they might be of a real person."

[14] On a general assessment of these four reading strategies, see Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000), 3-33.

2. 1. Historical Criticism

The historical approach pursues the world behind the text in order to reconstruct, as objectively as possible, the original meaning of the text within its historical context. Modern Johannine scholarship has pursued and outlined the historical development of the Johannine community. In particular, the works of J. Louis Martyn, Reimund Bieringer and fellow co-editors, and Richard Cassidy have sought to situate the Gospel of John within its Jewish and Roman imperial settings.

J. Louis Martyn

J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (1968) has been a landmark historical-critical work in the field of Johannine studies. Martyn makes a key contribution to the reconstruction of the Johannine community, with a focus on the tension with the Jewish synagogue. Martyn hypothesizes that the final version of the Gospel as it now stands retains a two-level drama: (1) the story of Jesus as commonly described in the earliest tradition; (2) the story of Jesus as refracted through the experience of John's contemporary community. Most notably, he applies this two-level reading strategy to show how the conflict between church and synagogue offers the lens through which John retells the story of Jesus' healing of the the man born blind (John 9:1-41).[15] Hence, Martyn reconstructs the Johannine community as a Jewish-Christian community facing the danger of "becoming expelled from" (ἀποσυνάγωγος

[15] J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed., The New Testament Library (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 35-66.

γενέσθαι) the synagogue (John 9:22; cf. 12:42; 16:2), mainly due to its acknowledgment of Jesus as Messiah (John 9:28).

The relevance of Martyn's work for my project is his emphasis on the minor characters, as he highlights their significant role in the formation of the Johannine community. His analysis revolves around such figures as the blind man, his parents, the crippled man, the Pharisees, the chief priests, the police officers, the rulers, Moses, and the Jews—in both a Jewish and Christian context. In his account, therefore, Jesus stands in the background. However, by emphasizing the traumatic experience of the Johannine community's excommunication from the synagogue, Martyn tends to overlook the anti-Jewish elements of the FG. While I am indebted to Martyn for providing a model for emphasizing the major role of minor characters in the construction of the Johannine community, I differ from his approach insofar as I highlight a more hybrid nature of the community as containing both Jews and Gentiles (including Samaritans, Greeks, Romans, etc.).

Bieringer, Pollefeyt, and Vandecasteele-Vanneuville

Another important volume in the analysis of the Jewish-Christian question is *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (2001), a selected collection of papers presented at a research program of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). Wrestling mainly with the historical Jewish-Christian relation, this edited volume tackles the problematic of the most victimized figure, that is, the Jews, in the FG, though without any consideration of the other minor characters. As the editors—Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville—explain, the volume seeks to provide an alternative to the anti-Jewishness of the Gospel by restructuring the contributions around five questions: (1) Is the Gospel of John anti-

Jewish? (2) Who are "the Jews" in John? (3) How do we have to understand the presumed conflict between the Johannine community and "the Jews"? (4) Is John supersessionist? (5) What is the possible contribution of hermeneutics to the reading of John?[16]

These five questions are answered as follows. First, it is impossible to absolve the Gospel of its trenchantly anti-Jewish inclinations. Second, even a symbolic construction of "the Jews" as a representative of the unbelieving world may not evade all responsibility for stereotyping real Jews as unbelievers. Third, John 9:22 refers to a local conflict between the Jews and the Johannine community rather than a global split of Judaism from Christianity. Fourth, due to the supersessionist elements reflected in John's Christology, John's text demands a more ethical hermeneutics to respect the otherness of the Jews. Finally, in spite of its anti-Jewish traces, the FG also puts forward "an alternative world of all-inclusive love and life which transcends its anti-Judaism."[17]

To my mind, the volume provides a valuable outlook on the Jews, given its awareness of John's anti-Jewish elements. However, it should also be remembered that the FG is both a Jewish and anti-Jewish text in the sense that the Johannine community at the outset arose from the Jewish tradition but with time developed increasing tension with the Jews. The volume also leads to an ethical, more inclusive view of the Jews. Most importantly, the volume poses the crucial question of how to translate the Greek term Ἰουδαῖοι. The contributors translate Ἰουδαῖοι variously as follows: Judeans (in national or geographical terms), Jewish authorities (in political terms), or most predominantly, "the Jews" (with quotation marks) as unbelievers (in religous,

[16] R. Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel : Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, 2000*, Jewish and Christian Heritage Series (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2001), 3-44, espec 5.
[17] *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel : Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, 2000*, Jewish and Christian Heritage Series (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2001), 44.

symbolic terms). The implication is that John's Ἰουδαῖοι can and should be distinguished from the Jews as a universal concept across temporal and spatial boundaries. I agree with this observation in general. However, I would go further by arguing that John's racial/ethnic reasoning is more complex, because it can range from a Judean Jew through a Galilean Jew to a Diasporic Jew in ambiguous fashion. Thus, the Jews are a more racially/ethnically ambiguous character than the authors of this volume acknowledge. I offer a more diverse picture of the Johannine community in racial/ethnic terms. This racial/ethnic analysis becomes all the more complex when it comes to the Roman imperial context.

Richard Cassidy

In addition to the Jewish world, one can explore the FG in terms of the Roman imperial milieu. Against this background, Richard Cassidy's *John's Gospel in New Perspective* (1992) situates the Johannine community within the context of Roman persecution around the turn of the first century. Drawing on the correspondence between Pliny (61-112 C.E.) and Trajan, around 110 C.E., Cassidy argues that the Johannine community was highly likely to have undergone oppression from the Roman emperors, notably Domitian (51-96 C.E.) and Trajan (98-117 C.E.). Apart from the issue of the Jewish tax, Cassidy sets the sovereignty of the Roman emperors in diametric contrast with that of Jesus on the basis of the imperial cult. Above all, he brings into focus the fact that the titles attributed to the Roman emperors—for instance, "Savior of the World," "Lord," and "Lord and God"—are employed with reference to Jesus in John's Gospel. Cassidy understands Johannine Christology as opposed to the divinization of Roman emperors, with a view to reinforcing the faith of the Johannine community.

Above all, Cassidy's work offers new insight into the significance of Caesar, a minor character, in conflict with Jesus. This implies that the Johannine community confronts a double threat from the Roman authorities as well as from the unbelieving Jews. Further, Cassidy construes the trial of Jesus within the framework of the Roman imperial system, thereby singling out the roles of such minor characters as Pilate, as a Roman governor, and the Pharisees and the chief priests, as the Jewish authorities. Cassidy also calls attention to Thomas' description of Jesus as his Lord and God in light of John's anti-imperial movement.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Cassidy's main focus leans toward the main character, Jesus, in the Roman imperial context. In this regard, he characterizes such minor characters as Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and Thomas as strengthening Jesus' counter-imperial identity. This implies that the minor characters in the FG are conducive to the formation of Jesus' identity, in dynamic terms. Cassidy thus, implicitly rather than explicitly, minimizes the importance of the minor characters in John by, in turn, enhancing that of Jesus.

2. 2. Sociocultural Criticism

The sociocultural approach seeks to extract the underlying meaning of the biblical text from a sociological and anthropological perspective. This approach thus interprets the text within specific social and cultural situations. Jerome Neyrey's work on the FG is an important example of this approach, as is that of Bruce Malina and Richard Rohr.

Jerome Neyrey

Neyrey's *An Ideology of Revolt* (1988) presents a sociocultural analysis of John's high Christology—Jesus as "equal to God but not of this world"—by blending redaction criticism with an anthropological model advanced by Mary Douglas. Calling attention to the interaction between the social setting of the Johannine community and the invention of high Christology, Neyrey claims that the community's experience of an utter separation between the heavenly world and the earthly world brings about a revolutionary ideology vis-à-vis the dominant worldview.

In Part One, he uses a redaction-critical perspective to reexamine those passages that describe Jesus as equal to God in John 5, 8, 10, and 11. His historical reconstruction of Christology in John demonstrates a far-reaching shift from a low Christology to a high Christology in the process of alienation from this world. In Part Two, Neyrey makes use of Douglas' model of group, defined as "the degree of societal pressure at work in a given social unit to conform to the society's definitions, classifications, and evaluations," and grid, defined as "the degree of socially constrained adherence normally given by members of a society to the prevailing symbol system, its classifications, patterns of perception and evaluations," to interpret the observation gained from redaction criticism. Neyrey demonstrates that the dichotomous worldview plays a role as a cultural boundary marker between the Johannine community and the dominant society, attributing all values to the heavenly world in stark contrast to the earthly world. Therefore, the statement that Jesus is equal to God and not of this world turns out to be a theological and social revolt against the prevailing worldview.

Not unlike Cassidy, Neyrey takes little account of the minor characters, while putting too much stress on John's high Christology. In this scenario, he constructs the identity of Jesus, a major character, as reflecting the Johannine community's social experience of animosity from

the synagogue. Conversely, the Jews, a minor character, are obliquely presented as opposing the Johannine community in negative terms. Neyrey constructs the Johannine community as a minoritized group against the dominant society. I should note here that Johannine dualism plays a significant role as a boundary marker in alienating the Johannine community from the world and the Jews. As a consequence, Neyrey's emphasis on the Johannine community as a minoritized group, ironically, entails the process of minoritizing the function and significance of the minor characters within and without the community.

Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh

Malina and Rohrbaugh's *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (1998) analyzes the Gospel of John from a socio-linguistic perspective in order to figure out "what a first-century reader would have conjured up from the social system he or she shared with the author."[18] The underlying assumption is that John's anti-language originates from an anti-society. Malina and Rohrbaugh argue that the Johannine community as an anti-society alienates itself from the broader community symbolized by the Judeans. Reflecting this anti-social phenomenon, John's language is transformed into anti-language. Anti-language consists of the dual process of relexicalization (i.e., giving old words new meanings by an alienated group) and overlexicalization (i.e., providing oppositional modes of existence). Consequently, anti-language as a mode of collective resistance from a marginalized group plays the role of identity marker *par excellence*, standing as a new, anti-social identity in opposition to the dominant values of a society represented by the Judeans and this world.

[18] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 16.

In my opinion, Malina and Rohrbaugh provide a dualistic perspective whereby the minor characters can be identified as either insiders or outsiders of the Johannine community. To illustrate, they portray some minor characters, e.g., the mother of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, as (transformed) insiders, whereas they present other minor characters, e.g., Nicodemus and the Judeans, as outsiders. On the assumption that the Johannine community is an anti-society with an anti-language in the face of the dominant society, as represented by world and the Judeans, Malina and Rohrbaugh conceive of the Johannine community as a minority group against the domineering sociocultural system. This approach proves problematic insofar as it tends to overlook the complex and ambiguous relationship of the minor characters both within and without the Johannine community across the category of insider/outsider: the Johannine community may have outsiders within (e.g., women, gentiles, and Samaritans) and insiders without (e.g., the Judeans/Jews).

2. 3. Literary Criticism

In contrast to historical and sociocultural criticism, the literary approach focuses on the world within the text. The literary critical method searches for meaning in the internal structures. It concentrates its analysis on such literary elements as narrative structure, plot, setting, themes, motifs, characters, point of view, among others. Given the recent interest in characters and irony in the FG, this survey investigates the important works of Alan Culpepper, Paul D. Duke, Gail R. O'Day, Susan Hylen, Christopher W. Skinner, Stephen A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann.

Alan Culpepper

A landmark literary critical work in the FG is Alan Culpepper's *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (1983). Drawing on the narrative communication model of Seymour Chatman, who scrutinizes the transmission of a narrative from a teller to an audience, Culpepper investigates such narrative elements as narrative time, plot, characters, and implicit commentary (e.g., misunderstanding, irony, and symbolism) alongside the axes of teller and audience. He looks closely at those narrative structures within the Gospel of John to analyze both how and why the narrative is communicated from a teller to an audience.

In the first place, Culpepper's analysis of characterization in the FG captures my attention. I find his sketchy construction of John's characters to be somewhat flawed. Culpepper strikingly shows how the literary approach renders the minor characters more vulnerable to the risk of victimization than any other. Citing the theory of E. M. Forster, he makes a clear-cut distinction between flat and round characters. For instance, he constructs Jesus as a flat character with one single trait, in stark contrast to round characters with complex traits. In my judgment, Culpepper runs the danger of essentializing all the characters of the FG, according to a flat and round binomial.

Second, I find more serious the fact that most of the minor characters are vulnerable to the victimization of irony.[19] Culpepper characterizes Jesus as having complete comprehension and other characters, as is often the case, particularly minor characters, as showing incomplete comprehension. He further affirms that irony contributes to the victimization of minor characters: "The Jews and those associated with them (the Pharisees, Nicodemus, Caiaphas, and so forth) are the most frequent victims of John's irony. Their inability to comprehend Jesus' glory sets up

[19] Misunderstanding, irony, and symbolism are the modes of implicit commentary, a way of "silent" communication operative in interaction with the reader.

most of the irony, since the reader is able to see both their blindness and Jesus' glory through the eyes of the evangelist."[20] Culpepper thus makes victims of minor characters via irony. Consequently, irony, a literary device, functions to justify the logic of exclusive dualism, which places Jesus in the center and minor characters in the periphery.[21]

Paul D. Duke

As a doctoral student of Culpepper, Duke in *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (1985) performs a deeper analysis of John's use of irony as a literary device than his teacher. Distinguishing between surface-level meaning and deep-level meaning, Duke defines irony as "a double-leveled literary phenomenon in which two tiers of meaning stand in some opposition to each other and in which some degree of unawareness is expressed or implied."[22] Further, he centers his discussion on an analysis of two types of irony, local and extended, in John's Gospel. Although Duke's theory is more complex than Culpepper's, it still runs into similar problems.

First of all, Duke heavily relies on a dualistic perspective with regard to characterization. According to Duke, irony is founded on a series of dualistic assumptions: it (1) has double-layered meaning; (2) contains a clash of meaning; and (3) involves an element of awareness and unawareness. It is natural that such dualistic assumptions produce an "exclusive either/or scheme" and, as a consequence, fixed identities for the characters.[23] For instance, Duke states: "Jesus is

[20] R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 178.
[21] It is important to remember that it is the exclusive nature of the binary system such as understanding/misunderstanding and belief/unbelief that operates irony.
[22] Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 17.
[23] Francisco Lozada, *A Literary Reading of John 5: Text as Construction*, Studies in Biblical Literature (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 22.

the only character in the Fourth Gospel who utters irony without being the victim of it."[24] However, a closer reading reveals that Jesus himself, sometimes, becomes a target of irony. It would be wrong to postulate that each character has a fixed identity. In effect, an either/or scheme, a foundation of irony, leads to overly reductive characterization.

Second, Duke's theory, like Culpepper's, serves to reify an exclusive dualism of knowledge concealed in his analysis of irony. Duke refers to irony as a weapon against the victim. Those who can wittily play with the double-meaning of irony can simply mock those who unwittingly cannot. In terms of (lack of) knowledge, characters might be divided as follows: the oppressed in want of knowledge versus the oppressor with knowledge. I contend that Duke's interpretation of how irony functions in the FG ends up justifying the power games veiled in word play.

Finally, Duke exacerbates anti-Jewish elements already present in the FG by interpreting the Jews as the unequivocal victims of irony. He argues, "The victims of the irony, however, are most often 'the Jews.' This is the case not only because they are the dramatic representation of the world's unbelief, but because in John's view the nation of Israel was singularly culpable in rejecting Christ. 'The Jews' are victims of irony because they of all people—'his own'—should have received Jesus yet did not."[25] No doubt this interpretation is grounded in Louis Martyn's argument that the context of the Gospel of John is connected with the synagogue controversy.[26] Duke's explanation is troublesome because he does not clarify what he means by "the Jews (*Ioudaioi*)"—whether they are the Judeans, the Jewish rulers, all Jewish people of Jesus' time, or the Jews in general terms. Even more troubling, he does not attend to the anti-Jewish

[24] Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 45.
[25] *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 149.
[26] Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 30.

implications of victimizing the Jews. For this reason, I would argue for a more careful interpretation of irony in interpretation.

Gail R. O'Day

O'Day in *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel* (1986) expands irony from a literary to a theological level. She argues that literary analysis achieves theological revelation of God via irony: "This book will investigate the ways in which the Fourth Evangelist uses irony in the Gospel narrative to create and recreate the dynamics of revelation."[27] She goes on to say that revelation is dynamic and generative, not static and fixed.[28] Irony is thus transformed into "a mode of revelatory language."[29] However, given her assumption that irony conveys revelation to characters, revelation is destined to be exclusive: the narrative may be either revelatory to a character or not.[30] For instance, she uses the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:2-42) as a case study. She describes the Samaritan woman as insensitive to the revelation of Jesus via irony at the literary and theological levels. Thus, her interpretation dismisses the minor characters too easily, without taking into account the ways in which they can act to reveal Jesus' identity. O'Day is not alert to the violence hidden in irony as a mode of revelation; her theological understanding of irony thus renders this violence permissible in the name of revelation.

Susan Hylen

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[27] Gail R. O'Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 10.
[28] *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986).
[29] *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim*, 31-2.
[30] Lozada, *A Literary Reading of John 5: Text as Construction*, 25-26.

In general, the literary analysis of characterization and irony in the FG leads to the victimization of the minor characters. Thus, the literary(-theological) approach is perhaps the most notorious in terms of minoritization and its resultant oppression. Susan Hylen is one of the few exceptions to this scholarly trend. Unlike the other biblical scholars who have considered Johannine characters as flat or one-dimensional in a dualistic framework, Hylen in *Imperfect Believers* (2009) puts emphasis on their ambiguity in terms of characterization. She points out that it is one thing to admit that the dualistic worldview is prevalent throughout John's Gospel, but another to embrace dualism in characterizing the Johannine figures in extreme polarities. Rather, she moves to blur or dismantle John's dualism operative in characterization. Through the lens of ambiguity, Hylen reexamines the allegedly flat characters—Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the disciples, Martha and Mary, and the Beloved Disciple—as well as the supposedly more thorough and complex characters—the Jews and Jesus.

In doing so, Hylen advances the study of characterization in John. She shifts the focus of character study from an either-or categorization (e.g., flat and round characters) to a both-and categorization (e.g., ambiguity and complexity) through an investigation of indirect modes of characterization. The result is that each character, whether major or minor, in John can no longer be vulnerable to the victimization of irony based on an either-or term, for each is portrayed as having manifold and, most notably, contradictory traits. In addition, she offers an important theological observation: the ambiguity present in John's characters entices the reader to see belief as a gradual process along a continuum. Seen in this light, the characters in John can be presented as containing paradoxical attributes, say, both understanding and misunderstanding or both belief and unbelief. Thus, Hylen touches on the ambiguity and complexity of the characters of the FG without any victimization. Nevertheless, her work still leaves much space for

discussion. First, she does not push herself toward a deconstructive move in order to reflect on the concept of ambiguity. In addition, she falls short by seeing all characters in light of the Jewish-Christian relationship without any consideration regarding the Roman imperial ideology within the imperial-colonial framework.

Christopher W. Skinner and Steven A. Hunt et al.

Recent years, especially the year 2013, witnessed an escalated research interest in characters and characterization in Johannine scholarship. *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (2013) is a monumental work edited by Christopher W. Skinner. Overall, this volume consists of two sections: a survey of methodological approaches and some exegetical practices of several minor characters in the FG.[31] In the first section, the volume explores a variety of literary theories of characterization by exploring the historical, psychological, theological, and ideological dimensions of narratives. In the second section, it applies characterization theories to such figures as God, John the Baptist, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Mary, Martha, the Beloved Disciple and Pilate. Thus, the volume presents a comprehensive approach to characterization theory and its application to diverse characters in the FG.

Another groundbreaking work is *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (2013), coedited by Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerann. To date, this volume is the most far-reaching approach to the wide cast of characters in the FG. As the editors lucidly state at the beginning of the book, "The purpose of this volume is to offer a comprehensive narrative-critical study of nearly every character Jesus (or, in some cases, only the reader) encounters in the

[31] Christopher W. Skinner, ed. *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2013), xxx.

narrative world of the Fourth Gospel."[32] What is interesting is that the volume never deals with Jesus, in spite of its extensive approach to nearly all the characters with whom he interacts in the Johannine narrative. The volume is predominantly concerned with literary approaches to characterization, ranging from conventional close reading to intertextual reading to speech act theory, to name but a few.[33] Prior to exploring many Johannine characters in sixty-two essays, the introductory chapter offers an exhaustive overview of scholarship on character and characterization in such areas as narratology, biblical studies, Synoptic Gospels and Acts, and John's Gospel, followed by a complete table of the characters in John's Gospel.

In spite of differences between the two volumes' approaches and scope, there are some overlapping features. First, both volumes, wittingly or unwittingly, foreground minor characters in the analysis of Johannine characters. What is more, neither work dedicates a chapter to the characterization of Jesus.[34] Clearly, when compared to research in past years, interest in minor characters in the FG has increased. Even so, I deem it problematic to concentrate solely on the other characters without discussing Jesus. I find that one would arrive at a deepened understanding of the minor characters through analysis of the dynamics between Jesus and the minor characters and vice versa.

Second, neither volume demonstrates interest in irony as a literary device in an either-or framework. Rather, both volumes participate in a new trend in Johannine scholarship that takes a more comprehensive approach to characterization, with particular attention to more complicated

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[32] Steven A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann, *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), xi.
[33] Skinner, *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, vii-viii; Hunt, Tolmie, and Zimmermann, *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John*, xi-xii.
[34] Cf. *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John*, v-ix.

dynamics between characters. To illustrate, both volumes highlight such themes as ambiguity, complexity, and polyvalence to reveal the intricacy of John's minor characters.[35] However, some essays in these collections embrace and explore polyvalence, while others instead perpetuate a traditional binary of understanding versus misunderstanding, albeit in a more sophisticated form. These essays still portray minor characters as misunderstanding Jesus' words rather than acknowledging the validity of their understandings.

Third, while Johannine scholarship in past years focused exclusively on the implied author, both volumes make room for equal treatment of the implied reader on the assumption that meaning-making occurs in the communication between the implied author and the implied reader. This move is promising because it offers the perspective of the implied reader as another vantage point from which to view the minor characters. Despite increased interest in the implied reader, however, these volumes do not consider the role of real readers in interpreting the minor characters in the FG. An engagement with real readers' social locations would sharpen ideological focus on a variety of issues, including, but not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, economy, and colonialism.

With this in mind, narrative criticism should look at the complexity of the minor characters' characterization in ongoing interactions with Jesus, drawing on the lived experience

[35] Cf. Cornelis Bennema, "A Comprehensive Appproach to Understanding Character in the Gospel of John," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2013), 36-58; Susan Hylen, "Three Ambiguities: Historical Context, Implied Reader, and the Nature of Faith," ibid., 96-110; Craig R. Koester, "Theological Complexity and the Characterization of Nicodemus in John's Gospel," ibid., 165-81; Michael Labahn, "Simon Peter: An Ambiguous Character and His Career," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John*, ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 151-67; Paul N. Anderson, "Philip: A Connective Figure in Polyvalent Perspective," ibid., 168-88.

of real readers. In this regard, postcolonial and deconstructive approaches can bring in a new perspective that narrative criticism cannot see by itself.

2. 4. Ideological Criticism

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the ideological approach aims to discover and evaluate the dominant ideologies of a society. In particular, I seek to focus in greater detail on postcolonial and deconstructive criticisms. With respect to postcolonial criticism—in particular the works of Fernando F. Segovia, Tom Thatcher, Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey L. Staley—I will foreground the power dynamics within the colonial-imperial context at the core of the narrative. With deconstructive criticism, especially the work of Colleen Conway, I will highlight the element of ambiguity present in Jesus' interactions with minor characters.

Fernando F. Segovia

In *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (2007), Fernando Segovia explicitly explores how postcolonial criticism engages with the imperial-colonial framework in the Gospel of John.[36] He defines postcolonial criticism from a socio-psychological perspective, emphasizing the significance of conscientization in a geopolitical context. In response to a potential critique about the relevance of postcolonial theory to ancient texts, he understands colonialism as a recurrent social and cultural phenomenon throughout history and across multiple geographies. As part of his postcolonial strategy, he analyzes the narrative world within the text as a rhetorical and ideological product of the Roman-imperial context. He also highlights the

[36] Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, "The Gospel of John," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 158-63.

social and cultural of each individual reader, opposing the construct of the implied reader and instead arguing that each reader engages with the biblical text through his or her own social location.

Segovia proposes three overarching claims: (1) the Gospel's fundamental agenda is to contend with "absolute power"; (2) its fundamental alternative, presented in the prologue, is a "vision of absolute otherness"; (3) its fundamental postcolonial project, throughout the plot, is a "way of absolute opposition."[37] Through his analysis, postcolonial criticism provides a new window into the power dynamics of the Gospel and also enables flesh-and-blood readers to critically engage in the text with their social location in mind.

Yet, postcolonial reading, as Segovia envisions it, leads to stark absolutes—as exemplified by such phrases as "absolute power," "absolute otherness," and "absolute opposition." As a consequence, Segovia, in both religious and political terms, ends up reifying binaries, for instance: ruler/ruled, Rome/Palestine, this-world/the-other-world, Satan/God and so forth. With these absolutely-bipolarized categories, Segovia draws boundary lines and calls for an either/or choice from minor characters, which leaves little room for fluid and fragmentary identity. As a result, the Johannine characters take on fixed identities and become flattened. This dualistic worldview runs the risk of rendering the Johannine community an exclusive, rather than inclusive, community. For the purposes of liberation and decolonization, I intend to pay fuller attention to indeterminacy and uncertainty.

Tom Thatcher

[37] "The Gospel of John," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 163-89.

Drawing upon postcolonial studies as well as empire-critical studies, Tom Thatcher in *Greater Than Caesar* (2009) delves into John's Christology in the Roman imperial context.[38] Thatcher argues that John's Jesus—the colonized subject—subverts Caesar's supremacy. By developing his ideas about a "negative" Christology[39] "informed by the premise that Jesus is greater than Caesar,"[40] he also portrays Jesus as surpassing the Roman imperial powers represented by the Jewish authorities, Pilate, and the cross. He states: "Specifically, John believed that Christ is in every way superior to Caesar, and his gospel communicates this vision by reversing the normal public meaning of Jesus' encounters with various agents of the Roman Empire."[41] Accordingly, Thatcher construes the FG as a subversive Gospel written in a mode of opposition to imperial power.

Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to note that Thatcher's reading finally turns out to be anti-colonial rather than postcolonial. His interpretation remains unaware of the ambivalent nuances of John's Christology in the Roman imperial context: "Essentially, I argued above that John is *not* ambivalent toward Roman power in the sense that he sends a clear message about Caesar's fall throughout his Gospel" (italics in original).[42] Thatcher's anti-colonial reading brings into focus the colonized Jesus' resistance against the Roman imperial ideology of deifying Roman emperors by overlooking the role and importance of the minor characters, unless they are

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[38] Cf. Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalpyse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); Richard J. Cassidy, *John's Gospel in New Perspective: Christology and the Realities of Roman Power* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992); Lance Byron Richey, *Roman Imperial Ideology and the Gospel of John*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2007); Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008).
[39] Tom Thatcher, *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 6.
[40] *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 11.
[41] *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel*, ix.
[42] *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel*, 135-36.

otherwise related to Roman power. In contrast, a postcolonial reading would point to a more complex reality of colonialism in that John's Christology may function to simultaneously subvert and internalize Roman imperial ideology.[43]

Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey L. Staley

John and Postcolonialism (2002), edited by Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey L. Staley, is a selection of essays probing traditional interpretations of John's text. Using a postcolonial framework, the essays focus on travel in a colonial-imperial context. Significantly, most of the authors locate their postcolonial interpretation in their lived experiences of colonialism and imperialism within their own communities. The authors, as the so-called "blood-and-flesh readers," demonstrate what a difference varying contexts can make in the process of interpretation. I will concentrate my analysis on the three essays most relevant to my project: the works by Musa Dube, Adele Reinhartz, and Leticia Guardiola-Sáenz.

First, Dube in "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)" interprets Jesus as a colonizing traveler.[44] From the perspective of the minor characters and their communities, she presents Jesus and the Johannine community as propounding an imperializing-colonizing ideology, concealed in the FG in imitation of ancient Roman ideologies. Hence, she brings to the fore the colonized, minor characters and their communities—particularly, the Samaritan woman and the Samaritan community—as subversive agents against Jesus. While I appreciate Dube's reconsideration of the minor characters and their communities, I find her reading to be limited in

[43] Cf. Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, no. 73 (1999).
[44] Musa W. Dube Shomanah, "Reading for Decolonization," in *John and Postcolonialism: Travel, Space and Power*, ed. Musa W. Dube Shomanah and Jeffrey Lloyd Staley (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 51-75.

that she disregards the resistance of Jesus against the imperial rule and overemphasizes his colonizing moves.

Second, Reinhartz in "The Colonizer as Colonized" presents Jesus and the Johannine community as both colonizing and colonized, depending on the specific context.[45] She pinpoints John's ambiguous double status as both the colonizer to his followers and the colonized to the Roman authorities. Reinhartz wittily acknowledges that the boundary between the colonizer and the colonized is blurry in nature. In this respect, the FG could and should be construed as an ambivalent text, both colonizing and colonized, at the same time. In my reading, I similarly intend to analyze the Gospel's ambivalence.

Third, Guardiola-Sáenz in "Border-Crossing and Its Redemptive Power in John 7.53-8.11" proposes a hybrid reading of the Gospel.[46] Guardiola-Sáenz aims to present Jesus and the woman caught in adultery as threatening John's polarized world and, by implication, the hierarchical structure of binary oppositions. She constructs the woman as a borderless figure and portrays Jesus as a border-crosser, a traveler between cities and villages, between heaven and earth. Moreover, she goes on to represent the Johannine community as a hybrid community made up of Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles.[47] Like Guardiola-Sáenz, I will emphasize the Johannine community's hybridity.

In sum, a postcolonial reading based on the lived experiences of interpreters brings into focus the colonial and imperial nature of John's Gospel. Dube highlights the colonizing-

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[45] Adele Reinhartz, "The Colonizer as Colonized: Intertextual Dialogue between the Gospel of John and Canadian Identity," ibid., ed. Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey Lloyd Staley, 170-92.
[46] Leticia A. Guardiola-Saenz, "Border-Crossing and Its Redemptive Power in John 7.53-8.11: A Cultural Reading of Jesus and the Accused," ibid., 129-52.
[47] "Border-Crossing and Its Redemptive Power in John 7.53-8.11: A Cultural Reading of Jesus and the Accused," in *John and Postcolonialism: Travel, Space and Power*, ed. Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey Lloyd Staley (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 137.

imperializing nature of the Johannine Jesus and community. To take it a step further, Reinhartz emphasizes their double position as both colonizing and colonized. Guardiola-Sáenz further stresses the hybrid nature of the Johannine Jesus and community. Thus, the three authors contribute to investigating the complexity of the power dynamics of John's Gospel in a colonial and imperial context. With these fresh insights gained from postcolonial study in mind, my project aims to delve more deeply into the ambiguity of John's Gospel by highlighting its liberating and decolonizing potential.

Colleen M. Conway

Conway in "Speaking through Ambiguity" (2002) develops the theme of ambiguity in the FG with particular attention to minor characters—e.g., the mother of Jesus, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Peter, Martha and Mary, Mary Magdalene, Pilate, the Beloved Disciple and so on. From a deconstructive perspective, she does not view them as representing belief or unbelief but rather as obfuscating the clear-cut choice between belief and unbelief.[48] In other words, she sees the minor characters' identities as unstable and fluid, undercutting the dualistic world of the Johannine Gospel.

However, I find that she does not push deconstruction as far as she could have. In the first place, I take issue with her approach to Jesus' identity and his relationship to the minor characters. In spite of her deconstructive gestures, Conway maintains a dualistic stance toward Jesus and minor characters. She stabilizes the relationship between John's Jesus and minor characters rather than destabilizing their power dynamics. Specifically, she persistently constructs Jesus as an important character and minor characters as unimportant. She further

[48] Colleen M. Conway, "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel," *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no. 3 (2002): 325-6.

presents Jesus as unambiguous and minor characters as ambiguous. As she remarks: "It [the Fourth Gospel] presents us with a dualistic world in which the lines are sharply drawn, especially by the main character, Jesus."[49] Rather, I will consider the various relationships between Jesus and minor characters as unstable and shifting.

In the second place, Conway overlooks the unjust power imbalance at work between John's Jesus and minor characters. Oblivious to their power dynamics, Conway simply locates Jesus at the center and the minor characters at the periphery. I would argue that the deconstructive approach should go hand in hand with the postcolonial approach in order to address the imbalance of power. While deconstructionists tend to be less attuned to power dynamics, postcolonial critics tend to be less aware of ambiguity. I find that these approaches are supplementary and together enable me to explore how the ambiguity of the Gospel may allow for the liberation and decolonization of the minor or marginalized characters.

2. 5. Retrospect and Prospect

Thus far I have analyzed four different approaches. First, the historical approach lays the foundation for a survey of the Johannine community's formation within the Jewish and Roman imperial matrices and thus concentrates on the Jewish and Roman minor characters alone. Second, the sociocultural approach, adopting John's dualistic worldview and anti-Jewish elements, puts emphasis on the identity and role of the Johannine Jesus and community in diametric opposition to the dominant, Jewish society and culture. Third, the literary approach, grounded deeply in polarities, often victimizes the minor characters, notoriously by way of the

[49] "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel," *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no. 3 (2002): 340.

literary device of irony. Fourth, within the ideological approach, postcolonial criticism puts forward a way of analyzing John's power dynamics between Jesus and minor characters in a colonial and imperial context, while deconstructive criticism sheds light on the ambiguity of John's minor characters, which helps to address the Gospel's stark dualism, albeit without any attention to power relations.

Out of these recent approaches to Johannine studies, literary and ideological (postcolonial and deconstructive) criticisms are the most central for my project. The literary approach emerges as the sharpest in the marginalization of minor characters, with its emphasis on an either/or framework. It tends to characterize John's minor characters as misunderstanding Jesus' identity, because they fail to understand irony, in itself grounded in the dualistic either/or framework of the Gospel. As a minoritized reader, I would propose an alternative interpretation whereby the suppressed voices of these characters may be recuperated. Rather than deploying an either/or framework, I shall utilize narrative criticism as a literary critical method to foreground the ambiguity of Johannine minor characters within a both/and framework. Seen in this light, the minor characters can no longer be reconstructed as fixed and stable within an either/or framework, but rather as fluid and flexible within a both/and framework.

In addition, I have stated that the biggest obstacle to a fair interpretation of the minor characters proves to be the stark dualism embedded in the Gospel and its interpretation. The deconstructive approach allows me to dismantle the dualistic worldview. However, its drawback is that it does not account for power dynamics. Postcolonial criticism, on the other hand, does touch on power dynamics within the imperial-colonial framework and also enables the readers to engage critically in the text, calling into question their social location. However, postcolonial criticism is not as apt for addressing the matter of dualism, oftentimes absolutizing it instead.

Hence, for me, the deconstructive approach should go hand in hand with the postcolonial approach in order to better tackle both the dualistic worldview and power dynamics of the Gospel along with the readers' critical engagement.

3. Interpretive Framework: A Narrative Construction of Minor Characters through the Lens of Deconstructive Postcolonialism

Given the mostly negative representation of John's minor characters in literary and ideological scholarship, I draw upon an interpretive schema that derives from both of these scholarly traditions. In order to reconstruct the otherness of the minor characters in the FG, I propose to employ a combination of approaches—a narrative critical approach and a postcolonial approach in a deconstructive mode.[50] With this lens, I explore the narrative world of the FG, focusing on both the ideology of heteronomy based on an exclusivistic binary system and the power discrepancies operative in the Jewish and Roman colonial-imperial contexts, which form the backdrop of the Gospel narratives.

I utilize narrative criticism as a method for my reading of John along with a critical lens of "deconstructive postcolonialism."[51] I thus put forward deconstructive postcolonialism as an

[50] On postcolonial narratology, see Marion Gymnich, "Linguistics and Narratology: The Relevance of Linguistic Criteria to Postcolonial Narratology," in *Literature and Linguistics: Approaches, Models, and Applications*, ed. Marion Gymnich, Ansgar Nünning, and Vera Nünning (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2002), 61-76. "Postcolonial narratology, thus, shows how concepts of identity and alterity or categories such as ethnicity, race, class, and gender are constructed, perpetuated or subverted in narrative texts (62)." My interpretive framework is greatly indebted to the approach of Marion Gymnich. To take it a step further, I propose a deconstructive postcolonial approach to narrative because postcolonial agenda would be more effective within deconstructive parameters.

[51] Cf. Michael Syrotinski, *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory*, Postcolonialism across the Disciplines (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007).

optic, not a method, through which to interpret the text and the way it has been read, in order to explore the hierarchical nature of the stark dualism that structures both the text of the Gospel and the imperial Roman world in which it was written. With respect to the nature of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida simply states: "Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one."[52] As R.S. Sugirtharajah puts it, postcolonial criticism is also "a mental attitude rather than a method, more a subversive stance towards the dominant knowledge than a school of thought."[53] Hence, I do not see deconstruction or postcolonialism as a method, but rather as a critical lens to analyze the FG.

Moreover, as I outlined above, I consider deconstruction and postcolonialism as supplementary approaches. Such a reading strategy seeks to counterbalance both the apolitical features of deconstruction and the trap of deterministic binarism in postcolonialism.[54] The dissertation thus creates a novel reading model by using narrative criticism as a method through the critical lens of "deconstructive postcolonialism." I borrow this term from theorist Michael Syrotinski, whose work *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* has been formative for my thinking. My contribution is to apply deconstructive postcolialism to the field of biblical studies, which has traditionally used deconstruction and postcolonialism separately.

3. 1. Deconstructive Criticism

[52] Jacques Derrida and Peggy Kamuf, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1991), 273.
[53] R. S. Sugirtharajah, *A Postcolonial Exploration of Collusion and Construction in Biblical Interpretation*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah, The Postcolonial Bible (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 93.
[54] Syrotinski, *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory*, 1-7. Syrotinski aptly states that "deconstruction as a highly vigilant reading practice can inform our critical understanding of specific postcolonial contexts (59)."

Prior to detailing my use of narrative criticism, I will introduce my take on deconstruction and postcolonialism. To begin with, Stephen Moore's essay "Deconstructive Criticism: Turning Mark Inside-Out," first published in 1992, has played a crucial role in introducing deconstruction criticism to biblical studies.[55] According to Moore, deconstruction intends to dismantle the oppressive hierarchies hidden in the binary system deeply rooted in biblical texts and theology.[56] His attempt to deconstruct hierarchical oppositions ultimately demonstrates that the boundary distinguishing between the binary terms is necessarily fuzzy and porous.[57] Moore further makes it clear that deconstruction means more than merely an inversion of an opposition, for a hierarchical, oppositional category would still remain intact in an inverted fashion.[58]

In his book *Poststructuralism and the New Testament* (1994), Moore then applied deconstructive reasoning to John's Gospel. In contrast to the above-mentioned Johannine literary critics, Culpepper, Duke, and O'Day, Moore demonstrates that irony functions to disrupt the hierarchical structure grounded in binary oppositions—such as, life/death, light/darkness, male/female, heaven/earth, and so forth.[59] For example, Moore explores the motif of thirst in John 4 and 19 and shows that the hierarchical structure between Jesus and the Samaritan woman eventually collapses. Irony works at the expense of the Samaritan woman when in John 4 she does not understand Jesus as a figurative, rather than a literal, giver of eternal water. In John 19 it is Jesus who becomes the victim of irony when he cries out for literal water during his

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[55] Stephen D. Moore, "Deconstructive Criticism: Turning Mark inside-Out," in *Mark & Method*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson, and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 95-110.
[56] "Deconstructive Criticism: Turning Mark inside-Out," in *Mark & Method*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson, and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 96.
[57] "Deconstructive Criticism: Turning Mark inside-Out," 99.
[58] Ibid.
[59] *Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 62.

crucifixion. In this way, irony oscillates undecidably, such that Jesus' understanding becomes misunderstanding.[60] As a result of this undecidability, irony changes John's Gospel into a transitory text. Thus, Moore describes at greater length that the line between binary opposites is, by nature, porous.

In addition to shattering the hierarchical binary oppositions, deconstructive criticism contributes significantly to our understanding of identity. From a deconstructive perspective, Judith Butler tackles a primary Western presupposition, namely, identity as thoroughly stable or static. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler sheds fresh light on identity, and more particularly, gender identity. She conceives of the gender binary between masculinity and femininity as fluid rather than fixed and undertakes to deconstruct the essentialist view of gender identity. There is, she argues, no such thing as stable identity. Instead, she construes identity as a social construction subject to contestation. She understands that identity is constituted by performativity. Butler states: "Performativity is …not a singular 'act,' for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition."[61] In this respect, performativity is an ongoing process of repetition of social norms and ideologies. Because identity is performative, it is therefore contingent upon an endless process of transformation.

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[60] *Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 72.

[61] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 239. It is important to note that Butler make a distinction between performance and performativity: the first concerns theater and ritual; the second discourse. She succinctly argues: the "reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake (234)."

Butler's theory of performative identity provides a helpful lens for the study of minor characters in the FG.[62] If we accept that identity is performative, we do not have a parameter to distinguish between major and minor characters, because there is no stable identity by which we can call some characters "major" and others "minor."[63] In spite of the absence of essentialist identity of major and minor characters, I intend to *strategically* use these terminologies in order to liberate the so-called minor characters from the harmful effects of victimization.[64] I claim that all characters perform their identity, whether they are major or minor, in relation to other characters. The identity performed by each character is open to transformation in narratives, which is to say that major characters can be marginalized and minor characters can be centralized. From this point of view, the hierarchical opposition between main and minor characters is disrupted and collapsed.

While deconstruction is essential to my project, I see a drawback in that it has a tendency to be ahistorical and apolitical. As noted earlier, deconstruction does not afford critical tools to analyze differences among characters in context. Therefore, the present study needs to take a political turn to treat seriously the differences derived from complex social and cultural realities, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and, most especially, colonialism.

3. 2. Postcolonial Criticism

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[62] A. K. M. Adam, *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 30. Under the aegis of deconstruction criticism, one can see the line customarily drawn between major and minor characters as arbitrary rather than natural. The reason for this is that, within a deconstructive framework, "there is no center by which we can orient ourselves with respect to the margins."

[63] *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 28. As A. K. M. Adam argues, "deconstruction decenters that which has been constructed to be central."

[64] On "strategic essentialism," see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 205.

Postcolonial criticism makes it possible to analyze the minor characters in terms of power relations. As the insights gained from deconstruction suggest, an attempt to produce stable and fixed identities turns out to be unsuccessful, even in imperial and colonial regimes. A postcolonial perspective further suggests that John's minor characters—*colonized others* who manifest ambivalent and hybrid identities—can be seen as subverting colonial power and authority.

Toward this end, I will highlight the potential repercussions of postcolonial theory for the study of the minor characters, drawing on insights offered by the following scholars' works: (1) Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978); (2) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988); (3) Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd's *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (1991); and (4) Minh-Ha T. Trinh's *Woman, Native, Other* (1989).[65]

As Tat-Siong Benny Liew notes, drawing on Michel Foucault's conceptualization of discourse as an intimate interplay between knowledge and power, Said investigates the ways in which the Orient has been subjugated to the Western world through the modern invention of discourse, turning the Arab world into the object of knowledge and domination.[66] Furthermore,

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[65] For an excellent overview of postcolonial theories of Said, Spivak, JanMohamed, Lloyd, and Bhabha, see Tat-Siong Benny Liew, "Postcolonial Criticism: Echoes of a Subaltern's Contribution and Exclusion," in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 213-15. Please notice that my analysis in this section is greatly indebted to Liew for his outstanding introduction to postcolonial theorists—namely, Said, Spivak, JanMohamed and Llyod—, except for Trinh.

[66] "Postcolonial Criticism: Echoes of a Subaltern's Contribution and Exclusion," in *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 213-14. Otherness in a colonial context is originally invented to grant stable identity to the colonizer. According to Michel Foucault, those cultural others classified as insane, criminal, and deviant were confined to a mental hospital, prison or concentration camp with a view to establishing the normative Western self in modern society. In a colonial society, the category of cultural others is extended to the colonized as the counterpart

Said emphasizes that the Western world has exploited the Arab world in order to define Western identity. Put otherwise, the geopolitical West shapes its identity by othering the Orient. By means of "a dialectic representational inclusion and exclusion," the West constructs a clear-cut boundary enough to be distinguishable from the Orient by ascribing negative images to it.[67] In doing so, the West can create the criteria through which to signify itself in positive terms and the Orient in negative terms. Thus, Said points to the invention of Orientalism as an othering discourse:

> The construction of identity–for identity, whether of Orient or Occident, France or Britain, while obviously a repository of distinct collective experiences, is finally a construction–involves establishing opposites and "others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from "us". Each age and society re-creates its "others". Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of "other" is a much worked-over

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of the colonizing Western self (*Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973)). Megan Vaughan notes that "the need to objectify and distance the 'Other' in the form of the madman or the leper, was less urgent in a situation in which every colonial person was in some sense, already 'Other' (*Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 10)." As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin suggest, colonial-imperial discourse constructs the colonized other as drastically different from the colonizing self in order to construct the identity of the latter in stark contrast to that of the former: "In order to maintain authority over the Other in a colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate the Other as radically different from the self (*The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 102)."

[67] Cf. Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown, *Racism*, 2nd ed., Key Ideas (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 38-39.

historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies.[68]

Despite his analysis of Orientalism as part of the Western strategy for the formation of collective identity, the efficacy of Said's approach is limited, because he does not address the practical potential for the "others" to gain agency.

In her famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Spivak wrestles with the agency of the colonized in the Indian context.[69] By analyzing the suicide of a young Indian widow in 1926, she takes on the issue of the subaltern's agency.[70] The subaltern woman immolated herself due to her reluctance to get involved in a political assassination as part of the Indian Independence Movement. British intellectuals were enthusiastic to speak on behalf of this woman. However, Spivak shows that they ended up misinterpreting her suicide as a *Sati*-suicide, a Hindu practice of widow self-sacrifice at the husband's funeral. Spivak points to the problem of the Western representation of the others in a vain attempt to speak for them and concludes outright: "The subaltern cannot speak."[71] Hence, Spivak underlines the dangers of erasing the differences between the colonizer and the colonized for the sake of others. Furthermore, she goes so far as to emphasize an irrevocable chasm between elite and subaltern within a seemingly homogeneous, colonized society. She argues against the assumption that the colonized are a homogeneous

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[68] Said, *Orientalism*, 332.
[69] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.
[70] On Spivak's revised position on the subaltern woman, see *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 306-11.
[71] "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 308. It is important to note that Spivak describes her polemical statement as "an advisable remark" in the revised version. On this, see *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, 308.

group.[72] Rather, she sees the colonized as a heterogeneous group of different backgrounds along the lines of race/ethnicity, gender, and social status.[73] In her final analysis, Spivak expresses doubt about the possibility of representing the subaltern through the lens of the colonizing or colonized elites mainly due to the differences deriving from those racial/ethnic, gender, and social lines. Thus, she is pessimistic that representation can endow the others with agency.

In contrast to Spivak, JanMohamed and Lloyd emphasize the possibility of retrieving the suppressed voices of minorities by advocating minority discourse in a dominant culture that champions "universalistic, univocal, and monologic humanism."[74] It is interesting to note that JanMohamed and Lloyd make an effort to transform the collective nature of marginalization into a minority discourse.[75] Calling attention to the collective nature of those marginalized, they never attempt to eradicate minorities' differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and so forth. They highlight the significance of solidarity based on the collective experience of minoritization, while at the same time being alert to the danger of homogenizing social and cultural differences. [76] JanMohamed and Llyod thus assert the possibility of collaboration within and between minority groups such that the act of negating minorities' adverse experiences of domination becomes a mode of affirmation.[77]

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[72] Liew, "Postcolonial Criticism: Echoes of a Subaltern's Contribution and Exclusion," 214.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1.
[75] *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 2. JanMohamed and Lloyd state that "those who, despite their marginalization, in fact constitute the majority should be able collectively to examine the nature and content of their common marginalization and to develop strategies for their reempowerment."
[76] *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, 9. JanMohamed and Lloyd insist: "The theoretical project of minority discourse involves drawing out solidarities in the form of similarities between modes of repression and struggle that all minorities experience separately but experience precisely as minorities (9)."
[77] *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, 10.

Unlike JanMohamed and Lloyd, Trinh goes to great lengths to elaborate on the differences within and between the marginalized rather than focusing on their homogeneity based on their experiences of minoritization. Her goal is to recover the voices of those marginalized at the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, etc. Paying particular attention to the experience of non-Western women, Trinh considers it impossible to separate gender identity from other identities. The experience of oppressed women is complex because oppression is a multidimensional phenomenon. She makes it clear that binaristic thinking, which separates one identity from the other, oppresses non-Western women by reinforcing the binarism endorsed by the dominant culture.[78] She goes on to claim that the intersections of identity underscore the heterogeneity of marginalized voices, since a complex mixture of different identities result in different experiences. Thus, in foregrounding the complexity and multiplicity of identities in a colonial context, Trinh leads minority discourse to the heterogeneous aspect of identity.

Under the aegis of postcolonial studies, the biblical narratives that contain John's minor characters can be viewed as a cultural production of colonialism. First, Said's analysis of colonial discourse on Orientalism sheds fresh light on the oppositional divide between major characters and minor characters. This distinction serves to other the minor characters in order to position the major characters at the center of the narrative. In reexamining the minor characters

[78] T. Minh-Ha Trinh, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 104. Trinh states thus: "The same holds true for the choice many women of color feel obliged to make between ethnicity and womanhood: how can they? You never have/are one without the other. The idea of two illusorily separated identities, one ethnic, the other woman (or more precisely female), again, partakes in the Euro-American system of dualistic reasoning and its age-old divide-and-conquer tactics……The pitting of anti-racist and anti-sexist struggles against one another allows some vocal fighters to dismiss blatantly the existence of either racism or racism within their lines of action, as if oppression only comes in separate, monolithic forms."

(i.e., the colonized others), I explore how the politics of representation is operative through the rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion in the FG.

Second, Spivak questions the possibility of recovering the subaltern voice. I reformulate her project as an inquiry into the possibility of recuperating the voices of minor characters. As Spivak asserts in the case of the Indian widow's suicide, it would be impossible to recover the agency of a Third World woman from a dominant perspective. This observation reveals the necessity of rereading the voices of John's minor characters from the margins.

Third, JanMohamed and Lloyd reaffirm the agency of minorities in a painstaking effort to recover their marginalized voices. They point to the solidarity across the differences within and between minorities, while remaining sensitive to the reasons for maintaining those differences. This insight encourages me to weigh the differences among minor characters, while also recognizing the potential for solidarity.

Last but not least, Trinh goes a step further by endorsing the agency of minorities with much emphasis on heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. In this regard, I can and should pay special attention to the agency of minor characters with a focus on difference rather than simply sameness. Collaborative resistance against power differentials can be effective insofar as minorities sustain the differences between and within themselves. Therefore, I will attempt to recuperate the marginalized voices of John's minor characters in terms of both solidarity and difference.

3. 3. Narrative Criticism

Thirdly, I employ narrative criticism as a method in order to investigate the narrative

construction of John's minor characters in interaction with Jesus, the major character. Because my interest in narrative criticism is methodological, the present study draws on scholarship beyond the bounds of Johannine studies. Due to the earlier emergence of narrative criticism of the Gospel of Mark, it owes much to Markan scholarship, especially the works of Robert Tannehill and Elizabeth Malbon.[79] In addition, it is indebted to the work of John Darr on the significant role of the reader in the narrative building of characterization in the Gospel of Luke.

In his article on "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology" (1979), Robert Tannehill provides fresh insight into characterization theory by drawing on narrative Christology as a type of narrative identity.[80] Opposing a scholarly trend to impose theological categories onto biblical narratives, Tannehill instead concentrates on the characterization of Jesus at the narrative level. Therefore, he bluntly advocates a narrative Christology that moves along with the story of Mark, thereby giving fullest attention to the narrative identity of Jesus on the basis of his speech and action.[81] In other words, the Markan narrative develops its own Christology as the reader observes what Jesus says and does. Hence, Tannehill is predominantly concerned with the narrative presentation of Jesus, with awareness of his interactions with other characters.

In my judgment, Tannehill contributes a new understanding of Jesus' identity as a

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[79] On the development of narrative criticism in Mark and John, see respectively Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Characters in Mark's Story," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011); Tom Thatcher, "Anatomies of the Fourth Gospel: Past, Present, and Future Probes," in *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature*, ed. Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008).

[80] Robert C. Tannehill, "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology," *Semeia*, no. 16 (1979): 57-95. On a philosophical reflection on narrative identity, see also Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Paul Ricoeur states: "The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character (147-8)."

[81] Tannehill, "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology," 58.

narrative construction, but with limited awareness of a more dynamically reciprocal relationship between Jesus and minor characters. No doubt, Tannehill offers a new view of Jesus' characterization at the literary as well as theological levels. He approaches the identity formation of biblical characters through the unfolding of narrative, especially in dynamic rather than essentialist terms. However, it is clear that he shows less interest in minor characters. Even though he points to their contribution to Jesus' identity, his approach is mainly concerned with the influence of minor characters upon Jesus, not vice versa.

Following in the footsteps of Tannehill, Elizabeth Malbon in *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (2009) advances a narrative-critical understanding of biblical characters in a dialogical perspective. To put it simply, she emphasizes that the narrative identity of Jesus is reciprocally constructed in ongoing interactions with other characters. The process of constructing a character is by nature relational to other characters. As a result of this, other characters serve to reveal the identity of Jesus and vice versa.

At this point, it is worthwhile to make a distinction between a dialogical perspective and a dialectical perspective in understanding the process of characterization. A dialectical perspective assumes that the identity of Jesus stands in marked opposition to the alterity of the minor characters, especially the Jewish authorities in the FG.[82] Such a stark dichotomy tends to attribute positive characteristics to the identity of Jesus, but negative characteristics to the alterity of the minor characters. Simply put, a dialectical perspective constructs the identity of Jesus by portraying the alterity of the minor characters in an overwhelmingly negative light. Ruth Sheridan notes: "The positive characteristics of the "we-voice" are constituted in interaction with the negative characteristics of the "other" in John (the Jews, the Pharisees, the chief priests).

[82] Sheridan, "Identity, Alterity, and the Gospel of John," 201.

Jesus' central and supreme identity is also constituted in relation to the Jews—and vice-versa. Any identity needs the support of alterity to be upheld."[83] A dialectical perspective turns out to be unfavorable to the minor characters. By contrast, a dialogical perspective presumes that the identity of Jesus and the alterity of the minor characters equally coexist with each other through their perpetual interactions. In other words, the minor characters influence Jesus, just as he influences them. Therefore, the minor characters are not necessarily negative in comparison with Jesus. When seen from a dialogical perspective, the identity of Jesus proves to be relational, rather than antithetical, to the alterity of the minor characters.

In my view, a dialogical perspective makes it possible to consider the significant role of minor characters in building the character of Jesus. This conceptualization of minor characters shows that they play a major role in increasing "the continuum of potential responses to Jesus in an open-ended way."[84] Jesus is exposed to the possibility of transformation throughout the plot as he engages with minor characters. This means that the narrative construction of Jesus is always changeable, depending on what minor characters say and do in their dealings with him.[85] The underlying assumption is that narrative identity is performative in the sense that it is constructed in his interactions with minor characters.[86] Because of this performativity of narrative identity, both Jesus and minor characters have potential for the transformation of their

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 193. See also "Characters in Mark's Story," 61.
[85] On the constructions of identity and alterity in John's narrative, Sheridan, "Identity, Alterity, and the Gospel of John," 188-209. On identity and alterity constructions in narratives, see also Monika Fludernik, "'When the Self Is an Other': Vergleichende Erzähltheoretische Und Postkoloniale Überlegungen Zur Identitätskonstruktion in Der (Exil)Indischen Gegenwartsliteratur," *Anglia* 117 (1999): 71-96.
[86] Cf. Sheridan, "Identity, Alterity, and the Gospel of John," 202. In the words of Sheridan, "The narrative identity projected in the Gospel of John constitutes a "performative" identity."

identities throughout the narrative.

John Darr extends the dialogical perspective operative in the relationship between Jesus and minor characters to the relationship between characters and readers. [87] In his *On Character Building*, Darr demonstrates that a reader intervenes in the shaping of characterization beyond the narrative level. According to Darr, characterization can be construed as a process by which readers construct literary characters as the story unfolds. He calls attention to the dialogical nature of characterization at the narrative and readerly levels. Just as characters reveal the identity of other characters, readers reveal the identity of characters because readers ground their individual readings in their individual contexts.[88]

Along with Darr, I contend that the construction of characters occurs at both the textual and readerly levels. It is of premium importance to note that the reader grapples with the point of view or ideology superimposed upon the text alongside his/her own point of view or ideology. This means that there always exists a theological or ideological clash between text and reader. On the one hand, the Johannine Gospel signals its theological or ideological values to the reader with a view to letting the reader espouse them.[89] The Johannine Gospel is replete with the pervasive dualistic and imperial-colonial ideology and point of view. On the other hand, the real readers do have their own theological or ideological values prior to their engagement in the Gospel. Thus, based on their own theological or ideological values, the real readers determine

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[87] Cf. John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 59. John Darr aptly states: "The process of constructing character is neither neutral nor unidirectional."

[88] *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 25.

[89] Cornelis Bennema, "A Theory of Character in the Fourth Gospel with Reference to Ancient and Modern Literature," *Biblical Interpretation* 17, no. 4 (2009): 410.

whether or not they should accept those of the text.

This being the case, I as a real reader interact with John's dualistic and imperial-colonial ideology and values along with my deconstructive and postcolonial values. In this light, I examine the ways in which a reader constructs John's characters through a deconstructive postcolonial lens. In the final analysis, I will examine the possibility that the reader himself/herself can be transformed through a dialogical interplay with the characters as *others* in the FG.

4. A Hermeneutics of Otherness and Recovery[90]

In order to build a narrative construction of John's minor characters as *others* through a deconstructive postcolonial lens, I propose a hermeneutics of otherness and recovery—the presence of others as not to be overridden but to be respected, and the voice of others as not to be silenced but to be recovered.[91] Augmenting Cristina Grenholm's scope regarding the mutable concept of mode of existence, I will pursue three aspects of otherness: heteronomy, rationality, and autonomy—in conversation with Jacques Derrida, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Homi Bhabha, respectively.[92] First, Derrida destabilizes the binary schema between the self and the other, both

[90] This section is mainly based on my previous work. See Sung Uk Lim, "The Myth of Origin in Context through the Lens of Deconstruction, Dialogism, and Hybridity," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 10, no. 29 (2011): 116-23.
[91] On an outstanding reflection of otherness as a biblical hermeneutics, see Fernando F. Segovia, "Toward a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora: A Hermeneutics of Otherness and Engagement," in *Reading from This Place, Vol 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr, 1995), 57-73.
[92]On autonomy, cf. Christina Grenholm, "Autonomy," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, ed. Daniel Patte (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 89. On heteronomy, cf. "Heteronomy," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, ed. Daniel Patte (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 510-11. On relationality, cf. "Relationality," 1062.

decentering the self and demarginalizing the other in a deconstructive perspective. Second, Bakhtin's dialogical imagination pinpoints that the self only exists relative to the other, and the other way around, in hopes of recovering of the silenced voice of the other. Third, Bhabha highlights the asymmetry in power differentials between the self and the other in an effort to recover the agency of the other.

4. 1. Otherness as Heteronomy

As Derrida envisions it, otherness as heteronomy encourages us to hold others in high esteem and simultaneously to sustain differences in the ontological dimension. Derrida calls into question, at a fundamental level, a binaristic thinking deeply grounded in Western metaphysics in order to destabilize its exclusivistic system. When it comes to an oppositional divide between self and others, Derrida's deconstructive enterprise aims to subvert the Western logic of binarism, which gives rise to both the colonizing self and the colonized others. Specifically, he points out that such binary oppositions as male/female, presence/absence, and origin/copy engender both an exclusivistic system, which prioritizes one over the other, and a hierarchy of order.[93] Conversely, he attempts to disrupt the hierarchy of binaristic systems in such a way as to indicate the absence of an absolute center that makes it possible to distinguish one from the other. To put it simply, he unsettles the system of binarism by decentering that which is conceived to be a center. Derrida states:

[93] Jacques Derrida and Alan Bass, *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 195.

> Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which while governing the structure, escapes the structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it. The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere*. The center is not the center (italics in original text).[94]

Contra the structuralist assumption that structure as its entirety revolves around the center, Derrida demonstrates that the center is not located inside the structure but outside it.

By hinting at a dearth of an absolute center to warrant a binaristic system, Derrida goes on to suggest that binary oppositions are arbitrary inventions founded on a self-contradictory center of structure. Without any absolute center as a parameter of dualism, we can no longer tell which is a positive term and which is a negative term in binary oppositions. As a corollary, the exclusivistic binarism ends up breaking down its own hierarchical system.

If this is the case, Derrida gets rid of all negative values on the other as a counterpart of the self, at the very least. The reason for this is that the epistemological mechanism that divides between the self and the other, and furthermore, between the colonizing self and the colonized other, turns out to be arbitrary; both the centeredness of the self and the marginality of the other have been destabilized.[95] To take it a step further, the destructive agenda pays more attention to

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[94] *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 279.
[95] Jacques Derrida, "Deconstruction and the Other," in *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers: The Phenomenological Heritage: Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, Herbert Marcuse, Stanislas Breton, Jacques Derrida*, ed. Richard Kearney and Paul Ricœur (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984), 107-26.

the colonized others rather than the colonizing self, in stark opposition to a dualistic tendency to privilege the latter over the former.[96] In the words of John Caputo, "deconstruction is respect, respect for the other, a respectful, responsible affirmation of the other, a way if not to efface at least to delimit the narcissism of the self (which is, quite literally, a tautology) and to make some space to let the other be."[97] In a deconstructive perspective, the difference between self and the other is not to be disparaged but to be respected. Thus, Derrida's construction of otherness as heteronomy makes it possible to respect the other, while maintaining otherness as it stands.

4. 2. Otherness as Relationality

According to Bakhtin, otherness as relationality enables us to recover the subdued voices of others by dint of dialogism and double-voicedness at the ontological level.[98] In the dominant society, where the voices of cultural others—such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities—are prone to be overlooked, there seems to exist exclusively an

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[96] François Cusset, *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 125.
[97] Jacques Derrida and John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 44.
[98] On the dialogical "face-to-face" encounter between the self and the other, see Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Duquesne Studies. Philosophical Series, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969); *Time and the Other* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987); *Otherwise Than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998); Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1993). Like Bakhtin, Emmanuel Levinas emphasizes the self's inevitable encounter with the other and in consequence the otherness which derives from that "face-to-face" encounter. Both Bakhtin and Levinas have a tendency to understand otherness within the realm of the self, thus restructuring selfhood in light of otherness operative within it. On this, cf. Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 36.

unequivocally monological discourse of the colonizing self. However, Bakhtin suggests that each and every discourse involves both the perspective of the self and the perspective of the other. The result is that discourse becomes dialogical and doubly voiced. I will examine how to recuperate the voices of the other in self-dominated discourse in critical engagement with Bakhtin's theory.[99]

Bakhtin claims that discourse *per se* is dialogical rather than monological.[100] In his view, monologism repudiates the presence of the other beyond itself, whereas dialogism takes for granted interaction with the other in an open-ended manner.[101] His contention is that discourse itself has an inherently mutual aspect between self and other, just as dialogue mediates between the two. The reason is that the self and the other rely upon each other for their presence at the ontological level. More specifically, this dialogic schema also leads us to generate fresh insight into the identity formation of the self and other. The construction of the self is entangled with the construction of the other: the self is constructing itself, while constructing the other;

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[99] On the power of voice as a metaphor, see *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity*. "'Voice' becomes such an attractive concept because it is not tied essentially to one point of view; rather, one must learn to *find* one's own voice to *hear* the voice of the other within a common social context. It is precisely in the movements of seeking, listening, and answering that an intersubjective ethics of response might be born. And this points to the distinctly *ethical* character of dialogics: if social space is understood as a rich dialogue of voices rather than a fight for recognition and domination, then the other is not necessarily a menacing or hostile force."

[100] Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, New Accents (London; New York: Routledge, 2002); M. M. Bakhtin and Michael Holquist, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, University of Texas Press Slavic Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

[101] On Bakhtin's critique of Hegel's dialectics, M. M. Bakhtin and Caryl Emerson, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 292-93. Bakhtin states: "The unified, dialectically evolving spirit, understood in Hegelian terms, can give rise to nothing but a philosophical monologue." As far as otherness is concerned, Bakhtin sees a dialectical imagination as a philosophical monologue granting more privilege to sameness than difference.

simultaneously, the other is constructing the self, while constructing himself/herself.[102] In other words, the self and the other mutually influence each other, while being mutually influenced. Therefore, this ontological mutuality between self and other produces the bi-directional or dialogical nature of discourse.

What is intriguing is that Bakhtin develops the notion of dialogism into the notion of double-voicedness. In his view, dialogism lays bare the double-voiced nature of discourse, since it retains a collision between the voice of the self and the voice of the other: "Thus dialogic relationships can permeate inside the utterance, even inside the individual word, as long as two voices collide within it dialogically."[103] If these dialogic relationships apply even to a word, it follows that discourse also comprises a dominant voice and its counter voice. Therefore, any discourse intrinsically involves the voice of the colonizing self and the voice of the colonized other. Then, it would be incumbent upon us to retrieve the suppressed voice of the other from self-dominated discourse.

Bakhtin makes it feasible to make the other speak for himself/herself in such a way as to bring to light the dialogic and double-voiced nature of discourse. When seen in a dialogic perspective, the other no longer remains outside the realm of the self because they reciprocally influence and are influenced by each other.[104] Pointing out that discourse is fundamentallyd double-voiced between the dominant voice of the colonizing self and the counter voice of the

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[102] On this, see M. M. Bakhtin, Michael Holquist, and Vadim Liapunov, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Sung Uk Lim, "Jonah's Transformation and Transformation of Jonah from the Bakhtinian Perspective of Authoring and Re-Authoring," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, no. 2 (2008).
[103] Bakhtin and Emerson, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 184.
[104] On the psychoanalytic approach to the relationship between self and other, cf. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 51. Julia Kristeva notes that "only a thorough investigation of our remarkable relationship with both the *other* and *strangeness within ourselves* can lead people to give up hunting for the scapegoat outside their group."

colonized other, Bakhtin opens up the possibility of recovering the repressed voice of the colonized other.

4. 3. Otherness as Autonomy

According to Bhabha, otherness as autonomy empowers the colonized other to regain his/her lost agency by resisting colonial powers. Drawing on his lived experience, Bhabha more concretely engages with the practice of resistance. In particular, he pays attention to the subversive potential of the otherness of the colonized in ongoing interactions with the colonizer, focusing on the notions of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity.

Colonial identity is characterized by ambivalence, because the identity of the colonizer is seemingly original but really recurrent. As Bhabha states, "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference."[105] The central mechanism of identity formation in the colonial milieu is that the colonizing self desires to make itself entirely distinguishable from the colonized other, but at the same time seeks to grant adequate identity to the colonized other in order to keep him/her under control.[106] Put otherwise, "The Other can, of course, only be constructed out of the archive of 'the self,' yet the self must also articulate the Other as inescapably different."[107] As a result, otherness in a colonial context necessarily generates ambivalence because differences are maximized, while minimal similarities are maintained.

More specifically, Bhabha points out that ambivalence in a colonial context derives from

[105] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 153.
[106] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 102.
[107] Ibid.

mimicry. The colonizer deploys a strategy of forcing the colonized to mimic the colonizer partially, but not fully. Such a partial mimicry of the colonizer by the colonized results in "a difference that is almost the same, but not quite."[108] In the words of Kyung Won Lee, "Mimicry here is a partial assimilation of the colonized into the colonizer, which in turn exerts an ambivalent influence on the identity of the latter."[109] Moreover, the ambivalence caused by the mimicry of the colonized menaces the colonizer, because the latter loses full control of the former. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin remark:

> When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a "blurred copy" of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. This is because mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics.[110]

In this way, mimicry seems to initially stabilize colonial authority but ultimately proves to destabilize it. Even though mimicry is part of a strategy to transform the colonized into the manipulatable other, the colonizer finally feels apprehensive about a monstrous representation by the colonized. Contrary to its original intent, mimicry functions to undermine colonial authority in the long run.

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[108] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.
[109] Kyung-Won Lee, "Is the Glass Half-Empty or Half-Full? Rethinking the Problems of Postcolonial Revisionism," *Cultural Critique*, no. 36 (1997): 92.
[110] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 114.

Mimicry in turn enacts hybridity, a space of subversion of authority in the colonial milieu. Bhabha interprets hybridity as a liminal space, called the "third space," created by a partial copy.[111] To put it otherwise, hybridity can be defined as "a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation."[112] Hybridity as an interstitial space that leads the colonized other to cross the boundaries that the colonized self sets in order to demarcate between center and periphery. Hybridity becomes a space of resistance because the colonized other subverts the colonizing self:

> Hybridity is the reevaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates identification in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.[113]

Hybridity becomes subversive by obfuscating an untraversable otherness between colonizer and colonized. Hence, Bhabha shows that the colonized other has the agency to oppose the colonial authority of the colonizing self.

4. 4. Concluding Remarks

[111] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 55.
[112] *Nation and Narration* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1990), 211.
[113] *The Location of Culture*, 159-60.

To sum up, I have reviewed three aspects of otherness—heteronomy, rationality, and autonomy—in order to formulate a hermeneutics of otherness and recovery. First, Derrida opens up the possibility that the difference between the (colonizing) self and the (colonized) other is yet to be respected. Second, Bakhtin makes it feasible to recover the oppressed voice of the (colonized) other in everlastingly reciprocal interactions with the (colonizing) self even in the dominant discourse. Third, Bhabha further shows that the colonized other has the creative agency to subvert the colonial power of the colonizing self. In what follows I shall critically apply the aforementioned hermeneutics of otherness and recovery to John's minor characters and Jesus in pursuit of a decolonizing agenda.

5. Outline of the Study

The present and final chapters of the dissertation function as a theoretical introduction and a reflective conclusion, respectively. Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 address the various aspects of otherness constituted by the minor characters in John: Nicodemus as an example of otherness *in-between*; the Samaritan woman as an example of otherness *from within*; both the Jews and Pontius Pilate as examples of otherness *from without*; both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as examples of otherness *beyond.*

Drawing on Judith Butler's performativity, chapter 2 investigates the ambiguous otherness of Nicodemus: the otherness *in-between* the Johannine community and the Jewish community. Marginal as he may be, Nicodemus resists being classified in terms of binary oppositions such as insider/outsider, believer/unbeliever, and understanding/misunderstanding.

The ambiguous otherness of Nicodemus undermines a dualistic interpretation of John's worldview.

In light of the insight found in Homi Bhabha' theory of mimicry, chapter 3 examines the internal otherness of the Samaritan woman: the otherness *from within* the Johannine community. In the narrative, the Samaritan community as represented by the Samaritan woman becomes part of the Johannine community. Due to gender, racial-ethnic, and religious differences between Jews and Samaritans, the Samaritan community becomes an other to the Johannine community from within. The internal otherness of the Samaritan woman destabilizes the boundary between Jews and Samaritans by showing that the difference between the two within the Johannine community is blurred.

Using Giorgio Agamben's theory of biopolitics, chapter 4 examines the external otherness of both the Jews and Pontius Pilate: the otherness *from without* the Johannine community. Not surprisingly, the Gospel expresses animosity against the Jews, in particular the Jewish leaders, and Pilate, a representative of Roman imperial rule. The Johannine community emerges thereby as marginalized by such dominant groups. At the same time, the Gospel also engages in an inverted process of othering these groups through the use of exclusivistic language. Seen in this light, the Jews and Pilate are presented as otherized opponents of Jesus by the Johannine community. The external otherness of both the Jews and Pilate decenters the hierarchical power structure between Jesus, the Jews, and Pilate in the trial narrative.

In terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of double-voicedness, chapter 5 explores the transcendent otherness of both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple: the otherness *beyond* the Johannine community. A comparison of the otherness of the Samaritan Woman in John 4 with the otherness of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple in John 19 shows that

the former points to tension deriving mainly from the gender, racial-ethnic, and religious differences between Jews and Samaritans, while the second points to a unity beyond such differences. Therefore, the transcendent otherness of both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple signifies otherness in solidarity across differences. Paradoxically, the Johannine community comes into play in such a way as to both maintain the differences between the minor characters and move beyond them for the sake of unity.

Chapter 6 starts with a summary of the findings regarding the otherness of minor characters in John. Reading the otherness of the minor characters in the text *otherwise* helps to engage the context of the reader differently. The study considers the dialogical implications of reading the otherness of colonized others, both textual and contextual, in collaboration, while simultaneously maintaining and sustaining the differences within and between them. In the long run, it reflects on the ethical and political ramifications of reading the others in the text and context with John.

6. Conclusion: Repercussions

This project seeks to make a significant contribution toward a reimagining of the relationship between self and others in the religious realm. This it does by stressing the reciprocally formative, performative, and transformative characteristics of identity formation and the premium importance of respecting human agency and dignity, especially of the Christians marginalized in Western religious life. In the first place, I highlight that the identity of the self in the field of religion is mutually formed, performed, and transformed in unending interaction with other people. In the second place, I put emphasis on marginalized Christians' agency with

respect to race, ethnicity, gender, and class by struggling with the political, ethical, and theological dimensions of otherness. In my judgment, an attempt to reimagine the relationship between self and others will promote a culture of tolerance in the hope that human dignity will prosper among all the ethnicities that constitute Christianity in its global context.

CHAPTER II

NICODEMUS AND JESUS: READING THE OTHERNESS *IN-BETWEEN*

I. Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to construct the otherness of Nicodemus as an otherness existing in-between the Jewish community and the Johannine community. There is no doubt that Nicodemus is one of the most enigmatic characters in the Gospel of John. Since Nicodemus appears three times (John 3:1-15; 7:45-52; 19:38-42) throughout the Gospel, the reader has trouble characterizing Nicodemus' identity, especially because he switches back and forth between the Jewish and Johannine communities.[114]

Is Nicodemus, from the point of view of the Johannine community, an outsider/unbeliever or insider/believer? Some portray him as an outsider or unbeliever who stays within the boundaries of the Jewish community.[115] Others present him as an insider or believer who gradually progresses into the Johannine community, eventually becoming a follower of

[114]On the ambiguity of Nicodemus, see Wayne A. Meeks, "Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91, no. 1 (1972): 44-72; Jouette M. Bassler, "Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel," ibid.108, no. 4 (1989): 635-46; Terence L. Donaldson, "Nicodemus : A Figure of Ambiguity in a Gospel of Certainty," *Consensus* 24, no. 1 (1998): 121-24; Conway, "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel," 324-41; Raimo Hakola, "The Burden of Ambiguity: Nicodemus and the Social Identity of the Johannine Christians," *New Testament Studies* 55, no. 4 (2009): 438-55; Susan Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

[115] To be clear, I am using "Judaism" and "Christianity" as later readers of the Gospel of John have constructed them. I am not assuming that the Johannine community would have understood itself in these terms. My concern is not to reconstruct the history of the Johannine community as it relates to its self-understanding of separation from "Jews," but rather to analyze the text as it stands now.

Jesus. Despite all efforts to identify him, Nicodemus still remains elusive in that he has one foot in the Jewish community and the other in the Johannine community. Hence, Nicodemus can be constructed as an *unambiguously* ambiguous character, blurring the clear-cut boundary between the two communities. Jouette Bassler further suggests that Nicodemus is also one of the marginal characters, who are "neither outsiders nor insiders nor even in transition from outsider to insider."[116] Thus, as a marginal and ambiguous character, Nicodemus does not fit neatly into any given category.[117] In this way, Nicodemus points to ambiguous otherness, derived from his interstitial position in-between the Jewish and Johannine communities.

In addition to being an ambiguous character, Nicodemus is one of the most marginalized and victimized characters in the Fourth Gospel. In general, the most salient pattern of victimization of minor characters in the Gospel is to present them as mis-understanding or non-comprehending, in contrast to Jesus as an omniscient character, through the literary device of irony. As Alan Culpepper makes clear, "The Jews and those associated with them (the Pharisees, Nicodemus, Caiaphas, and so forth) are *the most frequent victims of John's irony*. Their inability to comprehend Jesus' glory sets up most of the irony, since the reader is able to see both their blindness and Jesus' glory through the eyes of the evangelist (italics mine)."[118] Among other

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[116] Bassler, "Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel," 646.

[117] J. M. Servin, "The Nicodemus Engima: The Characterization and Function of an Ambiguous Actor of the Fourth Gospel," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel: Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, 2000*, ed. R. Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2001), 368-69. On the other hand, some scholars evaluate the ambiguity of Nicodemus in a negative way: "In this reading, ambiguity in the character of Nicodemus points to his refusal to commit fully to Christian discipleship." Now, it should be remembered that it is the binary category of belief or unbelief that leads to this negative assessment of Nicodemus' ambiguity. Cf. Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John*, 24.

[118] SeeCulpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*; Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*; O'Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim*.

characters, Nicodemus represents one of the "victims of irony"[119] on the grounds that he misunderstands what Jesus intends to say.

If this is the case, Nicodemus can be seen as negative in terms of the binary opposition of understanding and misunderstanding. Noticeably, the binary category operative in irony results in the stark contrast between the positive characterization of Jesus and the negative characterization of Nicodemus. On a fundamental level, the dualistic *Weltanschauung* provides a rationale for justifying the victimization of minor characters in John, particularly by way of irony. At the same time, such binary or dichotomous opposition entails the hierarchical relation of power between Jesus and the minor characters by placing the former at the center and the latter in the periphery. To illustrate, Jesus is seen as superior, omniscient, and omnipotent, whereas minor characters are depicted as inferior, incomprehensive, and powerless. Consequently, Nicodemus is made into a victim of irony, or more precisely, its underlying dualistic, hierarchical thinking.

In opposition to the scholarly tendency to portray Nicodemus as a negative character, the purpose of the current chapter is to highlight his ambiguity of otherness with a view to liberating Nicodemus from the prison of hierarchical dualism (e.g., insider/outsider, believer/unbeliever, and understanding/misunderstanding). The reason is that Nicodemus' deeply-seated ambiguity and indeterminacy can be read as challenging and destabilizing the binomial straightjacket of the Gospel rather than as becoming its victim. That is to say, Nicodemus is an other who crosses and thereby blurs the boundary between binary oppositions. As Bassler rightly writes, "Nicodemus's repeated professions and actions of faith have made him no more than a "proximate other," the other who is beginning to challenge the limits of otherness but who remains 'other'

[119] Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 40.

nonetheless."[120] By escaping the trap of binary thinking, Nicodemus as a minor character can otherwise be seen as playing a major role in subverting the pervasive dualism or polarity in the Gospel.[121]

In addition, the present chapter seeks to present Nicodemus as contesting and destabilizing the static construction of identity closely connected to the dualistic, and by extension, essentialistic framework of the Gospel.[122] It is worth mentioning that Nicodemus performs his own identity as one that is not fixed, but rather in perpetual dynamic flux. All this can be made clearer by treating the Gospel as a drama within a theatrical setting.[123] An actor performs a character and thereby creates the dynamic identities of the character. At the same time, the audience observes the identities of the character as the actor performs. Seen in this light, the readers explore the identity performance of Nicodemus as a character in such a dramatic manner.[124]

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[120] Bassler, "Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel," 646.
[121] Conway, "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel," 325.
[122] On Nicodemus' ambiguity and his deconstruction of John's dualism, see Hakola, "The Burden of Ambiguity: Nicodemus and the Social Identity of the Johannine Christians," 438-55.
[123] On the dramatic elements of the Gospel of John with special reference to Greek tragedy, see Clayton Raymond Bowen, "The Fourth Gospel as Dramatic Material," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 49, no. 3 (1930); Charles Milo Connick, "The Dramatic Character of the Fourth Gospel," ibid.67, no. 2 (1948); William Domeris, "The Johannine Drama," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no. 42 (1983); Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2004). Some scholars argue that the Fourth Gospel can be conceived of as a drama rather than a narrative within the traditions of Greek tragedy on the ground that dramatic techniques abound in the Fourth Gospel. In this vein, Jesus and other characters in John can be treated as actors in a drama. I am of the opinion that the Fourth Gospel contains dramatic elements. Among others, Nicodemus can be constructed as a character in the dramatic setting insofar as he shows up three times throughout the Gospel. Furthermore, I look upon Nicodemus as performing his identity in flux in a dramatic way.
[124] On the relation between performance, performativity, and theatricality in a political dimension, see Janelle Reinelt, "The Politics of Discourse: Performativity Meets Theatricality," *SubStance* 31, no. 2/3 (2002): 201-15. In my judgment, the concept of theatricality refers to a lived-experience that is not necessarily restricted to the theater. The most important point to be noted here is that such theatricality creates a perception between the actor and the audience in a

With respect to a character's identity-construction in narrative, I should note that my project innovates characterization theory through an in-depth conversation with Judith Butler's understanding of identity as performative. According to Butler, it would be wrong to suppose that identity is stable and static in essentialist terms.[125] Contra the idea of fixed and stable identity, Butler considers identity as fluid and flexible by presuming that identity is a sociocultural construction subject to contestation and transformation rather than a natural given. That having been said, identity itself, for Butler, is performative in that it exists so long as it is performed; therefore, performance creates identity. Here, performative theory leads us to consider the ways in which the narrative performs the identities of Nicodemus, which are subject to an endless process of transformation through the unfolding of plot. That is, Nicodemus performs his own identity as one that is not fixed but rather flexible in John's Gospel. Therefore, Nicodemus can be seen as contesting and destabilizing the static construction of identity beyond

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dynamic manner. One can go further and argue that the audience dynamically perceives the identity performed by the actor. This being the case, the theatricality of the Fourth Gospel leads the readers as audience to engage dynamically−or more precisely, dramatically–in the identities of the characters performed by the actor.

[125] Cf. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York; London: Routledge, 1997). Butler's notion of performative identity derives from the speech act theory as advocated by J. L. Austin, who holds that performative discourse, in contrast to descriptive discourse, has the ability to enact or do what it says by means of repetition. Simply put, performative language is a language that produces the reality it names. Here, Austin suggests that speech can be construed not only as what one says, but also what one does. Consider the utterance "I now pronounce you husband and wife" in the wedding ritual. This statement works out to the extent that it produces the very social conventions or norms that are cited and reiterated. In this respect, performativity is an ongoing process of repetition of social norms and ideologies. Butler defines performativity thus: "Performativity is …not a singular 'act,' for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition (*Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, 239.)." This study is an attempt to look at Nicodemus' identity based on performative theory as such.

the dualistic and hierarchical framework of the Gospel by performing his ambiguous identities.[126]

To re-construct the otherness of Nicodemus, I will look closely at the performance of both Nicodemus and Jesus in the following steps: (1) the construction of Nicodemus as a subversively ambiguous character; (2) the construction of Jesus as a hybrid character; and (3) a reexamination of the otherness of Nicodemus in interaction with Jesus. This I shall do from a deconstructive postcolonial angle.

First, I construct Nicodemus as an ambiguous, ambivalent, and subversive character. This I elaborate in three stages. In the first stage, John 3:1-15, I present Nicodemus as an ambiguous character in-between the Jewish community and the Johannine community. In the second stage, John 7:45-52, I present Nicodemus as an ambivalent character insofar as his liminal position between the two communities destabilizes the binary system of center and periphery, given that the law serves to decenter itself as well as those at the center, the Jewish leaders. In the final stage, John 19:38-42, I present Nicodemus as an ambiguously subversive character, who is slyly resistant against the Roman Empire by making Jesus an (anti-)imperial figure. Thus, ambiguous and marginal as he may be, the ambiguity of Nicodemus enables him to challenge and destabilize the Johannine dualistic framework.

Second, I construct Jesus as a hybrid, Jewish Galilean, and (anti-)imperial character. In John 3:1-15, I portray Jesus as a hybrid character in-between the earthly and heavenly worlds. In John 7:45-52, I portray Jesus as a Galilean Jew whom the Pharisees stigmatize in various ways. In John 19:38-42, I portray Jesus as an (anti-)imperial character who is subject to Nicodemus'

[126] On Nicodemus' ambiguity and his deconstruction of John's dualism, see Hakola, "The Burden of Ambiguity: Nicodemus and the Social Identity of the Johannine Christians," 438-55.

performance whereby the crucified Jesus is rendered de facto royal by the bringing of extravagant spices.

Third, I conclude by providing a reflection on the implications of the otherness of Nicodemus. I will assert that such otherness in-between undermines the essentialized, dualistic worldview of the Johannine Gospel.

2. Constructing Nicodemus as an Ambiguous Jew in Resistance

Scene One (John 3:1-15)

The Gospel of John reveals throughout a dualistic worldview: the heavenly, upper realm (e.g., spirit, life, and light) is opposed to the earthly, lower realm (e.g., flesh, death, and darkness). Thereby the Gospel sets up a conflict between John's Jesus, a character from above, and his opponents (e.g., "the Jews," "Pharisees," "the rulers," and Pontius Pilate), characters from below (cf. John 3:13, 31; 6:41; 8:23).[127] Shunning this stark contrast between the upper and lower realms, I interpret Nicodemus to be an ambiguous character in all three appearances, given his location in-between the Jewish and Johannine communities.

On the one hand, this first scene emphasizes the Jewishness of Nicodemus.[128] At the beginning, the narrator introduces Nicodemus as "a man of the Pharisees" (ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῶν

[127] Gabi Renz, "Nicodemus: An Ambiguous Disciple? A Narrative Sensitive Investigation," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 255.

[128] On the construction of Nicodemus as a representative of the Jews who believe Jesus to fulfill the Torah, see John N. Suggit, "Nicodemus: The True Jew," in *Relationship between the Old and New Testament* (Bloemfontein, South Africa: New Testament Society of South Africa, 1981). Overall, I am of the opinion that Nicodemus still remains a Jew, while at the same time ceaselessly leaning toward Jesus. To take a step further, I will argue that Nicodemus' performance with regard to Jesus has the effect of making Jesus more Jewish than ever.

Φαρισαίων) and "a ruler of the Jews" (ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων) (v.1). This description reveals that Nicodemus is both a religious leader and a political leader. In conjunction with the preceding passage (John 2:23-25), this scene implies that Nicodemus approaches Jesus in Jerusalem, a center of the Jewish community. This geographic setting indicates that Nicodemus is one of the religious and political authorities in Jerusalem. Additionally, as I will argue later, he is a faithful Jew (Ἰουδαῖος) in observance of Jewish traditions, including the law (νόμος) (John 7:51) and the custom (ἔθος) (John 19:40). It is apparent that Nicodemus, as an insider of the Jewish community, performs his Jewish identity throughout the Gospel.[129]

On the other hand, the scene also indicates Nicodemus' affinity with John's Jesus and, by implication, the Johannine community. The very fact that Nicodemus comes to Jesus (ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν) and addresses him (εἶπεν αὐτῷ) reveals his interest in becoming involved in the Johannine community (John 3:2).[130] Here, Nicodemus' act of visiting Jesus "by night" (νυκτὸς) (v.2) suggests that there is a strong, but hidden, bond between Nicodemus and the Johannine community. This nighttime setting might be interpreted to indicate that Nicodemus is a man of unbelief, based on the Gospel's symbolic use of light and darkness.[131] However, my contention is that the secrecy of Nicodemus' visit stems from his fear of the Jews.

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[129] On the Christian Jews, see Sarah J. Tanzer, "Salvation Is for the Jews: Secret Christian Jews in the Gospel of John," in *The Future of the Study of Religion: Proceedings of Congress 2000*, ed. Slavica Jakelic and Lori Pearson (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), 285-300.

[130] Nicodemus performance in approaching Jesus is comparable to that of Nathanael, one of Jesus' disciples, who proclaims Jesus to be "Rabbi" (ῥαββί), "the Son of God" (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) and "the King of Israel" (βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ) (1:49).

[131] Here, the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus is comparable to an act of searching for the light shining in darkness (John 1:5). In this vein, Nicodemus is no longer a figure of darkness, but rather a figure seeking the light shining in darkness. "Nicodemus comes out of the darkness into the light (vv. 19-21)." Brown, 130. Cf. symbol of night: light vs. darkness (vv. 19-21) as a negative description of darkness; cf. the light shining in darkness (1:5).

Nicodemus' act can be explained only in the context of tension between the Jewish and Johannine communities. As an illustration, when Nicodemus approaches Jesus' dead body with Joseph of Arimathea, "a secret disciple of Jesus because of the fear of the Jews" (μαθητὴς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κεκρυμμένος δὲ διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων) (John 19:38), the narrator recalls in the subsequent verse that Nicodemus had visited Jesus at night, implying that he also fears the Jews. Nicodemus' surreptitious act can thus be seen as an attempt to avoid the detection of his close ties with the Johannine community by the Jews, along the lines of Joseph of Arimathea. Thus, Nicodemus demonstrates his involvement in the Johannine community in a concealed manner.

Thus, Nicodemus is a Jewish leader who is secretly interested in the Johannine community. Navigating the boundaries between the Jewish and Johannine communities, Nicodemus by no means abandons his grounding in his Jewish identity in any of his intermittent appearances. What is more, Nicodemus plays a role as a representative of a larger Jewish group.[132] In this vein, Nicodemus' use of the first person plural οἴδαμεν indicates his group identity within a certain Jewish group. In particular, Nicodemus' emphasis on Jesus' signs (σημεῖα) (John 3:2) is a hint that Nicodemus is one of the many (πολλοὶ) who believe in Jesus' name by observing his performance of signs (John 2:23). It is worth noting that there exists a split (σχίσμα) between followers and opponents of Jesus among the Jewish leaders (ἄρχοντες) (John 7:48; 12:42) as well as ordinary people (ὄχλος) (John 7:43). In sum, Nicodemus becomes

[132] Marinus de Jonge, *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), 30. Likewise, Jesus can be seen as a representative of the Johannine community vis-à-vis a representative of a Jewish community, Nicodemus. To illustrate, Jesus uses the first person plural forms—e.g., οἴδαμεν, λαλοῦμεν, ἑωράκαμεν, μαρτυροῦμεν, and ἡμῶν) in the conversation with Nicodemus (3:11). Simultaneously, Jesus employs the second person personal forms—e.g., ὑμᾶς (v. 7) and λαμβάνετε (v. 11). It follows, therefore, that Jesus retains his group identity as a representative of the Johannine community.

an ambiguous character with one foot firmly in the Jewish community and the other tenuously in the Johannine community. As a result, his identity is neither fixed nor fixable.

With this in mind, Nicodemus can be conceived of as attempting in vain to understand the teachings of Jesus. As a Jewish leader, Nicodemus is reluctant to immediately adopt Jesus' discourse because his religious and political positions are quite different from those of Jesus. Nicodemus remains within the Jewish religious tradition, while Jesus goes beyond it. In addition, whereas Nicodemus does not dispute the power of the Romans, Jesus calls their authority into question. Consequently, Nicodemus struggles to comprehend Jesus' discourse regarding "birth again/from above" (γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν) and "the Kingdom of God" (τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) (vv. 3, 5). As can be seen below, Nicodemus wrestles with the teachings of Jesus.[133]

In the first place, birth ἄνωθεν presents a theological challenge to Nicodemus because of his lack of understanding of Johannine theology "from above." It does not occur to Nicodemus to consider the double *entendre* signified by the Greek word ἄνωθεν, which means either "again" or "from above," and he assumes that it takes the first meaning rather than the second. It is

[133] Nevertheless, it should be remembered that Nicodemus, a representative of a Jewish community, but in favor of the Johannine community, takes an ambiguous stance on the Johannine community, as his secret visit to Jesus insinuates. It would be incorrect to construct the dynamics between Jesus and Nicodemus simply in a polarized manner toward Nicodemus' identity. Rather, the point here is that Nicodemus reveals his insufficient understanding of Jesus' understanding. First, Nicodemus confesses Jesus to be a teacher from God (v. 2). In accordance with Nicodemus' description, Jesus truly comes from God, but he is more than simply a teacher (διδάσκαλος). Later in the conversation, Jesus emphasizes his identity as the one who both descends from heaven and ascends into heaven (v. 13). Compare Nicodemus' perception with Nathanael's perception of Jesus as "the Son of God" (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) and "the King of Israel" (βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ) (1:49) as well as "Rabbi" (ῥαββί) equivalent to the teacher (διδάσκαλος) in Greek. First, Nicodemus partially recognizes the religious identity of Jesus, while Nathanael completely acknowledges the political as well as religious identity of Jesus. Second, even though Nicodemus observes that Jesus performs signs, it is the case that Jesus does not entrust himself to those believing in him by observing them (2:23-24). Third, Nicodemus is right that Jesus is with God. Yet, Jesus goes further by asserting his unity with God (1:1; 10:30, 38; 14:11, 20; 17:20-21). Thus, Nicodemus demonstrates his inchoate comprehension of Jesus' identity within Jewish limits.

interesting to note that, throughout the Gospel, ἄνωθεν indicates "from above." For instance, Jesus refers to his mode of being as "the one who comes from above" (ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος), which runs parallel to "the one who comes from heaven" (ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος) (v. 31). Here, the Greek phrase ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ("from heaven") suggests that ἄνωθεν means "from above." Furthermore, in the passion narrative, Jesus emphasizes that the authority of Pontius Pilate comes "from above" (ἄνωθεν), in the sense that all authority on earth comes from God in heaven (John 19:11). The final use of ἄνωθεν appears in John 19:23, referring to the "upper" part of Jesus' tunic, which, while not theological, undoubtedly indicates "from above." Certainly, ἄνωθεν throughout the Gospel unambiguously denotes "from above," not "again," except for John 3:3 and 7. By taking ἄνωθεν to mean "again," Nicodemus, however, shows his inabilitity to grasp theology "from above," which is peculiar to the Johannine community.

In addition, Nicodemus is also a stranger to John's theology as it pertains to Jesus' death, which has not yet fully unfolded in the plot. More specifically, Nicodemus has good reason not to fully understand Jesus' agency of bearing (γεννᾶν) children of God (τέκνα θεοῦ), since this is an act that remains to be accomplished through his death (cf. John 1:12).[134] When Nicodemus has trouble understanding the phrase γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν (v. 4), Jesus uses as its alternative the phrase γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος ("to be born of water and Spirit") (v. 5). Water and Spirit are closely connected to Jesus' death.

Interestingly, there is only one passage (John 7:38-39) that addresses both water and Spirit. To begin with, when it comes to his living water (ὕδωρ ζῶν), Jesus quotes the Scripture

[134] The prologue stresses the fact that those who believe in the name of the Logos, enfleshed in Jesus, "are begotten from God" (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν), rather than "from blood" (ἐξ αἱμάτων), or "from the will of the flesh" (ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς), or "from the will of man" (ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς) (John 1:12-13). This implies that God, the heavenly Father, begets his children from above. As will be argued in chapter 5, the Johannine theology also implies that Jesus plays a role in bearing God's childeren through his death.

that reads, "Out of his belly (κοιλίας) shall flow rivers of living water (ὕδατος ζῶντος)" (John 7:38).[135] It is noteworthy to remember that Nicodemus himself uses the same Greek word κοιλία in describing the impossibility of a grown-up entering into "the belly of the mother" (τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς) a second time. As will be explained in chapter 5, the living water flowing out of the belly in John 7:38 evokes the water flowing from the side (πλευρά) of Jesus in the crucifixion narrative (John 19:34).[136] Then, in the subsequent verse, John 7:39, the narrator hints in an aside that believers in Jesus will receive the Spirit after he is glorified (ἐδοξάσθη; cf. John 12:16, 23; 17:1). Considering both that Jesus pours water from his side (John 19:34) and that he breathes the Spirit on his disciples after his death (John 20:22), we can conclude that the blended symbol of water and Spirit has much to do with Jesus' death.

Further, John's theology goes so far as to imply that Jesus becomes an agent of bearing God's children through his death (John 1:12-13; cf. 1 John 5:6; 4 Maccabees 9:2). John N. Suggit correctly claims that Nicodemus cannot understand the meaning of new birth until he goes through Jesus' cross and exaltation.[137] Without full awareness of this secret of being born of water and Spirit, which will come into effect in Jesus' crucifixion, Nicodemus has no choice but to demonstate his lack of understanding about birth *ἄνωθεν.*

In the second place, Jesus' slogan "the Kingdom of God" is a hurdle for Nicodemus due to its subversive connotation in the Roman imperial context (vv. 3:3, 5; cf. John 18:36). In his first encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus raises both the issue of the Kingdom of God and the issue of birth *ἄνωθεν*, but Nicodemus focuses only on the latter, while never mentioning the former.

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[135] It is controversial to whom the possessive "his" (αὐτοῦ) refers, whether the believer or Jesus. In light of Johannine theology, Jesus is more fitting to the context, because of the reference to living water for eternal life (John 4:14).
[136] Raymond Edward Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 1:323.
[137] Suggit, "Nicodemus: The True Jew," 96.

This raises the question of why Nicodemus ignores the topic of the Kindgdom of God. Prior to answering this question, it is important to note the political implication of "the Kingdom of God." As Warren Carter argues, the kingdom, or empire, of God stands in opposition to the empire of Rome.[138] For example, the only comparable allusion to "the Kingdom of God" within the extant Jewish literature, canonical or extracanonical, outside of the New Testament is found in the Psalms of Solomon: "the Kingdom of our God is forever over the nations in judgment" (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐν κρίσει). Clearly, the expression "the Kingdom of our God" has anti-imperial, apocalyptic overtones. The anti-imperialistic connotation of "the Kingdom of God" suggests that, as a Jewish leader, Nicodemus does not want to get involved in the political gestures of Jesus.

By way of illustration, the Jewish leaders, especially the chief priests and the Pharisees, are anxious that Jesus' popularity might generate a conflict with the Romans (John 11:47-48; cf. Acts 19:40). In addition, the Jews who represent the political position of the Jewish leaders in the passion narrative, are sensitive to the possibility of the anti-imperial kingship of Jesus (cf. John 19:12). It follows from this that, as part of the Jewish community sensitive to anti-imperialistic gestures, Nicodemus is hesitant to embrace Jesus' political agenda with regard to the Kingdom of God.

Furthermore, Nicodemus discovers that Jesus' discourse contains more anti-imperial traces. Particularly, Jesus' insistence that he is "the Son of Man" (τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) would sound quite anti-imperial to the ears of Nicodemus, a teacher conversant with the Jewish Scriptures (v. 13). John's "Son of Man" recalls the phrase "one like a son of man" (ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου) in Daniel 7:13. The book of Daniel describes "a son of man" as a heavenly figure to

[138] Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations*, 191-93.

whom eternal "authority" (ἐξουσία), "glory" (δόξα), and an indestructible "kingdom" (βασιλεία) over all the nations are given (Daniel 7:14). Daniel's "son of man," as a metaphorical representative of the sovereignty of God, signifies an eschatological figure who will put an end to all the world empires: Babylonian, Median-Persian, Greek, and Roman. As Warren Carter asserts, Daniel's "son of man" matches John's Jesus as "the Son of Man" in the sense that both figures have heavenly origins as divine agents (cf. 1 Enoch 37-71; Wisdom of Solomon 1-6; 4 Ezra 11-13).[139] Jesus' statement that he is a real embodiment of the metaphorical "son of man" must strike Nicodemus as subversive. Thus, given his familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures because of his role as a teacher, Nicodemus would have trouble adopting Jesus' anti-imperial agenda tout de suite.

In sum, we can construct Nicodemus as an ambiguous Jew who simultaneously performs both a firm Jewish identity and a nebulous Christian identity. Simply put, Nicodemus in *Scene One* (John 3:1-15) is portrayed as a Jewish leader with an affinity for Jesus and his community. As a Jew interested in Jesus' signs, Nicodemus demonstrates his lack of understanding of Jesus' religious and political agendas, which are reflected in the phrases "birth *ἄνωθεν*" and the "Kingdom of God." At a theological level, Nicodemus as a Jew cannot fully embrace theology from above and Jesus' agency in bearing God's children through his death. At a political level, Nicodemus as a Jewish leader cannot condone such anti-imperial slogans as "the Kingdom of God" and "the Son of God." Subsequently, I will demonstrate that, in *Scenes Two and Three*, Nicodemus' identity performance becomes all the more ambiguous in the Jewish and Roman imperial contexts.

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[139] *John and Empire: Initial Explorations*, 184. However, John's Gospel frequently presents Jesus as "the Son of Man" in conjunction with the Greek verb ὕψουν in the sense that he is yet to be lifted up on the cross and to be exalted to the place where he comes from (3:14; 8:28; 12:38).

Scene Two (John 7:45-52)

Nicodemus is constructed as such an ambivalent character that he can cunningly destabilize the hierarchical binary opposition of center and periphery.[140] In addition, Nicodemus plays a game of hide-and-seek with the Jewish leaders by citing the Jewish law, which is taken to mean both an explicit performance of Jewish identity and an implicit performance of Christian identity simultaneously. Vacillating undecidably between Jewishness and Christianness, Nicodemus demonstrates that the boundary between the two is porous and permeable.

Prior to examining Nicodemus' character as such, I should like to bring to light the socially encoded binary system of center and periphery. There is no doubt that the hierarchical social structure rests on a binary system of center and periphery in such a way as to keep some in the center and others in the periphery. The center-periphery category, broadly defined, applies to the most salient binary opposition in the scene: the Jewish leaders (as represented by the high priests and Pharisees) and the crowd. If this is indeed the case, the Jewish leaders can be seen as those in the center and the crowd as those in the periphery, given their (lack of) knowledge concerning the law (v. 49). The reason is that the Jewish leaders as a centralized group possess the knowledge of the law, but the crowd as a marginalized group is ignorant of it. Put otherwise, the social hierarchy is based on the binary formation of center and periphery, which privileges the Jewish leaders familiar with the law, but at the same time disregards the crowd unaware of it.

[140] Derrida and Bass, *Margins of Philosophy*, 195; Moore, "Deconstructive Criticism: Turning Mark inside-Out," 99. This analysis bears the influence of Jacques Derrida's deconstructive project of challenging a binary way of thinking in Western philosophy—which is said to lie at the foundation of hierarchical dualism, suppressing the weaker of two terms—by showing that the boundary between binary oppositions is not clear-cut but porous and fuzzy. However, the deconstructive move seeks not merely to invert a hierarchical binary relationship, but rather to imagine an alternative, non-hierarchical, and, moreover, non-oppositional thinking on the grounds that the boundary per se involves an artificial construction.

What is more, one should keep in mind that, when seen from a deconstructive postcolonial perspective, the law in the scene plays a role in decentering the center under the weight of its own ideological contradictions. It is truly paradoxical that the law, which is expected to serve as an ideological system of enforceable regulations maintaining the social structure, becomes a catalyst for the implosion of such a social structure in this text. To show this, I need to go into detail as to the role of the Jewish law. Similar to the law in general, for the Jews of antiquity the ancestral law or the Torah in particular endowed their rulers with the authority to exercise sovereign powers over the Jewish community.[141] To be sure, the ancient Jewish law served as a means of sustaining the social hierarchy of dominance and control. Furthermore, the Jewish law in antiquity embodied the ideological system of Judaism such that it became a source of power and privilege.[142] Nonetheless, a deconstructive postcolonial reading of this scene leads to a diametrically opposite function of Jewish law, namely, a dismantling of the hierarchical social structure based on the center-periphery schema.

First of all, Nicodemus shows that the law, implicitly or explicitly, serves to decenter those at the center, i.e., the Jewish leaders, by bringing into sharp focus their dissociation between knowledge and practice. The chief priests and Pharisees, as religious leaders in the Jewish society, are sufficiently conversant with the law to strictly adhere to it. In their conversation with the temple police, the chief priests and Pharisees accuse the crowd of being ignorant of the law (v. 49). Francis Moloney and Daniel Harrington rightly write: "The authorities exclude themselves from all discussion over Jesus as Messiah, and regard those who

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[141] Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E to 640 C.E*, Jews, Chistians, and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton Univ Pr, 2002), 64.

[142] *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E to 640 C.E*, Jews, Chistians, and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton Univ Pr, 2002)., 74.

engage in it as accursed, ignorant of the Law (v. 49)."[143] However, as Nicodemus suggests, there is an ironic twist insofar as those Jewish leaders familiar with the law do not observe it faithfully: "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it? (μὴ ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν κρίνει τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ πρῶτον παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ γνῷ τί ποιεῖ;) (v. 51)." This means that Nicodemus, albeit one of the Jewish leaders, charges the chief priests and Pharisees with violating the law they desire to preserve by judging people without having a hearing first.[144]

To put it simply, Nicodemus points to the gap between knowledge and practice regarding the law on their part. Therefore, a paradox emerges: the law situates the chief priests and Pharisees at the center of Jewish society; yet, at the same time the law challenges the *status quo* of such religious leaders by laying bare the striking inconsistency between their knowledge and practice of it.

Second, Nicodemus shows that a binomial opposition between center and periphery, as represented by the Jewish leaders and the crowd, respectively, in terms of knowledge about the law can be inverted. Perplexed by his charge regarding the discrepancy between knowledge and practice concerning the law (v. 51), the Jewish leaders attempt to derail Nicodemus' accusation by heaping sarcasm on him (v. 52), just as they had done earlier on the Jewish police and the crowd.[145] For example, the Pharisees blame the Jewish police for having been deceived by Jesus: "Then the Pharisees replied, "Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? (μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς πεπλάνησθε;) (v. 47)." By the same token, the Pharisees accuse the crowd of not knowing the

[143] Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 255.
[144] Severino Pancaro, "Metamorphosis of a Legal Principle in the Fourth Gospel: A Closer Look at Jn 7:51," *Biblica* 53, no. 3 (1972): 340-61. Pancaro points out that, to his knowledge, there is no allusion to the phrase "finding out what they are doing" in the OT or Rabbinic literature. In regards to this phrase, he undertakes a Christological interpretation.
[145] Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 255.

law (v. 49). However, there is clandestine irony here: the crowd, ignorant of the law, becomes aware that the Jewish leaders conversant with it have a self-contained inconsistency between knowledge and practice. This, explicitly or implicitly, opens a postcolonial space where the crowd (i.e., those in the margins) gains the initiative, while the Jewish leaders (i.e., those in the center) lose it.[146] As a consequence, Nicodemus overturns a hierarchical binary relationship between the two groups.

Last but not least, Nicodemus reveals that the law functions to decenter itself by producing an unexpected result: his performing the Jewish law becomes beneficial to Jesus. If this is the case, verse 51 indicates that Nicodemus is quite Jewish in that he cites the Jewish law. At the same time, however, his attempt to observe the law functions to defend Jesus from his opponents, namely, the chief priests and Pharisees outside it. Perhaps for this reason the Jewish leaders accuse Nicodemus of shrewdly attempting, consciously or unconsciously, to defend Jesus: "Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee (μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶ; ἐραύνησον καὶ ἴδε ὅτι ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας προφήτης οὐκ ἐγείρεται) (v. 52)." This sarcastic statement leveled at Nicodemus hints to the reader that the Jewish leaders cast suspicion upon him on account of his murky stance on behalf of Jesus. This strongly implies that Nicodemus has a closer affinity with Jesus and the Johannine community, despite his faithfulness to Jewish law.

Furthermore, Nicodemus' persistent performance of Jewish identity through his appeal to Jewish law paradoxically insinuates his incipient Christian identity.[147] At the very least,

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[146] Fernando F. Segovia, "Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 61.

[147] As a result, Nicodemus deconstructs the stark dichotomy of center and periphery as represented by the Jewish leaders (knowledge of the law) and the crowd (ignorance of the law). Above all, the ambiguous character Nicodemus undercuts the dichotomy of center and periphery

Nicodemus can be portrayed as a faithful Jew in the sense that he attempts to cite and, moreover, observe Jewish law. As Shaye Cohen suggests, the observance of Jewish law is crucial to Jewishness: "Thus all those who observe Jewish laws (or who 'deny idolatry') could be called Jews and could be known as Jews."[148] In this regard, Nicodemus' explicit assertion of Jewish identity through his citation of the law, more implicitly than explicitly, goes beyond the limits of Judaism, unwittingly moving towards Christianity.

It is to be noted that in their previous conversation with the Jewish police, the rhetorical question of the Pharisees suggests that some of the Jewish authorities or the Pharisees might believe in Jesus: "Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? (μή τις ἐκ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἐπίστευσεν εἰς αὐτὸν ἢ ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων;) (v. 48)." Moreover, this suggestion is strengthened by the observation of a literary attempt to describe Nicodemus as one of the Pharisees who had formerly approached Jesus (v. 50). In an ironic twist, the persistence of Jewish identity by dint of being loyal to the Jewish law allows Nicodemus to conceal his desire to lean favorably towards the Johannine Christianity. Thus, the Jewish law, a set of criteria for Jewishness, acknowledges the dual identity of Nicodemus as both an observant Jew and a fledgling Christian.

By and large, Nicodemus is portrayed as an ambivalent character in-between the Jewish and Johannine community, who deconstructs the boundary between center and periphery in engaging the Jewish law. He goes as far as to disrupt the borderline between Jewish identity and

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by his transgression of the social boundaries. From a social perspective, Nicodemus crosses the social boundaries between "a teacher of high rank within Judaism" and "one who, from a pharisaic perspective, is an uncredentialed, unlearned, would-be rabbi from Galilee (7:15, 45-52). Cf. Winsome Munro, "The Pharisee and the Samaritan in John: Polar or Parallel?," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (1995): 710-28.

[148] Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 61.

Christian identity insofar as he performs the former explicitly, on the one hand, and the latter implicitly, on the other. In consequence, the boundaries between Jewishness and Christianness turn out to be fluid and permeable.

Scene Three (John 19:38-42)

Nicodemus is depicted as a subversive character, slyly resistant against the Roman Empire, who ambiguously makes Jesus an (anti-)imperial figure. With the nature of parody in mind, I will pay special attention to the nuanced performance of Nicodemus in preparing the body of Jesus in accordance with Jewish burial custom (ἔθος). Drawing on the potential effects of the repeated performance of a set of norms, religious practice can be seen as a creative parody subject to a variety of interpretations, either maintaining preexisting social structures or resisting them for social change.[149] Especially within the context of an oppressive colonial system, religious performance may serve as a strategic parody for subverting such a system.[150] In this light, Nicodemus' action can be construed as a subversive performance or parody in the sense

[149]Catherine M. Bell, "Performance," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 208-09. Here the question arises about the feature of performance in general: is it oppressive or subversive on earth? The answer would be yes and no. Repetition in performance could be both oppressive and subversive. In other words, performance is concerned with both a static status to maintain a preexisting system of social relations and a dynamic process of social change. My interest in the present study leans towards this second feature of performance. Here, the emphasis is not on how human agency sustains the status quo by way of performance, but rather on how it endlessly creates and reproduces social structure. Thus, I stress that individual agents engage social systems in the dynamic mode of restructuring structured structure.

[150] On parody as a subversive performance, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Christina K. Hutchins, "Uncoming Becomings," in *Bodily Citations: Religion and Judith Butler*, ed. Ellen T. Armour and Susan M. St. Ville (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 120-56. Judith Butler emphasizes the subversive nature of parody as a strategy of resistance against the hegemony of social structure. The individual agent, particularly in the realm of micropolitics rather than macropolitics, may manipulate and undermine social conventions through parody. Butler, however, insists the significance of the specific context of parody in determining its meaning.

that it completely reiterates Jewish burial customs, with implications for an anti-imperial movement, albeit with the gap between intent and effect in mind.

With this in mind, let us revisit Nicodemus' third and final appearance in the burial scene (John 19:38-42). After Jesus' death on the cross, two characters emerge: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Joseph, a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, requests that Pilate let him remove Jesus' body from the cross (v. 38a). With Pilate's permission, Joseph comes and takes Jesus' body away, accompanied by Nicodemus, who brings a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred-pounds weight for his burial (vv. 38b-39). Joseph and Nicodemus remove Jesus' body together with a view to preparing it for burial in accordance with Jewish custom (v. 40). In the long run, because of the Jewish day of preparation, Joseph and Nicodemus lay Jesus' body in a new tomb, wherein no one has ever been laid, in the garden near the place where Jesus is crucified (vv. 41- 42).

The actions of Joseph and Nicodemus in preparing Jesus' body for burial are quintessentially Jewish. According to Jewish funerary customs in the Second Temple period, the Jews prepared the body for funeral and burial immediately after death.[151] To begin with, the dead body was washed with water and anointed with oil and perfume. Next, the corpse was covered by the shroud. Finally, in some cases, spices were placed around the dead body. It is worthwhile to notice that the body was commonly prepared for burial at home, except when prepared in the courtyard of the tomb.[152] Therefore, when it comes to Jewish burial practices, the preparation of Joseph and Nicodemus for Jesus' burial was entirely Jewish, apart from an excessive amount of myrrh and aloes.

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[151] Rachel Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices, and Rites in the Second Temple Period*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2005), 479-83.
[152] *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices, and Rites in the Second Temple Period*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2005), 480.

There has been controversy over the interpretation of the immense amount of spices brought forth by Nicodemus for Jesus' burial (v. 39). Some scholars suggest that Nicodemus' extravagant amount of spices indicates a lack of understanding of Jesus' life after death and the fact that he has not yet been transformed into a perfect believer in John 19:38-42, exactly as in the case of John 3:1-15.[153] Others suggest that such spices symbolically point to a royal burial.[154] In my judgment, neither of these interpretations is compelling. The first is problematic, for it victimizes Nicodemus by construing his action in terms of understanding/misunderstanding. The second falls short, since it by no means takes into account the religiopolitical implications of rendering Jesus' burial royal in the milieu of the Roman Empire.

My contention is that the actions of Nicodemus are to be seen as a subversive performance over against Roman imperial rule, albeit in highly elusive fashion. It comes as no surprise that Nicodemus' actions can be understood as a religious performance, since he fully reiterates Jewish burial customs. However, the excessive amount of spices implies that Nicodemus' actions convey a more subtle meaning than simply a religious performance. It is a

[153] On this interpretation, see Meeks, 55; Dennis D. Sylva, "Nicodemus and His Spices (John 19:39)," *New Testament Studies* 34, no. 1 (1988): 148-51; Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 110. Contra this, see Gail R. O'Day, "New Birth as a New People: Spirituality and Community in the Fourth Gospel," *Word & World* 8, no. 1 (1988): 53-61. Interestingly enough, O'Day suggests: "The power of Jesus' offer of new life, made available in the cross, will not be silenced by resistance, doubt, and fear. The epilogue to the Nicodemus story aptly demonstrates this (19: 39-42). At Jesus' death, even doubting and resistant Nicodemus is empowered to act in faith. Nicodemus assists in the preparation of Jesus' body for burial, anointing him with spices, binding the body, and laying Jesus' body in the tomb. Jesus' death opens Nicodemus to the possibility of new life. Grace and newness of life are made available even to those who try to say no. God's possibilities will triumph and work transformation (60)."

[154] On this, see Raymond Edward Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, [1st ed., The Anchor Bible, (Garden City, N.Y.,: Doubleday, 1966), 960; F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1983), 379.

hint that his performance is not merely a repetition of Jewish customs but rather a finely nuanced parody−a subversive repetition−of such customs in such a way as to make Jesus' burial royal.[155]

Nicodemus' performance of a royal burial ritual as a parody of Jewish burial ritual can be construed as a form of resistance against the Roman Empire, considering that the Empire does not allow for any king other than the Roman emperor: "Everyone who claims himself to be a king opposes the emperor (πᾶς ὁ βασιλέα ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν ἀντιλέγει τῷ Καίσαρι) (John 19:12b)." Nicodemus' parody in the Roman imperial context represents an elusive yet effective attempt to subvert the Roman Empire.[156] As we have seen before, Nicodemus crosses over the border between Judaism and Christianity in John 7:45-52. Moreover, through parody, a subversive performance, Nicodemus can be portrayed as crossing over the border lines between Judaism and Christianity and, by extension, the Roman Empire in the religiopolitical context.

As such, Nicodemus' parody of Jewish burial ritual can be taken to mean, simultaneously, both Jewish performance more explicitly and anti-imperial performance more implicitly. What is interesting is that parody in general constantly generates a slippage in meaning: as Butler puts it, "the act that the body is performing is never fully understood."[157] Put otherwise, the meanings conveyed by parody are ineluctably somewhat indeterminate or ambiguous.[158] In particular, Nicodemus' parody contains indeterminacy between religious and political performance.

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[155] On the subversive nature of reiteration with a difference, see James W. Perkinson, "A Canaanitic Word in the Logos of Christ; or the Difference the Syro-Phoenician Woman Makes to Jesus," *Semeia*, no. 75 (1996): 61-85., esp., 63-65.

[156] My argument is that Nicodemus' subversive performativity targets mainly the Roman Empire, not Judaism. It should be remembered that his actions are grounded in his "fear of the Jews." In response to Jesus' crucifixion, Nicodemus has the boldness to ask publicly for his body, even with his fear of the Jews in mind. His action, therefore, is not to be understood as anti-Jewish, but anti-colonial.

[157] Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, 11.

[158] E. Patrick Johnson, "Queer Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. Tracy C. Davis (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 166.

Specifically speaking, this indeterminacy opens up possibilities of resistance against the Roman imperial system, since its connotations constantly swing back and forth between the religious and political realms.

I would go even further to say that the ambiguity of Nicodemus' parody attempts to surreptitiously subvert the Roman imperial system by challenging the exclusive binarism prevailing in its social hierarchy.[159] Clearly, the Roman Empire consists of exclusive hierarchies and orders operative in the stark division between the powerful and the powerless, while subordinating the second to the first. Against this background, through the effects of parody, Nicodemus can be described as subtly undermining the stark dichotomy between the ruler and the ruled in such a way that Jesus is transformed from ruled to ruler. This is to say that Nicodemus changes Jesus from one of the ruled under the reign of the Roman Empire into a king by performing an ostensibly royal burial ritual for him: consequently, Jesus is rendered as the ruler-as-ruled.[160] The ambiguity of parody allows Nicodemus, the colonized, to catalyze identity trouble on the part of the Roman colonizers by opening up possibilities for indeterminacy between ruler and ruled in terms of the status of Jesus.[161] By and large, Nicodemus is depicted as resisting the hierarchical structure of the Roman Empire through his parody, which turns out to be unfixed and unfixable. [162] In short, Nicodemus becomes a subversive character, but in highly elusive fashion.

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[159] On this, see Munro, "The Pharisee and the Samaritan in John: Polar or Parallel?."
[160] Cf. Reinhartz, "The Colonizer as Colonized," 169-92.
[161] On identity trouble and its subversive character, see Timothy Kandler Beal, "Identity and Subversion in Esther" (Emory University, 1995), 89.
[162] Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, 14. According to Butler, parodic performativity through the process of resignification contains the gap between the meaning at the beginning and the meaning at the end. This state of unfixedness and unfixableness creates indeterminacy of meaning in such a a way that parody may become both colonial and anticolonial at the same time, which, in turn, threatens the colonizers, by causing ambiguity. In

3. Constructing Jesus as a Hybrid Character

Scene One (John 3:1-15)

In order to better understand Jesus' identity in the first scene, we should consider the sociocultural background to the Gospel of John, which will help to illuminate its literary features henceforth. The diasporic context, the backdrop for the Gospel (cf. John 7:35; 11:52), produces an in-between reality. In other words, the Jewish lived experience of the diaspora impacted the world of the Johannine Gospel. There is scholarly consensus that the Johannine Gospel was written around the first century after the Jewish War (66-70 C.E.). Apparently, the Roman soldiers' defeat of the Jewish revolt caused the dispersal of the Jewish people—many were captured and sold into slavery, and many others fled to other areas of the Mediterranean Basin. John's Gospel reflects the diasporic experience of being "in-between" home and the world. As Segovia puts it, such a diasporic experience did not only constitute biculture, but also multiculture.[163] The diasporic experience means to "have no place to stand" and to "have two places on which to stand."[164] As a consequence, the cultural experience of hybridity, or being socially and culturally located in-between, is built into the Gospel of John.

Bhabha's view, hybridity can be seen as a liminal or in-between space in which cultural identity becomes all the more fluid in the diasporic context.

[163] Fernando F. Segovia, "Two Places and No Place on Which to Stand," in *Mestizo Christianity: Theology from the Latino Perspective*, ed. Arturo J. Bañuelas (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 28-43.

[164] "Toward a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora: A Hermeneutics of Otherness and Engagement," 66.

With this in mind, Jesus is portrayed as a hybrid character in-between heaven and earth.[165] Jesus shapes his hybrid identity through travel between the world above and the world below. Jesus' journey into a liminal space, a transitional space between two worlds, plays a crucial role in the formation of his hybrid identity.[166] Moreover, this journey motif in John leads the reader to interpret Jesus' identity from two different simultaneous perspectives, an "above" perspective and a "below" perspective. In John 1:14, Jesus comes from the world above, entering the world below. This further implies that Jesus embodies two different elements of "descent" and "ascent." In the words of Segovia, Jesus' journey is "an overarching journey of the Word across the worlds of reality, encompassing the life of Jesus, through whom the Word becomes 'flesh,' and involving a 'descent' from the other-world into this-world and a corresponding 'ascent.'"[167] It follows from this that Jesus crosses over the boundary between this world and the other. Accordingly, Jesus himself hints at his hybridity from above and below in verse 13: "No one has *ascended into heaven* except the one who *descended from heaven*, the Son of Man (οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) (italics mine)." Arguably, the most important point to be noted here is that the travel narrative in John portrays Jesus as a hybrid character in-between above and below.

Due to his hybrid identity, the words of Jesus are inherently ambiguous (v. 12). This ambiguity utterly confuses Nicodemus. As suggested above, Jesus's words can be approached from both the "below" perspective and the "above" perspective, because they are concerned with

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[165] On hybridity, cf. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge Classics (London; New York: Routledge, 2004). Homi Bhabha defines hybridity as the "third space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity (55)."
[166] Cf. Segovia, "The Journey(S) of the Word of God: A Reading of the Plot of the Fourth Gospel."
[167] Segovia, 174.

both "earthly things" (τὰ ἐπίγεια) and "heavenly things" (τὰ ἐπουράνια) simultaneously.[168] This dual perspective is most prominently seen in the story of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. Drawing on such a dual perspective, I will revisit the analysis of Robert Kysar with regard to the following Greek words: ἄνωθεν, πνεῦμα, and ὑψωθῆναι.[169]

First, the Greek phrase γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν ("being born *anōthen*") in verses 3-7 is utterly puzzling. In Kysar's view, to be born *anōthen* means *either* to be born again *or* to be born from above.[170] Instead, I argue that to be born *anōthen* means *both* to be born again *and* to be born from above since both perspectives from below and above simultaneously apply to what he intends to say.[171] As a result of this, Nicodemus, being unaware of both perspectives, has good reason to be confused with what Jesus says about "being born *anōthen.*"[172]

Secondly, the Greek term πνεῦμα in verse 8 is also sufficient to conjure up ambiguity on the part of Nicodemus. Related to but different from the Greek term ἄνωθεν*,* πνεῦμα can,

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[168] On this, see Karl Olav Sandnes, "Whence and Whither: A Narrative Perspective on the Birth Anōthen (John 3,3-8)," *Biblica* 86, no. 2 (2005): 153-73., esp., 164. Interestingly enough, Sandnes points out the "above-below" pattern of Christology in relation to the identity of Jesus. Concurring with him, I believe that the hybrid identity of Jesus results in the Christology of the "above-below" pattern. More importantly, Jesus' hybrid identity ironically reveals how ambiguous and blurry "the most sharply dualistic above/below theme" is in the Fourth Gospel. Cf. Meeks, "Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," 55.

[169] Robert Kysar, "The Meaning of Metaphor: Another Reading of John 3:1-15," in *What Is John?*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1996), 21-41.

[170] "The Meaning of Metaphor: Another Reading of John 3:1-15," in *What Is John?*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1996), 25.

[171] William C. Grese, ""Unless One Is Born Again": The Use of a Heavenly Journey in John 3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107, no. 4 (1988): 677-93., esp., 691. William Grese also maintains that the Greek phrase γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν means both "born again" and "born from above." The reason for this is that in a superficial level it means "born again," while in a deeper level it means "born from above." Even though I am of Grese' opinion that there is a double meaning of the phrase**,** I can find a flaw in his argument. Instead, I believe that the double meaning derives from Jesus himself with the hybrid identity.

[172] According to Kysar, the ambiguity of "being born *anōthen*" generates another ambiguity in the phrase "the kingdom of God" which could refer to the power of God, an ideal society, and a political transformation. An *anōthen* birth has to do with the experience of God's dominion.

according to Kysar, refer to *both* "wind" *and* "spirit" in the respective perspectives "from below" and "from above."[173] If πνεῦμα is interpreted merely as wind, it is understandable that it is free to go where it chooses and is perceptible through sound, but it remains mysterious regarding where it comes from and where it goes (v. 8a). However, once combined with the Greek verb γεννᾶν, it turns out that πνεῦμα does not merely mean "wind" in terms of "from below," but also "spirit" in terms of "from above": "So it is with everyone born of the Spirit (οὕτως ἐστὶν πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος) (v. 8b)." As Jesus does not articulate this double meaning and perspective, Nicodemus is so confused that he is curious indeed how these things can happen (v. 9). This implies that just as it is mysterious whence the wind comes and wither it goes, so is Jesus, the one born of the Spirit, mysterious about whence he comes and wither he goes. The reason for this is that Jesus is located in-between the world from below and the world from above.[174]

Lastly, the Greek infinitive ὑψωθῆναι ("being lifted up") in verse 14 causes ambiguity because it perpetuates a double meaning. In Kysar's terms, it may refer to *both* being lifted up, from the standpoint of "from below," *and* being crucified/enthroned, from the standpoint of "from above."[175] Thus, verse 14 states that the Son of Man will be lifted up in exactly the same way that Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. In this verse, ὑψωθῆναι turns out to mean *both* being lifted up *and* being crucified/enthroned, as is the case with the whole narrative. William Grese remarks: "In John eternal life is coupled with the lifting up of the son of man, a

[173] Kysar, "The Meaning of Metaphor: Another Reading of John 3:1-15," 26-27.
[174] Edwyn Clement Hoskyns and Francis Noel Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, 2d ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 215.
[175] Kysar, "The Meaning of Metaphor: Another Reading of John 3:1-15," 28.

lifting up that is both crucifixion and exaltation."[176] For this reason, the meaning of ὑψωθῆναι in the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus remains ambiguous, because it conveys two perspectives simultaneously.

With this in mind, one can see that Jesus persistently plays hide-and-seek with Nicodemus in the dialogue, which centers on Jesus' hybrid identity. Wayne Meeks, interpreting Bultmann, offers profound insight into this game:

> Bultmann's starting point was the observation that the symbolic picture of Jesus as the man who descended and ascended constituted a puzzle within the fourth gospel. It seemed to identify Jesus as revealer come from the heavenly world, and therefore able to communicate what he had 'seen and heard' in that world-but his promise to do so was never fulfilled in the Gospel. He revealed only that he is the revealer.[177]

As Meeks rightly suggests, Jesus' identity is puzzling because his revelation is concerned with both the world above and the world below.

In conclusion, Jesus's dual perspective—simultaneously from above and from below—applies to his words in the conversation with Nicodemus. Unaware of John's theology from above and below, Nicodemus has good reason not to understand Jesus in the fullest sense: Jesus is constructed as a hybrid character travelling in-between the world above and the world below.

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[176] Grese, ""Unless One Is Born Again": The Use of a Heavenly Journey in John 3," 688-89. Also see Don Williford, "John 3:1-15−Gennêthênai Anôthen: A Radical Departure, a New Beginning," *Review & Expositor* 96, no. 3 (1999): 451-61., esp., 458.
[177] Wayne Meeks, "Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972), 47.

Scene Two (John 7:45-52)

In the harsh debate between Nicodemus and the Pharisees, the characterization of Jesus is contingent on how he is represented by them, apparently in his absence. On the one hand, the Pharisees seemingly refer to Jesus' origins in Galilee with contempt (v. 52; cf. 41). They doubt that a prophet, not to mention the Messiah, would come from Galilee. On the other hand, Nicodemus hints at the Jewishness of Jesus to the extent that the Jewish law (νόμος) is equally applicable to his case.[178] What is intriguing here is that Jesus elsewhere detaches himself from the limits of the Jewish law by using the second person plural pronoun (John 8:17; 10:34) or the third person plural pronoun (John 15:25). Notwithstanding Jesus' alienation from the law, Nicodemus ironically applies it to him. The implication is that Jesus is a Jew as long as the Jewish law is relevant to him. Taken together, the Pharisees and Nicodemus present Jesus as a Galilean Jew or a Jewish Galilean.[179]

Scene Three (John 19:38-42)

In the burial scene, Jesus is transformed from ruled to ruling Jew through the subversive performance of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Above all, Jesus is treated as Jewish when

[178] On the relationship between Jesus and the Law, see Severino Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity According to John*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

[179] Cf. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, 69-106. Here, it is noteworthy to remark that the semantics of Jewishness is quite malleable and flexible. My contention is that the Greek term *Ioudaios* contains a broad spectrum of meaning: a Judean Jew, a Galilean Jew, and a diasporic Jew. As Cohen argues, *Ioudaios* signifies a Judean in racial/ethnic and geopolitical terms and a Jew in religious and cultural terms. However, I would go further to claim that the meaning of *Ioudaios* as a Judean may be overlapped with that of *Ioudaios* as a Jew; the latter is more fluid and flexible than the former. It is assumed that racial/ethnic and geopolitical Judean identity can be interlocked with religious and cultural Jewish identity. If this is the case, there is a good reason for Jesus to be presented not merely as a Galilean but also as a Jew.

they prepare his body for burial. It is according to Jewish custom (ἔθος) that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrap Jesus' body with the spices in strips of linen (v. 40). Here, Jesus gains a Jewish identity by means of this Jewish custom, in the same way that he acquires a Jewish identity through the Jewish law in the previous scene.

What is more, Jesus is also treated as royal, since the immense amount of spices offered for his burial hints at a royal funeral (v. 39). As noted earlier, such extravagant spices suggest that the performance of Joseph and Nicodemus is a subversive reiteration of Jewish customs so as to render Jesus' burial royal. Given the nature of resistance under atrocious colonial rule, such parody produces the ambiguous effect of changing Jesus from the ruled to the ruler. When all is said and done, Jesus is paradoxically rendered as both a ruling and a ruled Jew.

4. Conclusion: The Implications of Otherness *In-Between*

The present chapter has delved into the otherness of Nicodemus as ambiguous from a deconstructive postcolonial perspective. I have thus gone against the grain of interpretation with respect to Nicodemus, one of the most marginalized minor characters in John, especially from the perspective of a literary approach. This approach has tended to characterize him as misunderstanding Jesus' identity as a result of irony, which is itself grounded on the dualistic either/or framework of the Gospel. The assumption in the present study has been that identity is performative in dynamic rather than static terms. In particular, the narrative of the Gospel of John performs the identities of Nicodemus, which are subject to an ongoing process of formation and transformation through the unfolding of the plot in a dramatic way. In short, Nicodemus is

constructed as performing a multiplicity of identities, which are ambiguous, ambivalent, and subversive.

Hence, this chapter proposes an alternative interpretation whereby the suppressed voices of Nicodemus as a minor character in John may be recuperated. In this respect, Nicodemus, an elusive character in the Gospel, plays, through ambiguity, a major role in challenging and destabilizing the dualism of the Gospel rather than becoming its victim. Consequently, Nicodemus crosses the boundaries between Judaism, Christianity, and the Roman Empire within a both/and framework. Furthermore, he subverts the hierarchical power structure based on binary oppositions in the context of first-century Judaism and the Roman Empire.

Following this line of reasoning, the characterization of Jesus is subject to that of Nicodemus, especially when he is physically absent but referenced by Nicodemus and other characters. In each scene, Jesus' identity is found to be twofold: first, he is ontologically in-between heaven and earth; second, he is racially-ethnically both a Galilean and a Jew; and third, he is politically both a ruled and a ruling Jew. In sum, I have portrayed Jesus as a dynamic character, given the performance of hybrid, Jewish Galilean, and (anti-)imperial identities. Therefore, Jesus shifts from a monolithic to a multi-faceted character. This ambiguity of identities also challenges the exclusivistic dualism typical of traditional readings of John's Gospel. In the final analysis, ambiguity as performed by Jesus as well as Nicodemus ultimately undermines the hierarchical structures of exclusivism as such.

CHAPTER III

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AND JESUS: READING THE OTHERNESS *WITHIN*[180]

1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to construct the otherness of the Samaritan woman afresh as an otherness *within* the Johannine community. On the narrative level, the Samaritan woman, as spokesperson for the Samaritans, signifies the process of their incorporation into the Johannine community, along with their racial-ethnic and religious differences.[181] That is to say, the Samaritan community, as represented by the Samaritan woman, eventually becomes part of the Johannine community, as represented by Jesus' disciples. Throughout, the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman fails to conceal a conflict over issues of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion. As a result, the case of the Samaritan woman demonstrates that the Samaritan community proves to be an *other* to the Johannine community from within.

In the first place, the otherness of the Samaritan woman arises from her anonymity and agency as a subaltern native. In contrast to other women in John's Gospel—Mary, Martha, and

[180] This is a revised version of my article: Sung Uk Lim, "Speak My Name: Anti-Colonial Mimicry and the Samaritan Woman in John 4:1-42," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 62, no. 3-4 (2010): 35-51.

[181] On the relationship between the Johannine community and the Samaritan community, see John MacDonald, *Theology of the Samaritans* (Philadelphia: Westminster Pr, 1964), 33; Birger Olsson, "Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2:1-11 and 4:1-42" (Thesis, Uppsala University, 1974), 254-56; Robert Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel: An Examination of Contemporary Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1975), 160-63; Raymond Edward Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 36-40. Brown states: "the Johannine community was regarded by Jews as having Samaritan elements (37)."

Mary Magdalene—"a woman of Samaria" (γυνὴ ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας) or "the Samaritan woman" (ἡ γυνὴ ἡ Σαμαρῖτις) is rendered nameless in the narrative (v. 7; 9). Naming has the power of ordering and controlling things and beings in such a way as to have the authority to make them visible in the world. In addition, naming has much to do with "creative agency."[182] In the same way, not-naming has the authority to make things and beings invisible in the world. Therefore, not-naming serves to rebuff "creative agency." In this regard, it is significant to note that John's Jesus, as a Jewish male character, never calls the Samaritan female character by any name whatsoever.[183] The Samaritan woman is made all the more invisible by this not-naming, and is deprived, as a result, of her subjective agency in the narrative. In the process, the Samaritan woman becomes marginalized and, moreover, victimized on the narrative level. In the second place, the otherness of the Samaritan woman involves the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion in the colonial milieu.[184] As Anne McClintock asserts, female gender is primarily used as a "boundary marker" to draw the line of demarcation between colonizer and

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[182] On this, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 28-39.

[183] In the current episode (John 4:1-42), the Samaritan woman recognizes Jesus as a Jew (Ἰουδαῖος) (v. 9). In Chapter 5, I will argue that Jesus is more specifically a Galilean Jew or a Jewish Galilean.

[184] On the definition of imperialism and colonialism, see to Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1993), 8; Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford, UK; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 16-17. Interconnected as imperialism and colonialism may be with each other, one needs to disentangle one from the other for further analysis. In general terms, imperialism refers specifically to the shaping of an empire, which is created and maintained by dint of the unequal and hierarchical relations of domination and subordination throughout history. In this regard, Edward Said defines imperialism as "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory." In contrast to imperialism, he further defines colonialism as "the implanting of settlements on a distant territory."

In a similar vein, Robert Young sees imperialism to be the practice of the centralized power typically featured with the ideology of metropolitan center in distinction to colonialism, which is construed as a pragmatic occupation of lands on the periphery.

colonized.[185] It is important to note that, on the symbolic level, gendered difference is interlocked with racial-ethnic and religious difference in order to represent the colonized other. On the assumption that the Johannine community is made up of Jewish and Samaritan groups, the Samaritan woman is considered to be an *other* to the Jewish group from within the Johannine community.[186] The Johannine community is a multi-ethnic community. Broadly speaking, it is composed of Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile groups. Each of these groups can be further subdivided. For example, I will argue in chapter 5 that the Jewish community can be divided into Judean Jews, Galilean Jews, and possibly Diasporic Jews. However, in this chapter, I will deliberately focus on the level of division of Jewish and Samaritan groups, paying attention to the narrative's particular emphasis on the tension between them. Seen in this light, the Samaritan woman can be looked upon as a colonial boundary marker to construct the dualistic, hierarchical structure of colonizer and colonized. Such a hierarchical binary structure gives rise to the discrepancy between the colonizer as superior and enlightened and the colonized as inferior and ignorant. By and large, the Samaritan woman as an *other* to Jesus, a Jewish man, becomes marginalized by the colonial structure in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion.

Within the exclusivist framework of Johannine dualism, the otherness of the Samaritan woman, a minor character in the Johannine narrative, is subject to a high risk of negative representation by Johannine scholarship. By means of a representational dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, negative features are attributed to the Samaritan woman, with the result that she becomes othered from within the Johannine community. To illustrate, Jesus is seen as superior,

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[185] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, 24-5.
[186] Raymond Edward Brown, "Johannine Ecclesiology: The Community's Origins," *Interpretation* 31, no. 4 (1977); "Other Sheep Not of This Fold : The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity in the Late First Century," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97, no. 1 (1978); *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. Cf. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*.

omniscient, and omnipotent, whereas the Samaritan woman is depicted as inferior, incomprehensive, and powerless. At the same time, such a representational dialectic entails an asymmetrical relation of power between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, placing the former at the center and the latter in the periphery. The dualism of the Johannine *Weltanschauung*, or way of seeing the world, provides a fundamental rationale to justify a negative othering of the Samaritan woman.

Nevertheless, I maintain that, through mimicry, the Samaritan woman can be reconstructed as challenging and destabilizing the dualism of the Johannine Gospel, rather than becoming its victim. By doing so, the Samaritan woman subverts the hierarchical power structure of the Jewish Roman world, which becomes unfixed and unfixable within the colonial-imperial framework. The most important point is that it is through her mimicry that the Samaritan woman can undermine the authority of Jesus, the one who mimics Roman emperors, and thereby can subvert John's dualistic worldview. While at the same time suffering from the Roman imperial ideology of expansion, the Johannine community represented by Jesus and his disciples mimics the ways in which Roman colonizers subjugate foreign lands and nations through their travels and conquests.[187] In this regard, Jesus' travel and missionary commission to his disciples can be taken as mimicry of the Roman colonizers. Since the Johannine community is founded on this colonial enterprise, its missionary activity also replicates the imperial agenda of conquest of alien lands and people.

[187] Dube, "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)," 63. Musa Dube argues: "In other words, the alternative vision of the Johannine community ironically embraces an ideology of expansion, despite the fact that it, itself, is the victim of imperial expansion and is struggling for its own liberation." Thus, Dube pinpoints the fact that the Johannine community as a colonized community, intentionally or unintentionally, copies the imperial ideology of expansion, while at the same time resisting it.

Given the missionary nature of Jesus' role as "the one sent by the Father" into this world, the relation of power between Jesus and the Samaritans runs parallel to that between a missionary and natives in the imperial-colonial context.[188] Here, it is suggested that the mechanism of colonialism is intrinsically germane to Jesus' mission. For example, Jesus' missionary travel mimics imperial travel so that he is called "the savior of the world," an expression commonly used in conjunction with the Roman emperors.[189] By imitating Roman colonizers, Jesus and his disciples can be assigned the epithet "traveling colonizers" by the Samaritans.[190] Seen in this way, Jesus' mission is significantly colonial in nature.

This suggests that a multi-layered level of colonization exists among the Romans, the Jews, and the Samaritans in John's narrative: at one level, there is the Roman colonization of the Jewish lands and people; at another level, there is the Jewish colonization of the Samaritan lands and people. What is interesting is that colonial mimicry operates at each level. Thus, the Jews duplicate the Roman imperial ideology of expansion, and, in turn, the Samaritans mimic the Jewish duplication of Roman colonial practices. It is clear, therefore, that the Samaritan woman mimics the colonial practices of Jesus, albeit in a subversive manner. I would go further by affirming that the mimicry of the Samaritan woman threatens colonial authority as well as, fundamentally, the hierarchical, dualistic structure embedded in the Gospel.

At this point, I will summarize the concept of mimicry proposed by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*. According to Bhabha, the colonial strategy is to force the colonized to

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[188] On the mission of Jesus as the Father's envoy, see Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1-42* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988).
[189] Craig R. Koester, ""The Savior of the World" (John 4:42)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 4 (1990): 665-68.
[190] On the relationship between traveler and colonization in John, see Dube, "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)," 54. Constructing Jesus as a colonizing traveler, Dube construes his travel as a journey in pursuit of a new land to subjugate. Cf. Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 9.

partially mimic the image of the colonizer, but in incomplete form: "almost the same, but not quite."[191] As Kyung-Won Lee puts it, "Mimicry here is a partial assimilation of the colonized into the colonizer, which in turn exerts an ambivalent influence on the identity of the latter."[192] Through the mimicry of the colonized, the colonizer's identity becomes ambivalent because the image of the colonizer mirrored by the colonized is neither identical to nor different from the colonizer's self-image.[193] This means that the colonized is partially identical with, and at once, partially different from the colonizer. Accordingly, mimicry gives rise to a double rupture between origin and copy.

As such, mimicry at once stabilizes and destabilizes colonial authority. On the one hand, it stabilizes colonial authority in that the colonized is altered from the intractable, inestimable other into the compliant, measurable other. On the other hand, it destabilizes colonial authority in that the colonized becomes but a partial replication of the colonial presence, thus decentering its supremacy. In consequence, the colonizer is apprehensive to find their own monstrous image as mirrored by the colonized.[194]

Mimicry, Bhabha suggests, menaces colonial authority by causing the colonizer to wrestle with ambivalence of identity. The reason for this is that "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference."[195] That is to say, a doubling or double vision in mimicry disrupts colonial authority because mimicry discloses the ambivalence of colonial authority. Colonial identity, regardless of whether it is the identity of the colonizer or of the colonized, is in an

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[191] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 128.
[192] Lee, "Is the Glass Half-Empty or Half-Full? Rethinking the Problems of Postcolonial Revisionism," 92.
[193] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 107.
[194] *The Location of Culture*, 42.
[195] *The Location of Culture*, 107.

ambivalent−"almost, but not quite"−state. This liminal identity undermines colonial authority.[196] As a consequence, mimicry is changed into a site of resistance against colonial authority.

As a postcolonial critic, I am committed to recovering the silenced voice of the "subaltern" and the repressed "colonial subject," who in this case is the Samaritan woman, a character rendered invisible and voiceless under colonial rule.[197] However, Gayatri Spivak has argued that it would be an illusion to think that a complete restoration of the silenced voice of the subaltern is possible. Spivak goes even so far as to de-romanticize the optimism at work in both the project of fully recovering the lost voices of the subalterns and the belief in the intellectual's ability to become an agent on their behalf. The reason for this is that this project may run the risk of homogenizing the differences within and between the subalterns, on the one hand, and the differences between the intellectual and the subaltern, on the other. For instance, colonized women are often made all the more voiceless and invisible within both the subaltern and elite groups so as to explicitly or implicitly sustain male dominance. To put it simply, Spivak points to the irretrievable heterogeneity within and between the subalterns, and between the elite and the subaltern. In this respect, she is suspicious of the possibility that the subalterns can speak, allowing a deeper consideration of differences at play by way of gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality.

I agree with Spivak's assessment of the romantic optimism involved in seeking to entirely recover the voice of the subaltern in colonial society. As I become increasingly aware of differentiation within and between the colonized, however, I would rather follow Bhabha's line

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[196] On this, see *The Location of Culture*, 153. As such, I consider hybridity, a liminal identity, as creative rather than passive. For instance, indigenous peoples' mimicry turns out a creative reproduction blended with the native and foreign cultures. In addition, hybridity has a tendency to give rise to a third, new culture, neither indigenous nor foreign. It follows that the colonized have creative agency in the limits of hybridity.

[197] On subaltern discourse, see Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," 271-313.

of reasoning. Namely, through mimicry, the subalterns are in a position to destabilize the authority of those who have hegemony in the colonial world. I am of the opinion that by way of mimicry, a partial assimilation, the subalterns have the agency to subvert colonial rule. Yet, my concern is not the subaltern, but the text itself. It is important to note that it is the text that silences the active and insurrectionary voices of the subalterns, because the majority, which neglects the voice of the minority, writes and furthermore, interprets it. Therefore, we should re-read the text in such a way as to distinguish between the oppressive voice of the majority on the surface and the oppressed voice of the minority behind the text. The time has come, I believe, to reinterpret the text in an attempt to partially, if not fully, recuperate the silenced voice of the minority.[198]

To reconstruct the otherness of the Samaritan woman, I shall conduct a closer reading of the conversation between Jesus and the woman (John 4:1-42) from a postcolonial perspective in the following three ways: construction of the Samaritan woman as a subversive character; construction of Jesus as an ambivalent character; and assessment of the otherness of the Samaritan woman in interaction with Jesus.[199]

First, I will construct the Samaritan woman as an active and subversive character. She can be presented as an active character in her efforts to identify Jesus, a strange traveler, with the result that the power relations between Jesus and the Samaritan woman are inverted slightly. Thus, for example, the Samaritan woman identifies Jesus as a “Jew” (v. 9), a “prophet” (v. 19), and “the Messiah” or “Christ” (v. 25). This suggests that the woman takes the initiative with

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[198] For Spivak, such an attempt would be impossible. "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern," in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 332-70.
[199] I intentionally design the hyphen in the term “re-construct” with the view to problematizing the term “reconstruct,” which is grounded on the assumption that there is an objective and universal reality. The crucial point to be stressed is that all re-constructions are constructions deriving from a subjective and particular context.

respect to Jesus' identity in the conversation, whereas Jesus passively responds to her statements. Although there is the thorny issue of whether or not the Samaritan woman, a subaltern, can speak for herself against the colonial authority of Jesus, I will argue that she can be presented differently—as a creative agent who challenges, through mimicry, his authority as a so-called colonial missionary.

Second, I will construct Jesus as an ambivalent character. To illustrate, through the mimicry of the Samaritan woman, Jesus becomes ambivalent in his racial-ethnic and political identity in connection to the Samaritans and the Romans (John 8:48-9; 11:48; 18:12; 19:3, 12). The Samaritan woman mimics what the missionary Jesus does and says and therefore nativizes him to some degree (John 4:40), as his stay with the Samaritans insinuates. Therefore, Jesus can be presented as ambivalent in his racial-ethnic and political identity.

Third, I conclude by offering some reflections on the implications of the otherness of the Samaritan woman. In effect, I will argue that such otherness from within the Johannine community destabilizes the boundary between Jews and Samaritans, since it has itself become blurry.

2. Constructing the Samaritan Woman as an Active and Subversive Character

The purpose of this section is to envision the otherness of the Samaritan woman beyond a voiceless and invisible character. My contention is that, though nameless and subaltern, she can be constructed as an active and subversive character in her interactions with Jesus, a colonial traveler. On the one hand, the woman can be constructed as an active character insofar as she seeks Jesus' identity, representing in so doing the whole nation of the Samaritans. On the other

hand, the woman can also be constructed as a subversive character when seen through the lens of mimicry. Without necessarily repudiating the possibility that mimicry might re-inscribe the colonial ideology of the colonizer among and upon the colonized, I would like to examine whether such mimicry indeed operates against and resists the authority of Jesus.[200] I claim that the mimicry of the Samaritan woman as the colonized is a threat to the colonizing power of Jesus, while actively investigating his identity.

2.1. The Samaritan Woman as an Active Character

In this vein, it is of great importance to determine whether the Samaritan woman is a passive or active character in the Gospel. A surface reading of the text leads one to view the Samaritan woman as a passive, rather than active, character. With particular reference to the revelation of Jesus' identity, the Samaritan woman would be considered as an auxiliary or supplementary character in the conversation with Jesus. For instance, in her book *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*, Gail O'Day contrasts Jesus' omniscience with the Samaritan woman's ignorance or misunderstanding.[201] O'Day maintains that the Johannine evangelist uses irony "as

[200] On the danger of colonial mimicry for the colonized, see Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might: Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," 12-13 n. 9. It is remarkable that colonial mimicry is a threat to the colonizer by causing ambivalence to them and, at the same time, might be a harm to the colonized by re-inscribing or internalizing colonial ideology unto them. In this sense, mimicry can be divided between colonial and anti-colonial mimicry. For now, I will examine both the colonial and anti-colonial effects of mimicry: that is, (anti-)colonial mimicry.

[201] In my opinion, the characterization of the Samaritan woman as ignorant or incomprehensive in contrast to the characterization of Jesus as omniscient amounts to a process of victimization. Such a reading is deeply rooted in any approach that focuses on irony as a literary device. This interpretation assumes that a discourse is monological. To avoid the victimization of the Samaritan woman as a whole, one needs to understand that a discourse is not monological but dialogical. Overall, this chapter is an attempt to pursue a dialogical understanding of the dialogue

a revelatory mode" so as to bring Jesus' identity to light.[202] According to her, irony comes about when the Samaritan woman does not recognize or misunderstands what Jesus intends to say. O'Day argues further that the evangelist utilizes the ignorance or misunderstanding of the Samaritan woman in order to unveil the identity of Jesus. In this reasoning, the woman is rendered a passive character. However, I understand the woman as an active character who sufficiently resists Jesus' colonial authority.

Furthermore, I will uncover the Samaritan woman's oppressed voice of resistance against Jesus. At first glance, the Samaritan woman, a powerless character, seems to be submissive to Jesus, a powerful character. A close reading will reveal, however, that the Samaritan woman is a threatening character to the colonizing power of Jesus. Such a reading aims to restore the position of the Samaritan woman as an active and subversive character in opposition to the construction of her as a victim or a true disciple/missionary. To say that the Samaritan woman is a victimized character would not be sufficient to rescue her from colonial oppression.[203] Moreover, in the words of Luise Schotroff, "the Samaritan woman does not describe herself as a victim."[204] Likewise, it would not be appropriate to portray the Samaritan woman merely as a true disciple or missionary of Jesus, while turning a deaf ear to the unequal power relations

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between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. In such an approach, the object of irony could be Jesus as well as the woman.

[202] O'Day, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim*, 31-32. On the irony in the Fourth Gospel, see also Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, 165-80; Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 139-56.

[203] On this, see Jean K. Kim, "A Korean Feminist Reading of John 4:1-42," *Semeia*, no. 78 (1997): 109-19; Luise Schottroff and Linda M. Maloney, "The Samaritan Woman and the Notion of Sexuality in the Fourth Gospel," in *What Is John? Ii, Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), 157-81. By no means do I intend to deny that the Samaritan woman becomes victimized at the narrative and discursive levels. Rather, my aim is to argue that the woman should be seen as more than simply a victim.

[204] "The Samaritan Woman and the Notion of Sexuality in the Fourth Gospel," 164.

between the two characters.[205] The Samaritan woman can be seen as more than a prototype of either a victim or a disciple/missionary of Jesus in the sense that she emulates Jesus' mission and at the same time undermines his authority.

This perspective provides a fresh understanding of the Samaritan woman that allows the reader to construct her as an active–or more precisely, ardent–character. The Samaritan woman can be constructed as an active character in terms of exploring Jesus' identity and representing her own community, as she confronts Jesus, a strange traveler. For one thing, the woman is active in probing into the unknown identity of Jesus, whereas he is passive in responding to her attempt to do so. For another, the woman is keenly committed to speaking on behalf of the colonized Samaritans in the conversation with Jesus who represents the colonizing Johannine community. This characteristic of the Samaritan woman highlights the colonial-imperial context. In this way, the Samaritan woman is active at both the individual and communal levels.

First, in her efforts to identify a strange traveler, the Samaritan woman takes the initiative over Jesus in their dialogue, whereas he passively responds to her sayings. To begin with, the Samaritan woman identifies Jesus as "a Jew" (Ἰουδαῖος) (v. 9).[206] Jesus' self-identity as a Jew is

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[205] Sandra Marie Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 126-48.

[206] On the Greek term Ἰουδαῖος, see Adele Reinhartz, ""Jews" and Jews in the Fourth Gospel," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville; London; Leiden: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 213-27; "On Travel, Translation, and Ethnography," in *What Is John?: Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1996), 249-56. The translation of Ἰουδαῖος is of premium importance in understanding the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel has been charged with anti-Judaism, especially after the Holocaust of the World War II. According to Adele Reinharz, the term Ἰουδαῖος carries layers of connotations: political, geographical, ethnical, national, religious, and so on. First, it may denote Jewish leaders or authorities. Second, it may refer to a resident of Judea, or Judaeans. Third, it may symbolize non-believers combined with the cosmos or world. Fourth, it may indicate a national, political, religious, and cultural group. However, the first and second connotations rarely work except for only a few verses in the Fourth Gospel, and the third tends to disregard the historical connotation. It follows from this that the fourth connotation is the most appropriate translation of Ἰουδαῖος.

made clear when he says: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews" (ὑμεῖς προσκυνεῖτε ὃ οὐκ οἴδατε· ἡμεῖς προσκυνοῦμεν ὃ οἴδαμεν, ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν.) (v. 22). Next, she calls him "Lord" (Κύριε) (vv. 11, 15, 19). She also identifies Jesus as "a prophet" (προφήτης) (v. 19) when he speaks to her about her private past life. It is only after the Samaritan woman identifies Jesus as a prophet that he, as a prophet, begins to declare the coming of a new form of worship free from geographical locations like "this mountain" or "Jerusalem" (vv. 21, 23).[207] She then reveals her expectation of a "Messiah" (Μεσσίας) or "Christ" (Χριστός) by saying, "I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ)" (οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός) (v. 25). Immediately after her declaration, Jesus replies in the affirmative, using the expression, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you" (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ λαλῶν σοι) (v. 26). The declaration ἐγώ εἰμι recalls God's name (cf. John 6:20; 8:58; 18:5). Through this interaction, the Samaritan woman keenly explores and draws out Jesus' identity.

Here it is to be kept in mind that the Samaritan woman eventually perceives Jesus as a type of missionary sent to her and the rest of the Samaritans. In their dialogue, she portrays him

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Cf. John Ashton, "The Identity and Function of the Ioudaioi in the Fourth Gospel," *Novum testamentum* 27, no. 1 (1985): 40-75; James D. Purvis, "Fourth Gospel and the Samaritans," ibid.17, no. 3 (1975): 161-98.

[207] Cf. Jeffrey L. Staley, "The Politics of Place and the Place of Politics in the Gospel of John," in *What Is John? Ii, Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), 275. According to Staley, Jesus' statement can be understood in two different ways, depending on Jesus' identity between colonizer and colonized. One the one hand, the statement may be an oppressive one in that Jesus–the Jewish colonizer in relation to the Samaritan woman, the Samaritan colonized–justifies the destruction of the Samaritan temple in 128 B.C.E. by saying that the place of worship is not important at all. On the other hand, the statement may be a liberating one in that Jesus–the Jewish colonized, like the Samaritan colonized, under Roman imperial regime–consoles the woman by saying that any place is not unique under God's sovereignty. Staley seeks to interpret Jesus' statement in a way that it may liberate the colonized without necessarily giving theological authority to the colonizer. Seen from a deconstructive perspective, I, however, do believe that the statement is perpetually, unavoidably subject to both interpretations.

as a missionary who finally accepts his missionary identity as "Messiah" or "Christ" (v. 26). Later, the Samaritan woman introduces Jesus to her townspeople as follows: "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (Δεῦτε ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον ὃς εἶπέν μοι πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησα· μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός;) (v.29). After her identification of Jesus, he tells his disciples about God's harvest as a missionary event, thereby reframing their concern about food (vv. 34-38). In this way, Jesus adopts his identity as a missionary as a consequence of the Samaritan woman's identification of him as such.

Second, by identifying Jesus as a missionary, it goes without saying that the Samaritan woman plays an active role as a spokesperson for the Samaritans under colonial rule. Indeed, I would go further and argue that the Samaritan woman is a spokeswoman for the colonized Samaritans, whereas Jesus is a spokesman for the colonizing Johannine community in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and religion.[208] As Musa Dube argues, the episode involves a Christian imperialist ideology of expansion under the mask of the missionary travel of Jesus and his disciples.[209] It is her contention that Jesus and his disciples are constructed as imperial travelers with a missionary vision of conquering untrodden lands and people in a religiopolitical sense. Dube paints the literary motif of travel in John's plot with the imperial ideology of the Roman Empire.[210] Travel is a translocal phenomenon in the Roman Empire as a result of territorial

[208] The Samaritan woman as a Samaritan female character stands sharply over against Jesus, a Jewish male character with special reference to race/ethnicity, gender, and religion.
[209] Dube, "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)," 66.
[210] On the travel motif of John's Gospel, see Segovia, "The Journey(S) of the Word of God: A Reading of the Plot of the Fourth Gospel," 23-54; M. Dube, "Savior of the World but Not of This World: A Post-Colonial Reading of Spatial Construction in John," *The Postcolonial Bible* (1998): 118–35. Postcolonial criticism has paid close attention to the motif of travel in the plot of FG, as Fernando Segovia suggests. Given travel, a translocal phenomenon, in the Roman Empire as a result of territorial expansion and domination, Dube paints Segovia's literary insights with ideologies of the Empire. She presents Jesus and the Johannine community as propounding an imperializing-colonizing ideology, concealed in the FG in imitation of ancient Roman ideologies,

expansion and domination. Here, she presents Jesus and the Johannine community as advancing an imperializing-colonizing ideology, which is concealed in the Gospel in imitation of Roman ideology. In this respect, the relationship between the Samaritans and Jesus' disciples can be seen as that between colonized natives and colonizing travelers.[211] The Samaritan woman and Jesus can be constructed, therefore, as representatives of the Samaritan and Johannine community, respectively.

This analysis becomes all the more convincing if one keeps the sociocultural context in mind. According to Craig Koester, the Samaritan woman represents the Samaritans who went through a history of subjugation by other nations.[212] The personal life of the Samaritan woman parallels the national history of Samaria. In this regard, the five husbands of the Samaritan woman parallel the five nations that had colonized Samaria, and particularly "the one you have now" (νῦν ὃν ἔχεις) indicates Roman colonization (v. 18).[213] Seen in this light, the statement of the Samaritan woman that "I have no husband" (οὐκ ἔχω ἄνδρα) means that the Samaritans have no nation under Roman rule (v. 17).[214] In Koester's words, "the use of a statement about the woman's personal life to allude to Samaria's colonial history would fit the flow of the narrative and accord with the woman's dual role as an individual and a national representative…"[215] This

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on the minor characters and their communities. Hence, she brings to the fore the colonized, minor characters and their communities-for example, the Samaritan woman and the Samaritan community-as subversive agents to Jesus, a colonizing character and the colonizing Johannine community.

[211] Dube, "Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)," 54.

[212] Koester, ""The Savior of the World" (John 4:42)," 674-80.

[213] ""The Savior of the World" (John 4:42)," 676.

[214] ""The Savior of the World" (John 4:42)," 676-77.

[215] On the five husbands of the Samaritan woman, see ""The Savior of the World" (John 4:42)," 676. If one interprets the five husbands of the Samaritan woman solely in light of moral standards, one may disregard her active role in investigating Jesus' identity. On the intertextual level, the woman could be portrayed as an impure character that commits adultery, as in Hosea 1:2. According to this moralistic interpretation, the woman could be regarded as a character that

sociocultural reading further reinforces the Samaritan woman's role as a representative of the colonized Samaritan community.

On the narrative level, the Samaritan woman draws a clear distinction between the Samaritans and the Jews and then speaks on behalf of her people in verse 20: "Our (ἡμῶν) ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you (ὑμεῖς) say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." The respective use of the possessive and nominative cases of the first and second person plural pronouns, "our" and "you," leads the reader to reckon the Samaritan woman and Jesus as representatives of their own communities.[216] That is to say, the woman, as a

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should repent of her sins in the encounter with Jesus as the Christ. This reading focuses on the Samaritan woman as an immoral character under the influence of the ideology of patriarchy underpinning society at large. ""The Savior of the World" (John 4:42)."

On the other hand, an allegorical interpretation postulates that the marital infidelity of the Samaritan woman is closely connected to the religious infidelity of the Samaritans. In this respect, the five husbands of the woman are construed to be the five deities worshipped by the Samaritan people since the Assyrian colonization of the Northern Kingdom. However, this allegorical interpretation is found to be unconvincing in consideration of 2 Kings 17:29-32, because the passage reads that the Samaritans worshipped seven deities, not five, along with Yahweh. It is worth noting that it is five nations that settle in Samaria under the Assyria colonization and introduce seven deities (2 Kings 17:24). It follows from this that the five husband of the Samaritan woman symbolize the five nations inhabiting the region of Samaria during the Assyrian occupation.

Contra the above-mentioned moralistic and allegorical interpretations, I argue the Samaritan woman represents the Samaritan people and their colonial past. Unquestionably, these interpretations hide and ignore the anti-colonial role of the woman by singling out her marital or religious infidelity.

[216] Interestingly enough, the evangelist uses plural pronouns to render some minor characters, such as Nicodemus as well as the Samaritan woman, representatives of their own communities in distinction to Jesus as a representative of the Johannine community. As is the case with Nicodemus, the evangelist employs the first person and second person plural personal pronouns in the following passages: "Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You (ὑμᾶς) must be born from above" (John 3:7); 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our (ἡμῶν) testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you (ὑμῖν) about heavenly things?" (John 3:11-12). Clearly, the evangelist has a tendency to transform such minor characters as Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman into representatives of their community, beyond the limits of individual characters, by using the first person and second person plurals. At the same time, Jesus is transformed into a representative of the Johannine community.

Samaritan spokeswoman for her people, stands in contrast to Jesus, as a Jewish spokesman for his people.

2.2. The Samaritan Woman as a Subversive Character

Further, the notion of (anti-)colonial mimicry leads the reader to construct the Samaritan woman as a subversive character in the Roman imperial milieu in such a way as to make Jesus equivalent to the Roman emperors. To illustrate, I will demonstrate that the Samaritan woman copies the ways in which Jesus speaks and acts. Then, I will show how her mimicry engenders further mimicry on the part of the townspeople. In the process, I will prove that the mimicry of the Samaritan woman and her people turns out to be resistant against the imperial agenda by rendering Jesus an anti-imperial character.

To begin with, the Samaritan woman mimics what Jesus, a traveling missionary, does and says. As Jesus "left (ἀφῆκεν) Judea and went back to (ἀπῆλθεν) Galilee" (v. 3), the Samaritan woman "left (ἀφῆκεν) the water jar and went back to (ἀπῆλθεν) the city" (v. 28). The woman "speaks (λέγει) to the people" (v.28) in the same way that Jesus "speaks (λέγει) to her" (v.7). Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "believe me (Πίστευέ μοι)" (v. 21), and the Samaritans, based on the woman's word of witness (τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς μαρτυρούσης), "believed in him (ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν)" (v.39). The Samaritan woman's mimicry of Jesus' missionary activity is such a success that her testimony causes the Samaritan townspeople to believe in him. As Sandra Schneiders puts it, "This woman is the first and only person (presented) in the public life of Jesus through whose word of witness a group of people is brought to 'come and see' and 'to believe in

Jesus.'"[217] It therefore follows that the Samaritan woman is an imitator of Jesus' missionary activity.

Next, the mimicry of the Samaritan woman, in turn, generates the mimicry of her townspeople. As noted above, the woman's testimony is a replication of Jesus' missionary activity, which runs parallel to the traveling colonizers in the imperial context. The woman's mimicry is subversive because it places Jesus on a par with the Roman emperors. More specifically, the phrase "the Savior of the world" (ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου) demonstrates the subversive effect of the woman's mimicry, which insinuates a striking connotation of resistance against the Roman Empire (John 4:42). Although there is no straightforward passage in which the Samaritan woman uses the phrase "the Savior of the world," it can be inferred from the flow of the narrative that she initially tells her townspeople that Jesus is "the Savior of the world."[218] The following statement of the Samaritans can corroborate this inference: "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe" (Οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν λαλιὰν πιστεύομεν) (v. 42b). This strongly implies that the townspeople hear the phrase from the Samaritan woman before they proclaim it in the conclusion of the passage. Therefore, it can be said that the townspeople mimic the Samaritan woman by propagating the phrase "the Savior of the world."

The phrase "the Savior of the world" would and should call to mind political implications within the Roman imperial context. The epithet σωτὴρ given to Jesus by the townspeople and, ostensibly, by the Samaritan woman bears anti-colonial connotations. It is a term exclusively applied to the Roman emperors as a tool of propaganda in Rome. In addition to σωτὴρ, such Greek terms as εὐαγγέλιον, εἰρήνη, δικαιοσύνη, and πίστις—all frequently used in early

[217] Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 142.
[218] Schottroff and Maloney, "The Samaritan Woman and the Notion of Sexuality in the Fourth Gospel," 168. Luise Schotroff argues rightly: "the woman becomes God's messenger, who tells her Samaritan people that Jesus is the Savior of the world (4:40)."

Christian writings—also derive from the propaganda of the Roman Empire. Under Roman rule, these terms respectively denote: the "gospel" of the emperor Augustus, the "peace" secured by the victory of a war, the "justice" enforced by Augustus Caesar, and the "loyalty" of citizens to Rome.[219] Here the use of the phrase "the Savior of the world" under the statue of Augustus, found at Myra in Lycia, is very much to the point: "The god Augustus, Son of God, Caesar, Autocrat [Autokrator, i.e., absolute ruler] of land and sea, the Benefactor and *Savior of the whole cosmos*, the people of Myra [acknowledgment, or, have set up this statue]."[220] (emphasis mine) In light of the parallels between Roman imperial and early Christian agendas, the Greek term σωτὴρ used by the Samaritans hints at the mimicry of the Samaritan woman of the colonial-imperial movement.

Lastly, due to the Samaritan woman's mimicry of such imperial propaganda, the townspeople can apply such a cherished imperial slogan as "the Savior of the world" to Jesus. As a consequence, Jesus is painted with an anti-colonial brush, regardless of his intent. The Samaritan townspeople grant Jesus the title "Savior of the world," which was used solely for Roman emperors, thereby rendering him equal to them. Notably, it is the colonial mimicry of the Samaritan woman and, subsequently, her townspeople that prompts the reader to recognize Jesus as an anti-imperial character. Given the exclusive nature of the slogan, Jesus runs counter-parallel to Roman emperors, thereby becoming a resistant character against the imperial agenda (cf. John 19:12b). In effect, one can construct the Samaritan woman as a subversive character because she paints Jesus as a counter-imperial character.

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[219] On this, see Dieter Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," in *Paul and Empire* (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Pr Int'l, 1997), 148-50.
[220] Cited by Frederick C. Grant, *Ancient Roman Religion* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 175.

In conclusion, this section envisages the Samaritan woman as an active and subversive character rather than a passive and subaltern character in the sociocultural context of narration. The woman can be constructed as an active character searching for Jesus' identity in the conversation. It turns out that Jesus is passive, but the woman is active in investigating the identity of a strange traveler. Additionally, the woman can be constructed as a subversive character in the Roman imperial context when seen through the lens of (anti-)colonial mimicry. The mimicry of calling Jesus the "Savior of the world," which is performed by the townspeople as well as (theoretically) the Samaritan woman, renders him equal to Caesar and, by implication, even anti-colonial. Given this anti-colonial effect of her mimicry, the Samaritan woman can be constructed as resisting the Roman Empire. Thus, the Samaritan woman becomes an active and subversive character in the narrative.

3. Constructing Jesus as an Ambivalent Character

As a consequence of her mimicry, the Samaritan woman causes Jesus to bring to light his ambivalent racial-ethnic and political identity. Prior to constructing Jesus as an ambivalent character, one has to raise the question as to whether John's Jesus is the colonized or the colonizer, because identity formation in the narrative dimension has much to do with the context of colonialism or imperialism. A variety of options exists: (1) Jesus as a powerful traveler, dominating unfamiliar inhabitants and lands in an imperialist project; (2) Jesus as the colonized, resisting Roman imperial rule, in particular in connection with Jewish authorities and Roman rulers; or (3) Jesus as both a colonizing and colonized traveler, simultaneously adopting and

subverting Roman imperial practice.[221] It is my contention that Jesus is both a colonizing and colonized character, which leads him to wrestle with his ambivalent racial-ethnic and political identity.

Up to this point, I have emphasized that Jesus is a *colonizing* traveler in this encounter and the Samaritan woman and townspeople are the colonized natives. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that Jesus is a *colonized* traveler under Roman rule. It follows, therefore, that John's Jesus can be viewed as both the colonizer and the colonized. Adele Reinhartz acknowledges that the boundary between the two is blurry in nature; for that reason, the concepts of colonizer and colonized are relative, not absolute.[222] In the words of Reinhartz, Jesus, so to speak, is "the colonizer as colonized" in the sense that he both espouses and resists Roman imperial ideology.

With this in mind, the Samaritan woman contributes to blurring the boundary between the colonizer and the colonized, especially with regard to race/ethnicity, through the ambivalent discourse of mimicry. As I will demonstrate, the mimicry of the Samaritan woman helps ultimately situate Jesus in-between a Jewish identity as the colonizer and a Samaritan identity as the colonized. In other words, Jesus' racial-ethnic identity becomes so blurred by the woman's mimicry that his Jewish identity can be blended with her Samaritan identity. As I will argue below, John 8:48-49 offers compelling evidence that Jesus confronts a pressing issue related to his racial-ethnic identity after his encounter with the Samaritan woman and the townspeople in John 4:1-42.

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[221] On this, see Dube, "Savior of the World but Not of This World: A Post-Colonial Reading of Spatial Construction in John; Dube, "Batswakwa: Which Traveller Are You (John 1:1-18)?," 150-62; Thatcher, *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel*; Reinhartz, "The Colonizer as Colonized," 170-92.
[222] "The Colonizer as Colonized," 192.

Yet the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42 shows that both characters navigate the boundaries between Jews and Samaritans. To begin with, the Samaritan woman points to the clear-cut racial-ethnic and gendered boundary between a Jewish man and a Samaritan woman in response to Jesus' request to give him a drink: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ' ἐμοῦ πεῖν αἰτεῖς γυναικὸς Σαμαρίτιδος οὔσης) (v. 9b). In this way, the Samaritan woman reinstates the racial-ethnic and gendered boundary that Jesus attempts to destabilize by asking her for water. Further, the narrator's aside corroborates the woman's position by emphasizing the racial-ethnic distinction (v. 9c): "Jews do not share in common with Samaritans" (οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις). Thus, the narrator credits the Samaritan woman with holding a traditional position about the interaction between two characters of different backgrounds.

In the face of Jesus' racial-ethnic and gendered breach, the Samaritan woman repeatedly underscores the clear distinction between Jews and Samaritans by asking the question: "Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob" (μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ) (v. 12a). Particularly, the woman's use of the second person singular and first person plural personal pronouns, "you" (σύ) and "our" (ἡμῶν), signals the obvious difference between Jews and Samaritans. Likewise, by introducing the urgent topic of the place of worship, "this mountain" (i.e., Gerizim) or "Jerusalem," the woman uses the first and second person plural personal pronouns, which persistently signify the dissension between Jews and Samaritans: "Our (ἡμῶν) ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you (ὑμεῖς) say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem" (v. 20). In this way, the Samaritan woman demarcates territories along racial-ethnic lines.

In a similar fashion, Jesus draws a neat boundary between Jews and Samaritans, albeit in

the mode of exclusive inclusion. At a glance, Jesus seems to contravene social conventions about race/ethnicity and gender by asking the Samaritan woman for a drink (δός μοι πεῖν) (v. 7c). Furthermore, he seems to transgress borders that separate Jews from Samaritans by invalidating both Mt. Gerizim and Jerusalem as the right place of worship: "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" (πίστευέ μοι, γύναι, ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὔτε ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ οὔτε ἐν Ἰεροσολύμοις προσκυνήσετε τῷ πατρί) (v. 21b). Apparently, these statements made by Jesus reflect a universalizing, inclusive movement in the Johannine community. However, his inclusive position, in the end, turns out to be transformed into an exclusive one by sharpening the boundary between Jews and Samaritans. This is shown in the contrast between "you" and "we" in verse 22a: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know" (ὑμεῖς προσκυνεῖτε ὃ οὐκ οἴδατε· ἡμεῖς προσκυνοῦμεν ὃ οἴδαμεν). Jesus' statement lays bare his Jewish perspective on worship. In the process, Jesus intentionally goes on to identify himself as a Jew. Jesus' exclusive stance culminates in the following statement: "for salvation is from the Jews" (ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν) (v. 22b). It is worth bearing in mind that the term "Jews" here refers to the Jewish people as a whole (John 11:19, 45), rather than, as is the case elsewhere, a section of the Jewish people who have a hostile attitude against Jesus (for example, the Jewish authorities in John 1:19; 5:16; 9:22).[223] In doing so, Jesus' seemingly inclusive attitude toward the Samaritan woman nevertheless excludes her from his group identity as a Jew.

In the Johannine perspective, such an exclusive inclusion on the part of Jesus is ultimately designed to reconstruct the boundary between Jews and Samaritans, while simultaneously deconstructing the boundary between the two. On the surface level, Jesus

[223] See Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 172.

deconstructs the racial-ethnic boundary between Jews and Samaritans in a way that reconstructs a new group for the Johannine community including both Jews and Samaritans. Jesus' mode of reconstructing the new community is similar to an imperialist project that seeks both to embrace all different racial-ethnic groups and to emphasize the dominant group. By the same token, Jesus highlights the Jews as dominant in terms of salvation, while still blurring the racial-ethnic boundary with the Samaritans.

In spite of an initial emphasis on his Jewish identity (John 4:7-26), Jesus ironically begins to be assimilated into a Samaritan identity as a result of the Samaritan woman's mimicry (John 4:39-42). This can be observed in the jarring debate between Jesus and the Jews in John 8:48-49, which hints at his ambivalence toward his racial-ethnic identity. To illustrate, in the debate, the Jews ask Jesus the question, "Are we [the Jews] not right in saying that you [Jesus] are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαιμόνιον ἔχεις;) (v. 48b). It is clear that this question is a guileful taunt, insolently thrown against Jesus' identity, since both "Samaritan" and "demon" convey negative connotations.[224] Jesus explicitly denies the second indictment that he has a demon by answering, "I do not have a demon" (ἐγὼ δαιμόνιον οὐκ ἔχω) (v. 49b). However, it is striking that Jesus remains silent–and implicitly compliant–with the first indictment that he is a Samaritan. This episode demonstrates Jesus' assimilation of a Samaritan identity.

On the individual level, this implies that Jesus becomes confused about his racial-ethnic identity, particularly after his interaction with the Samaritan woman and townspeople (John 4:1-42). Most importantly, the woman's mimicry of Jesus' missionary activity is a good reason for Jesus to feel a sense of ambivalence about his racial-ethnic identity. The reason for this is that

[224] Wayne A. Meeks, "Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85, no. 2 (1966): 166.

her mimicry gives rise to the assimilation of Jesus into the Samaritans. The converted Samaritan townspeople, mainly due to the woman's mimicry, entreat Jesus to "stay with them" (μεῖναι παρ' αὐτοῖς) (v. 40). So "he stayed there for two days" (ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ δύο ἡμέρας) (v. 40). In the Fourth Gospel, the Greek word μεῖναι, "to dwell," or "to stay," is a technical term symbolic of "union with Jesus."[225] From the fact that Jesus dwells (μεῖναι) with the Samaritans, one can argue that Jesus becomes united with, or assimilated into, them. This means that, at least to some degree, Jesus becomes Samaritanized in John 4:1-42. When read within the broader narrative, Jesus implicitly reveals his bewilderment with the Samaritanization of his racial-ethnic identity in John 8:48-49.[226] There is an ironic twist in the fact that Jesus, a colonizing missionary, is, in the end, incorporated into the people he intends to colonize, as a consequence of the Samaritan woman's mimicry of his missionary activity.

By the same token, on the communal level, Jesus admits that the Samaritans are integrated into the Johannine community through an intensive missionary propaganda. Hence, the community is made up of Samaritans as well as Jews.[227] As Wayne Meeks rightly argues, "the Johannine community was willing tacitly to accept an identification as 'Samaritans.'"[228] In this connection, Jesus' silence is taken to mean his partial, though not complete, identification as

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[225] Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 143.
[226] Nikos Papastergiadis, "Tracing Hybridity in Theory," in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., USA: Zed Books, 1997), 257-81. The terms "Westernized Indian" and "Indianized Westerner," which Nikos Papastergiadis coins, hints at the idea that Jesus is "Samaritanized."
[227] On the Samaritan origin of the Fourth Gospel, see George Wesley Buchanan, "The Samaritan Origin of the Gospel of John," Religions in Antiquity, ed. Jacob Neusner, 149-175; Edwin D. Freed, "Samaritan Influence in the Gospel of John," CBQ 30 (1968), 580-587
[228] Meeks, "Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel," 168.

a Samaritan.[229] As mentioned above, the most crucial point in the process of Samaritanization on both the individual and communal level is that the Samaritan woman's mimicry of Jesus' mission induces him to abide with the Samaritans and become assimilated into them at length. The upshot is that Jesus is betwixt and between the Jewish colonizer and the Samaritan colonized. Therefore, one can construct Jesus as an ambivalent character in terms of race/ethnicity.

The Samaritan woman's mimicry engenders Jesus' ambivalence about his racial-ethnic identity. Given the neat Jewish/Samaritan distinction constructed by Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42, his fragmentary integration into the Samaritans clearly does harm to his colonial authority. The assimilation of the colonizer into the colonized is, by nature, shameful in light of the hierarchical patterns of the Mediterranean world.[230] It is quite ironic that Jesus, a Jewish man, who exploits the racial-ethnic divisions between Jews and Samaritans in John 4:22, falls victim to a racial-ethnic slur against Samaritans by not publicly renouncing his alleged Samaritan identity in John 8:48-49.

Moreover, the Samaritan woman and townspeople reveal the ambivalence of Jesus' political identity, which unavoidably oscillates between imperial identity and anti-imperial identity, by calling him "the Savior of the world" (ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου) (John 4:42). As noted above, this phrase originally has imperial connotations in the context of Roman propaganda, since the Roman emperors monopolize the epithet σωτὴρ. It is paradoxical that Jesus becomes an anti-imperial character by giving him such an imperial epithet. Or put otherwise, Jesus becomes

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[229] Paul Duke, Irony in the Fourth Gospel, 75 Paul Duke states succinctly: "For early readers of the Gospel who were Samaritans, for readers who had learned to call such Samaritans sister and brother, and for Christians of every era weary of elitist and bigoted religion, especially in the church, this intended insult, accepted by Jesus with wonderful silence, elicits the smile of irony. For the sake of the sheep "not of this fold" (10:16) Jesus was and is always a Samaritan."

[230] On the honor and shame code in the Mediterranean basin, see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, Rev. ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

both an imperial and anti-imperial character in the sense that he is rendered equal to the Roman emperors through mimicry, and yet all the more resistant to the Roman imperial theology, wherein the emperor is widely worshipped not simply as a ruler (in a political sense), but also as a savior (in a religious sense). What is intriguing is that the more Jesus is portrayed as anti-imperial, the more imperial he appears.

As such, (anti-)colonial mimicry prompts both Jews and Romans to recognize Jesus as an anti-imperial character as the narrative unfolds. Specifically, the Jews conspire to kill Jesus because of their fear of the Romans, which stems from his anti-imperial traits: "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our holy place and our nation" (ἐὰν ἀφῶμεν αὐτὸν οὕτως, πάντες πιστεύσουσιν εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ ἐλεύσονται οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ ἀροῦσιν ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν τόπον καὶ τὸ ἔθνος) (John 11:48). The Jews identify Jesus as the one who claims to be a king. They understand this claim to resist Roman domination, saying, "Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar" (πᾶς ὁ βασιλέα ἑαυτὸν ποιῶνἀντιλέγει τῷ Καίσαρι) (John 19:12b). In a similar fashion, the Romans adopt the concern of the Jews over Jesus' anti-imperial traits at the moment when Jesus is arrested (John 18:12). In this vein, the epithet "the King of the Jews" (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων) used by Pontius Pilate and the Roman soldiers reflects the notion that the Roman colonizers also identify Jesus as an anti-imperial character (John 19:3).

In the face of anti-imperial identification, Jesus has no choice but to accept his anti-imperial identity. The phrase, "the King of the Jews" is the crucial term in understanding his political identity, which is prevalent in the Gospel (cf. John 1:49; 12:13; 18:33, 36, 37; 19:19). When Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" (σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων;) (John 18:33), the title "the King of the Jews" has a political implication, which hints that Jesus is a

Jewish national liberator.[231] Jesus denies the 'Jewish' kingship by saying: "My kingdom is not from this world" (ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου) (John 18:36b). In contrast, Jesus replies in the affirmative when Pilate asks him, "Are you a king?" (οὐκοῦν βασιλεὺς εἶ σύ;) (John 18:37a). As Raymond Brown argues, the Greek expression (σὺ λέγεις ὅτι βασιλεύς εἰμι) (John 18:37b) should be treated as an affirmative response: "Yes, you have said it correctly, I am a king."[232] Still, it remains ambiguous whether Jesus accepts his kingship in a religious or political sense. That is to say, it is unclear whether or not Jesus makes a neat distinction between "king" in a religious sense and "king" in a political sense. Nevertheless, considering that Pilate looks upon Jesus as an anti-imperial character and thereby crucifies him, Jesus' kingship is taken to be anti-imperial, regardless of whether such is his intent or not. Thus, Jesus' acquiescence with regard to his kingship allows for his anti-imperial characterization.

In short, the otherness of the Samaritan woman provides impetus for Jesus' ambivalence towards his racial-ethnic and political identity. Through the mimicry of the woman and subsequently of the Samaritans, Jesus swings back and forth between Jewish identity and Samaritan identity, as shown in the aforementioned analysis of John 8:48-49. On the other hand, by calling Jesus "the Savior of the world" (John 4:22), the Samaritans bring to light his ambivalence regarding his political identity, which vacillates between imperial identity to anti-imperial identity. While Jesus behaves as a colonialist in interaction with the Samaritans, he becomes anti-colonial in interaction with the Romans, particularly in the passion narrative. Taken together, Jesus becomes an ambivalent character between a Jew and a Samaritan on the racial-ethnic level and between a colonialist and an anti-colonialist on the political level. In other words, Jesus can be characterized as both the colonizer and the colonized. Consequently, the

[231] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 851.
[232] *The Gospel According to John*, 853.

mimicry of the Samaritan woman eventually destabilizes the identity of Jesus, both racial-ethnic and political, in such a way as to call into question his colonial authority.

4. Conclusion: The Implications of the Otherness *Within*

In conclusion, let us consider the implications of the otherness of the Samaritan woman. The otherness within destabilizes the boundary between Jews and Samaritans and between colonizer and colonized by demonstrating that the racial-ethnic and colonial differences within the Johannine community are blurred. Given that the Johannine community consists of a Jewish majority and a Samaritan minority, the Samaritan woman represents the otherness of the minority group within the community on a symbolic level. However, the integration of the Samaritans into the Johannine community cannot wipe off the marks of difference in race/ethnicity and religion. Seen in this light, the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman continues to betray the differences due to gender, race/ethnicity, and religion on a narrative level. The otherness of the Samaritan woman suggests that the Samaritan community becomes an internal other in the Johannine community.

The Samaritan woman is among the minor characters most vulnerable to victimization through negative representation within the exclusivist framework of dualism at a textual level and colonialism at a contextual level. At a textual level, we can see a dualistic framework in which the Samaritan woman is presented as inferior, ignorant, and impuissant, while Jesus is portrayed as superior, omniscient, and omnipotent. At a contextual level, we can also find a colonial framework in which the Samaritan woman is a boundary marker, which means that she is the colonized other to Jesus, a colonizing missionary. All things considered, the Samaritan

woman—as an other to Jesus and the Johannine community—becomes a victimized character in the hierarchical structure grounded in binary oppositions at both a textual and contextual level.

In spite of all this, the Samaritan woman should not be constructed as a victimized—or more precisely, passive and subaltern—character. A close reading from a deconstructive postcolonial perspective leads to the characterization of the woman as an active and subversive character at a textual and contextual level. At a textual level, the woman is an active character scrutinizing Jesus' identity during the conversation, while Jesus is a passive character. At a contextual level, the woman is a subversive character under Roman rule through the notion of mimicry. The Samaritan woman's mimicry (i.e., hailing Jesus as the "Savior of the world") is quite anti-colonial in the sense that it challenges the colonial authority of Roman emperors who are zealous to monopolize such appellation under any conditions. Consequently, the Samaritan woman is an active and subversive character sufficient to foster Jesus' ambivalent attitudes toward his racial-ethnic and political identity.

As such, this otherness of the Samaritan woman goes on to disrupt the boundary that separates the Jews from the Samaritans and the colonizer from the colonized, in such a way as to indicate that the racial-ethnic and colonial differences become blurred, especially on the part of Jesus. Due to the (anti-)colonial mimicry of the Samaritan woman and townspeople, Jesus unavoidably vacillates between Jewish identity and Samaritan identity. By the same token, Jesus unceasingly swings back and forth between imperial identity and anti-imperial identity on the grounds that he becomes both imperialistic in dealings with the Samaritans and anti-imperialistic in dealings with the Romans. The (anti-)colonial mimicry of the Samaritan woman causes Jesus to become an ambivalent character on both a racial-ethnic and political level. In the long run, the Samaritan woman undermines the dualistic and hierarchical structure of both the text of John and

the context of Roman imperial ideology. Her otherness becomes unfixed and unfixable within the dualistic and colonial-imperial framework. Thus, the Samaritan woman can be differently constructed as a genuinely creative character, resisting both the dualism of the Johannine world and the hierarchical power structure of the Jewish Roman world.

CHAPTER IV

PONTIUS PILATE, THE JEWS, AND JESUS:

READING THE OTHERNESS *WITHOUT*

1. Introduction

Chapter 4 constructs the otherness of both the Jews and Pontius Pilate in the trial narrative as externally opposed to the Johannine community.[233] It comes as no surprise that the

[233] On the matter of Ioudaioi in the Gospel of John, see Ashton, "The Identity and Function of the Ioudaioi in the Fourth Gospel; Wayne A. Meeks, ""Am I a Jew"-Johannine Christianity and Judaism," in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Udo Schnelle, "Die Juden Im Johannesevangelium," in *Gedenkt an Das Wort: Festschrift Für Werner Vogler Zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Werner Vogler, et al. (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999); Daniel Boyarin, "The Ioudaioi in John and the Prehistory of 'Judaism'," in *Pauline Conversations in Context: Essays in Honor of Calvin J. Roetzel*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson, Philip Sellew, and Claudia Setzer (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Urban C. Von Wahlde, "The Johannine "Jews" : A Critical Survey," *New Testament Studies* 28, no. 1 (1982); "Literary Structure and Theological Argument in Three Discourses with the Jews in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103, no. 4 (1984); ""The Jews" in the Gospel of John: Fifteen Years of Research (1983-1998)," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 76, no. 1 (2000); Donald Francois Tolmie, "The Ioudaioi in the Fourth Gospel: A Narratological Perspective," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel* (Leuven: Leuven Univ Pr ; Peeters, 2005). Lars Kierspel, *The Jews and the World in the Fourth Gospel: Parallelism, Function, and Context*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament. Reihe 2; (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Mathias Rissi, "Die 'Juden' Im Johannesevangelium," *ANRW* 2, no. 26.3 (1996).

In the current chapter, when I refer to the Jews (*hoi Ioudaioi*), I am speaking of a particular group of people in the Gospel of John rather than the Jewish people in general. Throughout the trial narrative, it is significant to note that the term the Jews does not comprise Jews as a whole.

In general, in the Gospel of John, it is a challenge to identify who the Jews are. The Gospel uses the term the Jews to call attention to different groups of people and different identities at different moments in the text. Sometimes, the term designates a racial-ethnic identity (John 1:35-51; 4:9). Other times, the term designates the crowd (John 7:1-3). Still other times, the term designates the Jewish religious authorities (John 7:15, 32, 45). It would be too hasty to

Gospel of John brings to light the tension between Jesus, the matrix of the Johannine community, and the Jewish and Roman rulers, as represented by the Jews and Pilate, respectively.[234] Clearly, the Jews and Pilate are the opposing characters of Jesus. On the one hand, the Jewish authorities refuse to accept his kingship.[235] On the other hand, the Roman authorities reject Jesus on the grounds that Jesus, as an anti-imperial character, runs counter to the Roman emperors.[236] Thus, Jesus emerges as an alienated character from the authorities, both Jewish and Roman. This further suggests that such dominant characters as the Jews and Pilate become the external opponents of Jesus outside of the Johannine community.[237] This chapter concerns the essentially

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conclude that the Jews are always portrayed as negative in that they are sometimes at least neutral or at most positive. Therefore, the Jews become an ambiguous character even within the trial scene. Cf. Warren Carter, *Pontius Pilate: Portraits of a Roman Governor*, Interfaces (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003), 133-34.

[234] David K. Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 92-96. Clearly, David Rensberger construes the Jews and Pilate as representative of the Roman and Jewish system, respectively.

[235] On the marginal nature of the Johannine character, see Robert J. Karris, *Jesus and the Marginalized in John's Gospel*, Zacchaeus Studies New Testament (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 102-07. Cf. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*.

Interestingly, Robert Karris stresses that the Johannine community is a marginalized community composed of marginalized groups such as the Samaritans, the Galileans, the disabled, and those ignorant of the law and so forth. Karris is significantly indebted to the observation of J. Louis Martyn that the Jewish Christians of the Johannine community have the fear of being cast out of the Jewish synagogue (e.g., John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). However, unlike Martyn, Karris' focus is not on a theological dispute over Jesus's divinity, but on a sociological dispute over the inclusivity of the Johannine community.

[236] On the anti-imperial nature of Johannine Christology, see Cassidy, *John's Gospel in New Perspective: Christology and the Realities of Roman Power*; Richey, *Roman Imperial Ideology and the Gospel of John*. It is worth noting that both Richard Cassidy and Lance Byron Richey uncover the anti-imperial elements in Johannine Christology from a historical perspective. Similar to, but distinct from Cassidy and Richey, I will investigate an anti-imperial portrait of Jesus from a literary perspective.

[237] Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community*, 92-96. In Rensberger's view, it is certain that the Jews and Pilate respectively stand for the Roman and Jewish opponents of the Johannine community in the trial narrative.

marginalized, or othered, nature of Jesus and, by implication, the Johannine community in stark opposition to the Roman rulers as well as the Jewish rulers.[238]

Whereas in the preceding chapters Jesus is a central character in his interactions with marginalized characters like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, in the trial narrative, Jesus is most often read as a marginalized character at odds with the more powerful characters: the Jews and Pilate. More specifically, a common interpretation suggests that Jesus and his kingship are challenged by the Jews and Pilate, with the result that the Jewish and Roman powers marginalize Jesus. Against this reading, I suggest that Jesus complicates these flattened power dynamics by showing that he is both a disempowered and empowered character. In contrast to the assumption that Jesus remains a marginalized character throughout the trial narrative, I argue that an inverted process of othering occurs, by which those who were originally marginalized in turn attempt to regain control by othering those in power. Jesus, a marginalized character, resists the powerful characters, i.e., the Jews and Pilate, through his subversive performance. A closer reading reveals that Jesus excludes the Jews and Pilate from the realm of his kingship. All things considered, I view the Jews and Pilate as *both* empowered *and* disempowered opponents of Jesus outside of the Johannine community. In this way, I disrupt the seemingly straightforward reading by bringing to light a more complicated picture of mutable and shifting power dynamics.

When read from a deconstructive postcolonial perspective, the dynamic between Jesus, the Jews, and Pilate is much more nuanced and sophisticated than the either/or logic characteristic of Johannine dualism can imagine. This is to say that Jesus' relation with the Jews

[238] On an anti-imperial portrait of the Jews and Pilate, see Thatcher, *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel*. See also Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations*. From an anti-imperial perspective, Tom Thatcher describes the Jews as giving supplementary support to imperial power, and Pilate as exercising his violent power under Roman rule.

and Pilate is both inclusive and exclusive simultaneously. To put it in Giorgio Agamben's terms, Jesus is paradoxically at once included in and excluded from the world of the Jews and the Roman world of Pilate.[239] First, insofar as Jesus remains a Jew even when he is expelled from the Jewish community, he is excluded from the Jewish community while simultaneously being included within it. Agamben would characterize the relationship of Jesus to the Jews as *inclusively excluded*. Second, Jesus is included in the Roman Empire, while at the same time being excluded from it. In other words, Jesus, as a Jew, is not a Roman citizen, but he is still subject to Roman rule. In Agamben's terms, the relationship of Jesus to Pilate would be described as *exclusively included*. The threshold between Jesus, the Jews, and Pilate becomes so blurred that the dynamic between them turns out to be both inclusive and exclusive simultaneously—or more precisely, *inclusively excluded* or *exclusively included*—, thereby producing a grey area between inclusion and exclusion, and furthermore, between insider and outsider.[240]

As such, Jesus' liminal position of being inclusively excluded and exclusively included in dealings with the Jews and Pilate stems from "a zone of indistinction," in Agamben's vocabulary,

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[239] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998). Note the differences in nuance of the term "Jewish." Like the term the Jews the term "Jewish" in the trial narrative of John may convey the different shades of meaning from negative via neutral to positive meaning.

[240] *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 21.
In Agamben's view, "exception" is an inclusive exclusion as an attempt to include the excludable and "example" is an exclusive inclusion as an attempt to exclude the includable. In this light, the dynamic between Jesus and the Jews functions as an example to exclude Jesus, the includable, from the Jewish rule and the dynamic between Jesus and Pilate serves as an exception to include Jesus, the excludable, in the Roman rule. As Agamben remarks, "But while the exception is, as we saw, an inclusive exclusion (which thus serves to include what is excluded), the example instead functions as an exclusive inclusion" (21).

between insider and outsider identities.[241] More specifically, Jesus is an insider in both the Jewish and Roman worlds on the grounds that he is subject to both the rules of Judaism and the Roman Empire. But at the same time, Jesus is an outsider from both the Jewish and Roman worlds explicitly because his kingship goes beyond both earthly rules (John 18:36; cf. 8:23; 17:14, 16). In a paradox, Jesus is simultaneously an insider in and an outsider from each of the Jewish and Roman reigns. That is to say, Jesus lives in both of the reigns, while at the same time belonging to neither of them.[242] It follows from this that Jesus resides in an in-between zone between insider and outsider.

In order to clarify further the relationship between Jesus, the Jews and Pilate, let us unpack what Agamben means when he speaks of a "zone of indistinction." In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben attempts to highlight the political paradigm defined as an undecidable zone, wherein the space between sovereign rule and its exceptions becomes indiscernible. Drawing on Michel Foucault's notion of biopower and biopolitics,[243]Agamben analyzes how sovereign power

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[241] On a zone of indistinction, see the *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 19.

[242] Cf. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 105. Following Agamben, Jesus can be, to a lesser or more degree, comparable to a werewolf, "who is precisely neither man nor beast, and who dwells paradoxically within both while belonging to neither." Similar to, but distinct from, a werewolf, Jesus would be construed as living in both the Jewish and Roman worlds, while simultaneously being affiliated with neither.

[243] On the concept of biopower and biopolitics, see Michel Foucault et al., *The History of Sexuality*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 140; Michel Foucault et al., *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan: République Française, 2007), 1-4. Michel Foucault defines the term "biopower" as a variety of technologies exercising power in such a way as to subjugate bodies and govern the entire population in the modern nation state and capitalism. That is, the natural life of each individual is integrated into the sphere of the political power of the nation state. Elaborating on his notion of biopower, Foucault goes on to understand "biopolitics" as a technical apparatus to exercise control over the physical bodies and the political bodies of the population in its entirety. Consider, for example, birth and reproductive control in the form of biopolitics. In the above example, the nation state exercises biopower over its population through the mechanism of biopolitics. Following in the footsteps of Foucault, Agamben espouses his concept of biopower and biopolitics, albeit with some modifications. Whereas Foucault

engenders *homo sacer* or "bare life" in the "state of exception," where sovereign power is momentarily suspended within the juridical order that it itself sets up.

It is worthwhile to elaborate on his use of "bare life." Agamben turns his attention to a pivotal differentiation in Greek between *zoe* (natural or biological life) and *bios* (political life) as Aristotle constructs them. To Aristotle's categories for life, Agamben adds a third type of life known as "bare life," which Walter Benjamin in his essay *Critique of Violence* originally defines as a medium of law and violence.[244] "Bare life" is an original production of sovereign power, paradoxically, both inside and outside the juridico-political sphere in the form of exception. More specifically, human beings in the modern era are often reduced to "bare life"—say, at the concentration camps during the Second World War—, which is deemed neither *zoe* nor *bios*, but rather a life deprived of human rights, the very condition of life. Agamben articulates thus:

> Instead the decisive fact is that, together with the process by which the exception everywhere becomes the rule, the realm of bare life—which is originally situated at the margins of the political order—gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, bios and *zoe*, right and fact, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction. At once excluding bare life from and capturing it within the political order, the state of exception actually

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understands biopower and biopolitics as the product of modernity with a focus on historical discontinuity, Agamben sees them as a transtemporal and transpatial paradigm beyond modernity. Cf. Alex Murray and Jessica Whyte, *The Agamben Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 36-39.

[244] Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 32. Agamben states that "the sovereign is the point of indistinction between violence and law, the threshold on which violence passes over into law and law passes over into violence."

constituted, in its very separateness, the hidden foundation on which the entire political system rested.[245]

Here, Agamben explains how "bare life" operates in the "state of exception." The "state of exception" is a state wherein the threshold between the juridical order and anomie, or that between an insider and outsider of the juridical order becomes blurred as a result of a law that is suspended from its effectiveness yet is effective in its suspension.[246] As Kalpana Seshadri suggests, "For Agamben, such a typology of the law enables the acknowledged and extreme right of law not only to *enforce* the rule of the law, but also to *suspend* its own application, thereby rendering the inside and the outside of law absolutely undecidable."[247] To illustrate, Roman law placed *homo sacer* or "bare life" outside of the Roman legal system under its realm in the form of exception. To put it otherwise, *homo sacer* was excluded from the Roman sovereign system, while simultaneously being included in it; therefore, *homo sacer* could stand both inside and outside the sovereign law simultaneously. For Agamben, the emphasis here is that the sovereign power to control the natural life of its population in the form of "bare life," as exemplified in *homo sacer*, is an operative paradigm across temporal and spatial constraints. If such is the case, the powerless in the ancient Roman Empire, notably, the colonized subjects, were made all the more vulnerable to the highest risk of becoming "bare life" under Roman imperial sovereignty.[248]

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[245] *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 9.
[246] *State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 23; 57.
[247] Kalpana Seshadri, *Humanimal: Race, Law, Language* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 68.
[248] Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Not Just Peace: Living and Giving Life in the Shadow of Imperial Death," *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion* (2010): 10. Tat-siong Benny Liew points out

With Agamben's framework in mind, let us analyze how Jesus is paradoxically *both* "both a Jew and a colonized subject of Rome" *and* "neither a Jew nor a colonized subject of Rome." My claim is that the death of Jesus can be traced back to the fact that (1) Jesus is subject to *neither* the Jewish *nor* Roman law in that the Roman law is sovereign but finds no problem with Jesus' action and the Jewish law finds cause for the death penalty but has no sovereignty, and (2) he is subject to *both* Jewish *and* Roman laws in that a combination of both laws leads to the death of Jesus.[249] In this light, a "zone of indistinction" could be reformulated as a zone of *both* "neither … nor" *and* "both … and" as it relates to Roman and Jewish laws. In the case of Jesus in the trial narrative, a blurred zone operates *both* between overlapping laws *and* within neither law. Jesus finds himself to be located *both* within *and* beyond the distinction between the Jewish and Roman worlds.

Therefore, Jesus can be interpreted as a "bare life" in a zone of absolute undecidability and uncertainty between Jewish and Roman jurisprudence. He belongs to the Jewish legal system in the sense that he is a Jew to whom Jewish laws are applicable. At the same time, Jesus belongs to the Roman legal system in the sense that he is a colonized Jew under the Roman imperial system. But, when the Jewish leaders try to give him a death penalty due to religious and political affairs surrounding the suspicion that Jesus is "the King of the Jews", they have no means to do so because the power to enact the sentence of life/death belongs to the Roman legal system. At the same time, the Roman governor, Pilate, finds no charges with Jesus such that he even attempts to release him. This being the case, *both* the Jews and Romans should take

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that the colonized subject lives in "a death zone—a state of 'living within death' that is also a liminal space between life and death (32)."

[249] Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 15. Agamben's correctly claims: "The paradox of sovereignty consists in the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order."

responsibility for the death of Jesus *and* at the same time neither the Jews nor Romans are to blame for it. In the final analysis, Jesus belongs to a "zone of indistinction" in which both the Jewish and Roman laws simultaneously are operative and are in void. In this regard, Jesus stands within the limits of the Jewish and Roman laws and at the same time goes beyond them.

In addition, Jesus becomes a liminal character in terms of his sovereignty.[250] Most importantly, Jesus claims not to belong to this world (κόσμος) (John 18:36). One should keep in mind that God' sovereignty is hidden within the discourse of the Jewish leaders, which runs counter to the Roman sovereignty. This suggests that Jesus is, by nature, *both* subject to the earthly sovereignty in that he is the one sent from heaven to the world by the Father (John 3:17; 4:34; 5:36; 6:29, 57; 7:29; 17:3, 8; 18, 23, 25; 20:21) *and* is not constrained by it in that he is fundamentally subject to the heavenly sovereignty. Jesus transforms himself into an ambivalent character on the grounds that he is both the insider and outsider of the earthly world; Jesus belongs to the religiopolitical zones of the Jews and Romans, while at the same time he transcends them.

To re-construct the otherness of Pilate and the Jews I shall do a narrative critical reading of the ongoing conversation between the Jews and Pilate, and Pilate and Jesus (John 18:28-19:22) from a deconstructive postcolonial point of view.[251] In the first place, Pilate is a powerful

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[250] On the ambiguity of the sacred, see *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 77. "The analysis of the ban—which is assimilated to the taboo—determines from the very beginning the genesis of the doctrine of the ambiguity of the sacred: the ambiguity of the ban, which excludes in including, implies the ambiguity of the sacred."

[251] On this, see Tolmie, "The Ioudaioi in the Fourth Gospel: A Narratological Perspective." Donald Tolmie analyzes the Greek *hoi Ioudaioi* (the Jews) in John from a narratological perspective. In the framework of implied author and reader, Tolmie takes a closer look at the characterization of *Ioudaioi,* a composite group or a character, in association with the other groups related to them, for example, the crowd, the Pharisees, and the religious authorities. Overall, Tolmie emphasizes a continuum of *Ioudaioi*'s responses to Jesus ranging from a negative response, through a neutral response, to a positive response. He further argues that the

character and the Jews are an ambiguous character. On the one hand, Pilate, as an agent of Rome, is a powerful, but vulnerable, character in the sense that he flaunts his imperial authority to judge Jesus during the trial, but is afraid of a potential rebellion of the colonized, including Jesus and the Jews. Pilate, the representative of Roman imperial power, displays his superiority over the colonized people, i.e., the Jews and Jesus, in a supercilious manner. For instance, the Jews beg Pilate to execute a sentence of death on the colonized subject, Jesus, because they are not permitted to carry out the death sentence. In this power dynamic, Pilate taunts the Jews about their lack of authority and lets his soldiers torment Jesus. Yet, in spite of his massive power, Pilate reveals his insecurities about the rebellious attitude of the colonized (John 19:7-8, 12). Consequently, Pilate is a mighty colonizer, but he is under increasing threat from the colonized.

On the other hand, given the different shades of meaning of the term the Jews they are ambivalent and self-contradictory in the trial narrative.[252] As Udo Schnelle correctly writes, it is important to keep in mind that the semantics of the Jews in *John* is by no means monolithic.[253]

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borders between *Ioudaioi* and the groups related to them become blurred as the narrative unfolds. Interestingly, he insists that characterization relies solely on what the *Ioudaioi* do rather than who they are. When read in this light, the process of characterization becomes more dynamic than static. I am of the opinion that the Jews in John as a group or character are not necessarily representative of the whole nation of the Jews in general. Instead, the *Ioudaioi* are a literary construction reflective of, but not necessarily identifiable with, the Jews on the historical level. When it comes to the characterization of the *Ioudaioi* in John, it would be too hasty to stereotype the Jews without taking into consideration the interpreters' underlying assumptions. Following Tolmie, I pay particular attention to what they do and say rather than who they are from a performative perspective.

[252] On the ambiguity of the Jews see Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John*, 126-30.

[253] Schnelle, "Die Juden Im Johannesevangelium," 218-19. Udo Schnelle analyzes the semantics of "the Jew(s)" in John as follows: the crowd; the opponents of Jesus as representatives of unbelief; a cultural-historical designation; conversation partners; a split group with regard to revelation; a positive religious group; sympathizers of Jesus; identity of Jesus.

On the semantics of "the Jew" in extra-biblical texts, see Ross S. Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term "Jew" in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," *Harvard Theological Review* 82, no. 1 (1989).

Overall, through the entirety of the Johannine Gospel, the meanings of the Jews are fluid and dynamic, depending on the specific context. To illustrate this point further, the Jews in chapters 1-4 are described in mostly neutral or positive terms and in chapters 5-11, and in particular in the passion narrative, are described in mostly negative terms.[254] When it comes to the passion narrative—or, more narrowly, the trial narrative—, the Johannine portrayal of the Jews is made all the more dramatic by fluctuating between the different meanings of the Jews in the narrative. the Jews are constructed as negative in the sense that they contribute to the execution of Jesus.[255] They are constructed as neutral in the sense that they are detached from the high priests and Pharisees. They are positive in the sense that Jesus is "the King of the Jews" on the cross. It turns out that the Jews are quite complex.[256] This is just to say that sometimes the term the Jews has negative connotations in connection with the Jewish leaders, but at other times it has at least neutral or at most positive connotations in relation to the Jewishness of Jesus, as implied in the

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[254] Schnelle, "Die Juden Im Johannesevangelium," 220-21. To further illustrate, John 4 portrays Jesus as a Jew (v. 9), emphasizing that salvation comes from the Jews (v. 22b). The implication is that salvation takes place through the death of Jesus, "the King of the Jews." By contrast, probably the most negative portrayal of the Jews relates particularly to those Jews who initially create a plot to kill Jesus (John 8:44).

[255] There is no denying the fact that the Jews in John often convey hostile connotations, as far as it is concerned with the persecution of Jesus and his followers (cf. John 5:16, 18; 7:1, 13; 9:22; 10:31; 11:8; 12:42; 19:30; 20:19)

[256] R. Alan Culpepper, "The Gospel of John and the Jews," *Review & Expositor* 84, no. 2 (1987): 38-46; Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes, UK ; Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009).

See also Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 86. Even though Rudolf Bultmann conceives of the Jews as a representation of the unbelieving world, it is too simplistic an interpretation to present them in this way. It is noteworthy to mention that the Jews as the designation of a group, also involves those people within the Jewish group who follow Jesus (cf. John 2:23; 8:30; 11:45; 12:11, 42)

On the ambiguity of the Jews in the historical context, see Meeks, ""Am I a Jew"- Johannine Christianity and Judaism," 164. Wayne Meeks states: "And when the Fourth Gospel itself speaks of 'the Jews'—as it does more than any other New Testament writing—it is not even absolutely clear what group it is referring to."

epithet, "the King of the Jews."[257] Taking everything into account, exclusivist language is applied to the Jewish leaders in particular rather than the Jews in general. In other words, the Johannine community takes an inclusive attitude toward the Jews in general, but an exclusive attitude toward the Jewish leaders in particular. Therefore, the Jews can be constructed as an ambivalent and incongruous character, which vacillates between negative and neutral/positive connotations.

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[257] Cf. Urban C. Von Wahlde, "The Terms for Religious Authorities in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Literary-Strata," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 2 (1979). In order to absolve the Johannine Gospel from any taint of anti-Jewishness, Urban von Wahlde argues that the Greek term *Ioudaioi* does not refer to the entire Jewish nation, including the common people and religious authorities, but rather denotes almost exclusively the Jewish authorities. In fact, von Wahlde supports his view that the *Ioudaioi* has to do with the Jewish authorities by noting the use of the term in most, though not all, passages. The only exceptions come in 6:41 and 6:52, which view the Johannine Jews as common people, more specifically, the Jews in Galilee, identifiable as *ochlos*, but with hostile attitudes toward Jesus.

More specifically, the *Ioudaioi* in 38 out of 71 occurrences refers to the religious authorities. First, the *Ioudaioi* is straightforwardly interchangeable with the term "authorities" in John 1:19-24; 7:32-34; 9:13-41; 18:3-14. Second, the people who are ethnically the Jews are said to fear the Jews in John 7:13; 9:22; 20:19, 42. Here, the object of fear is definitely the Jews with sufficient power to intimidate the Jews in general. For von Wahlde, the phrase "fear of the Jews" hints that the *Ioudaioi* is a group of opponents of Jesus, who intend to crucify Jesus; it follows from this that the *Ioudaioi* has political and religious authority. It is no less important to note that only the Jewish authorities have the power to arrest Jesus. Third, the edict of excommunication in John 9:22 insinuates that those Jews have the power to expel the Jewish Jesus-followers from the synagogue. Lastly, the specific group recognizable as Pharisees and chief priests are designated as the Jews in John 11:46-52; 18:1-3; 18:1-14. It has to be remembered that such terms as "Pharisees," "chief priests," "rulers," and "Jews" are equivalent to the religious authorities in John.

Thus, Von Wahlde reaches the conclusion that the *Ioudaioi* in the FG refers to a circle of opponents to the Jesus-followers, but with some degrees of differences. Notice that such interpretation mistakenly assumes that the *Ioudaioi* is sufficiently distinguishable between the one and the other. As noted above, I, however, contend that the semantics of *Ioudaioi* is instead ambiguous with varying degrees of positive, neutral and negative connotations. Given the nature of this ambiguity in connection to the relationship between the Johannine community and the *Ioudaioi*, it would be almost impossible to orient the connotations of *Ioudaioi* into an either/or choice. Von Wahlde rightly admits that the Johannine community wants to stay within the limits of the synagogue while retaining hostility toward the Jews in the synagogue. I further argue that the Johannine community is such a complex, ambiguous community in relation to the Jews that they become ambiguous with varying degrees of detachment, neutrality, and hostility.

Secondly, I will construct Jesus—an agent of the heavenly Father in the earthly realm, both Jewish and Roman—as a liminal character in-between the Jewish and Roman worlds as well as in-between the heavenly and earthly realms. Within John's dualistic schema, Jesus, albeit a major character, is generally prone to a portrait as either an othering or othered character in the ongoing interaction with minor characters. Sometimes Jesus is seen as an othering character with the minor characters, e.g., Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. At other times Jesus is regarded as an othered character with the minor characters, e.g., the Jews and Pilate. Taken together, I assert that Jesus, particularly in the trial scene, can be re-constructed as destabilizing and undermining the sharp (othering/othered) binary of *John* rather than reinforcing dualistic constructs as such. I go further and affirm that Jesus is such a liminal character subverting the hierarchical sovereign power of the Jewish and Roman worlds that he becomes an unfixed and unfixable character in a zone of undecidability or uncertainty.

Lastly, I conclude by reflecting upon the implications of the *double* otherness of both Pilate and the Jews namely the fact that they are othering and being othered simultaneously. Even though Pilate and the Jews constitute the centering power, in terms of the earthly power structure, at the same time they are vulnerable to Jesus' decentering power in terms of the heavenly power structure. Therefore, the trial narrative lays bare two contrasting readings of the power dynamics between Jesus, the Jews and Pilate. On the one hand, it is seemingly evident that in terms of earthly power, Jesus is inferior to the Jews and Pilate, and Pilate is superior to the Jews and Jesus. To put it more simply, Jesus is the weakest, the Jews are the middle, and Pilate is the strongest. On the other hand, the narrative also implies that Jesus has heavenly power, which is incomparable to the earthly power of Pilate and the Jews. As a consequence, Jesus is located in a liminal zone of undecidability between the Jewish and Roman legal systems.

For example, we will see clearly the ambiguity of Jesus' location between the earthly and heavenly realms by paying particular attention to his silence. Jesus' performative silence conveys both submissiveness and resistance at the same time. It thus reveals the doubled structure of otherness, i.e., othering and being othered, in ceaseless interaction with Pilate and the Jews.

Jesus uses the ambiguity of silence to threaten the imperial authority of Pilate. The result is that Jesus subverts the pyramid power structure based on the hierarchy in its entirety. For instance, Jesus' silence indicates neither the powerlessness of the colonial subject, nor his resistance to the power system, but rather his refusal to acknowledge the contemporary societal power structures, which are based on the dualistic framework of domination and subjugation. Jesus' silence is indeterminate between two extreme poles, but points to his rejection of John's dualistic system.

However, it is important to note that a deconstructive reading has postcolonial overtones in the trial scene, especially when it comes to Jesus' silence in the conversation with Pilate (John 18:38; 19:9). There is no doubt that his silence can be interpreted as both submissive and resistant. In the words of Seshadri, "silence, or a certain muteness (or *bêtises*), emerges as an effect of power through a procedure of exclusion from discourse. On the other hand, silence, I hypothesize, is a possibility that power cannot govern, and though it undoubtedly emerges within its force field, it is distinguishable from muteness as a counterforce, a force of annulment."[258] Read within this framework, the silence of Jesus comes into a zone of uncertainty between docility and resistance. The undecidable or ambiguous nature of Jesus' silence gives rise to anxiety for the colonizer, Pilate, who represents Roman sovereignty (John 19:11). As the silence of the colonized causes anxiety to the colonizers, the colonizers lose the power to interpret the

[258] Seshadri, *Humanimal: Race, Law, Language*, 31.

intent of the action of the colonized. Hence, the ambiguity of the silence of the colonized per se turns out to be subversive in the sense that the colonizer cannot translate the action of the colonized with certainty. It comes as a surprise that by virtue of his "performative silence," the sovereignty of Jesus, the colonized, takes effect, albeit in a concealed manner, in his dialogue with Pilate.[259] It is Jesus' silence that a deconstructive reading coalesces into a postcolonial reading.

2. Constructing Pilate and the Jews as Ambivalent Characters

Drawing on the unending negotiations between Pilate, the Jews and Jesus, I argue that Pilate and the Jews are not simply powerful or powerless. First, consider Pilate. On the one hand, Pilate is a daunting character who symbolizes the power of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, when Pilate is threatened by the colonized characters, i.e., Jesus and the Jews he is changed from an intimidating character to an intimidated character. Second, consider the Jews. the Jews are an ambivalent character. They are powerful in their dealings with Jesus, a colonized character. But they are powerless in their dealings with Pilate, a colonizing character. Let us examine the ambivalence of Pilate and the Jews in more detail.

2.1. Constructing Pilate as an Ambivalent Character

Scene One (John 18:28-32)

[259] *Humanimal: Race, Law, Language*, 108.

In his conversation with the Jews Pilate is characterized as a devastatingly powerful colonizer who heaps scorn on the Jews by way of the mistreatment of Jesus.[260] The reader can assume that Pilate is a Roman governor because of his association with the *praetorium* (τὸ πραιτώριον), an official residence of the Roman governor or procurator of a province. Without doubt, the word *praetorium*, implicitly rather than explicitly, signifies the colonial power of Pilate. Pilate stands as the representative of the harsh rule of the Roman Empire. Pilate displays his superiority as the colonizer over the Jews as the colonized. The interaction between Pilate and the Jews demonstrates the superior power of the former over the latter. For example, when Pilate goes outside to meet with the Jews to investigate their indictment of Jesus, he sarcastically points to the powerlessness of the Jews by asking them to judge Jesus according to their law: "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law" (λάβετε αὐτὸν ὑμεῖς, καὶ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑμῶν κρίνατε αὐτόν) (v. 31a).[261] Pilate's remark must be read as an insult to the Jews because it reminds them of their status as colonized people whose law does not have the right under Roman rule to execute anyone. Therefore, the Jews have no choice but to acknowledge their incapacity: "We are not permitted to put anyone to death" (ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα) (v. 31b). This implies that they are inferior to Pilate in handling the arrested Jesus. In doing so, Pilate slyly brings to light his power over the Jews. Thus, Pilate is described as a formidable colonizer who embodies the dominating presence of Roman rule.

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[260] Gail R. O'Day, "The Gospel of John: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 9:815.

[261] On the responsibility of the Jews for the death of Jesus, see Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 652; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 533; Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, The Passion Series (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 76.

Scene Two (John 18:33-38a)

Pilate's conversation with Jesus demonstrates that Pilate is an outsider to the sovereignty of Jesus as well as the Johannine community. As a result of his inquiry into the nature of Jesus' kingship, Pilate eventually discovers that he, as a representative of Rome's earthly sovereignty, is excluded from Jesus' heavenly sovereignty. This also denotes the conflict between heavenly and earthly sovereignty as represented by Jesus and Pilate, respectively.[262] To illustrate, when Pilate asks Jesus if he is "the King of the Jews" (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων), Jesus responds by saying: "If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews (v. 36)." Rather, Jesus makes it clear that his kingship (βασιλεία) is "not here" (ἐντεῦθεν), "from this world" (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου) (v. 36). It turns out that Pilate as an agent of Rome's earthly sovereignty is excluded from the realm of Jesus' heavenly sovereignty.

Moreover, Pilate hints at his detachment from the Johannine community by his reluctance to listen to the voice of Jesus. Jesus states that he is born and comes into this world so as to bear witness to the truth (ἀλήθεια) (v. 37c). Jesus goes to great lengths to explain the truth to Pilate by adding: "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (πᾶς ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκούει μου τῆς φωνῆς) (v. 37d). Otherwise put, the one who does not listen to Jesus' voice (φωνή) does not belong to the truth. As the good shepherd parable (John 10:1-21) suggests, this argument further means that by not heeding Jesus' voice, Pilate proves that he is not an adherent of the Johannine community.[263] Donald Senior writes: "it [the Johannine Gospel] condemns

[262] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols., Herder's Theological Commentary on the New Testament (London; New York: Burns & Oates; Herder & Herder, 1968), 250.

[263] The Greek term φωνή recalls the parable of the good shepherd (10:3-5; cf. 10:16). In the parable, a flock of sheep identifies its own shepherd and corroborates the interpretation that the

Pilate and his power as blind to the truth and mired in falsehood."[264] Thus, Pilate is characterized as an alien to Jesus' kingship and the Johannine community.

Scene Three (John 18:38b-40)

In the resumed conversation with the Jews Pilate is depicted as a shrewd colonizer taunting them by sarcastically asking them whether they want to release Jesus (as a practice of the Passover release), while knowing that they desire to execute Jesus. Upon returning to the Jews outside the *praetorium*, Pilate ridicules the Jews by declaring Jesus' innocence (v. 38b). Therefore, even though it seems that Pilate is respectful of Jewish customs (συνήθεια) insofar as he plans to grant a Passover amnesty (v. 39a)[265], in reality, Pilate insults the Jews by invoking the release of Jesus. Moreover, considering that the Jews do not adopt Jesus as their king, Pilate's repeated attempts to hail Jesus as "the King of the Jews" adds fuel to the flame (v. 39b).

As a result, Pilate's taunt provokes the Jews to call for the release of Barabbas as an alternative to Jesus (v. 40). Given the resistant character of a bandit, an insurgent in Roman Palestine, Pilate has good reason to conjecture that the appeal of the Jews to release Barabbas may as well be translated as their ill-concealed desire to oppose the Roman rule.[266] Yet, despite

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Johannine community as a flock of his sheep recognizes the voice of Jesus, its shepherd. In other words, Jesus' sheep hears his voice and follows him (10:27). On the other hand, the other communities would not recognize Jesus' voice without his guide. With this background in mind, it is plain that Pilate does not listen to Jesus' voice or words about his kingship simply because Pilate does not belong to the Johannine community whose shepherd is Jesus.

[264] Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, 83.

[265] Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 252. For example, Pilate underscores that this Passover amnesty is to the advantage of the Jews, given the function of the dative (ὑμῖν) as a dative of benefit.

[266] On a broader picture of first-century Jewish social world in regard to popular movements in Palestine Rome, see Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*, New Voices in Biblical Literature (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985). See also Carter, *Pontius Pilate: Portraits of a Roman Governor*, 144-45.

the fact that the Jews reveal their desire to become independent from the Empire by way of their choice of Barabbas, Pilate reveals himself as a canny colonizer tricking the Jews into highlighting their dependence on his colonial authority for the execution of Jesus.

Scene Four (John 19:1-3)

It is striking that the most inhumane and poignant scene stands at the core of the Johannine trial narrative in a chiastic structure in marked contrast to the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mark 15:17-20; Matthew 27:28-31; Luke 23:22).[267] Turning attention to the scourge (μαστιγόω) of violence against Jesus, the reader can construct Pilate as a ferocious colonizer exerting his authority on the colonized body of Jesus.[268] In the face of the supplication of the Jews to release Barabbas, Pilate takes Jesus and has him flogged (v. 1). As discussed above, Pilate, aware of the anti-imperial desire of the Jews has the audacity to bring them under control in a way that flaunts the massive power of the colonizer over the colonized body through scourge. By means of this torture, Pilate presents the ostentatious display of his power as a Roman colonizer.

Furthermore, the violent mockery of the Roman soldiers is targeted against both Jesus and the Jews. Regarding Jesus, the actions and words of the Roman soldiers mock his

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The preference of the Jews for Barabbas, a bandit (λῃστής), who can be labeled as a political evildoer within the sociohistorical context of John's Gospel, reveals their concealed desire to be independent from Roman imperialism. To further illustrate the implications of the Greek term λῃστής, Barabbas is a political criminal involved in a murder in the rebellion (στάσις) (cf. Mk 15:7). Flavius Josephus reports that the bandits in first-century Palestine are characterized as the political rebels resisting Roman rule by assaulting the dominant elites (*Jewish War* 2.253-54).

[267] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 3:858-59.

[268] See also Jennifer A. Glancy, "Torture: Flesh, Truth, and the Fourth Gospel," *Biblical Interpretation* 13, no. 2 (2005). Jennifer Glancy sees the scouring as a judicial torture rather than a punitive one with an aim of wresint truth from Jesus.

inauguration as "king."[269] To illustrate, the crown of thorns and purple robe worn by Jesus recall the royal crown and robe of a Roman emperor (v. 2). It is important to note that the thorny crown and purple robe are generally a crude parody of Roman imperial kingship, which is designed for the mockery.[270] As such, the parody is clearly a mocking action against Jesus because it stresses that Jesus is merely a copy of a Roman emperor. With respect to the Jews Pilate goes further by heightening their inferiority in such a way as to sneer repeatedly at Jesus as "the King of the Jews" during the would-be royal investiture. Once Jesus is hailed as "the King of the Jews" rather than simply a king, the target of the mocking is extended from Jesus to the Jews (v. 3). Jesus suffers humiliation as "the King of the Jews," regardless of the Jews' unwillingness to attribute this title to him; therefore, the humiliation is no longer an individual one, but rather becomes a collective one for the Jews. Simply put, Jesus' ignominy scornfully signifies the powerlessness of the Jews through the body of Jesus as a metaphor for the colonized. As Rensberger aptly argues,

> Pilate's scourging of Jesus might seem to signal a readiness to gratify "the Jews'" desires, but this is not so. Pilate's intention is not to satisfy them, much less to arouse their sympathy, but to humiliate them. None of his posturing about the "King of the Jews" or Jesus' innocence from this point on should be taken

[269] The Johannine Gospel does not straightforwardly state that the soldiers "mock" (ἐμπαίζω) Jesus. This stands in a stark contrast to the Synoptic Gospels (Mk 15:20; Mt 27:31; Lk 23:36). This by no means reduces the intensity of their mocking on a semantic level. This mimicry might not be a mockery, but rather a glorification of Jesus. Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1967), 69.
[270] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 874-75.

seriously; his statements are all ironic taunts, as he proceeds to use Jesus to make a ridiculous example of Jewish nationalism.[271]

Hitherto, Pilate seems to succeed in proving the superiority of the Roman colonizer over the Jewish colonized through the ruthless power of violence. Accordingly, Pilate is a brutal colonizer for the Jews as well as Jesus by flaunting the imperial violence against Jesus, the colonized subject.

Scene Five (John 19:4-7)

Pilate is transformed from a canny to a vulnerable colonizer in this scene. In the first place, Pilate is such a shrewd Roman governor that he scoffs at the powerlessness of the colonial subjects, the Jews as well as Jesus. As Pilate brings Jesus outside the *praetorium*, Pilate's repetitive proclamation about Jesus' innocence is intended to scorn the desire of the Jews to execute Jesus (cf. John 18:29, 38; 19:4, 6). It is scandalous to the Jews to find the humiliated Jesus "wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe" (v.5). The reason is that such a dramatic appearance of Jesus as a parody of the Roman emperor is a deliberate insult to Jewish kingship by Pilate because Pilate turns deaf ears to the Jews' refutation of Jesus' kingship by representing him as their king.[272] For this reason, upon observing Jesus dressed as a king, the chief priests and police (ὑπηρέτης) shout: "Crucify!" (vv. 5-6). The Jews want to get rid of the mockery of Jewish kingship as presented by the Roman power. Pilate continues to taunt the Jews by saying, "Take

[271] David Rensberger, "The Politics of John: The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103, no. 3 (1984): 403.
[272] "The Politics of John: The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103, no. 3 (1984): 404. As a parallel to this type of mockery in Hellenistic Judaism, see also Philo, *In Flaccum*, 36-42. The Alexandrians make use of a maniac to make fun of King Agrippa.

him yourselves and crucify him (λάβετε αὐτὸν ὑμεῖς καὶ σταυρώσατε)." Through the use of the emphatic function of the pronoun ὑμεῖς, Pilate highlights the lack of Jewish national sovereignty to inflict the death penalty (v. 6; cf. 18:31). Here, Pilate's repeated proclamation about Jesus' innocence is designed to impute the responsibility for the death of Jesus to the Jews rather the Romans (v. 6). Finally, the Jews account for their desire to crucify Jesus by alluding to the Jewish ban on blasphemy: "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God" (v. 7; cf. 5:18; 10:33). With this statement of the Jews the narrator demonstrates that it is the law (νόμος) of the Jews (Leviticus 24:16) that determines the execution of Jesus along with the approval of the Roman law (cf. John 18:31). Thus, Pilate is described as the canny governor who heaps scorn on the powerlessness of the Jews and at the same time imputes Jesus' death to them.

In the second place, Pilate is paradoxically a vulnerable character with regard to Jesus' kingship. The unintended consequence of Pilate's presentation of Jesus with the thorny crown and the purple robe is that it makes him an imperial king, albeit a parody of a Roman emperor. One should notice that parody itself is essentially ambiguous because it incessantly vacillates between travesty and homage.[273] Rudolf Schnackenburg correctly writes: "Jesus' hidden kingship comes ever more clearly to the fore in the contradiction of his enemies."[274] Considering that there is a sole king under Roman rule (cf. John 19:15), Jesus' parody of Roman imperial kingship conveys an anti-imperial gesture, since he himself becomes another king through his effectively subversive performance. In addition, the suggestion of the Jews that Jesus claims to

[273] Cf. Froma I. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature*, Women in Culture and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 388.
[274] Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3:255.

be "the Son of God" strikes the reader as all the more anti-imperial.[275] The reason is that Jesus' parodic performance as the Roman emperor forces Pilate to acknowledge Jesus' concealed anti-imperial kingship because the epithet, "the Son of God" (*divi filius*), is supposed to apply exclusively to the Roman emperor based on the imperial cult. For instance, the inscription at Myra in Lycia found under a statue of Augustus Caesar describes him as the "Son of God."[276] Thus, the Jews' denial of Jesus as the "Son of God" (υἱὸν θεοῦ) turns out to make Pilate anxious about Jesus' identity. The end result is that Pilate is portrayed as a powerful but vulnerable character during the process of taunting Jesus as an imperial king on the one hand, and as an anti-imperial Jewish king on the other hand. Pilate becomes transformed from a powerful to powerless character by allowing for Jesus' kingship in the blurred zone between the Jewish and Roman worlds.

Scene Six (John 19:8-12)

The final conversation between Pilate and Jesus makes it clear that Pilate is transformed from a powerful to a powerless character threatened by the colonized, i.e., Jesus and the Jews. The allusion of the Jews to Jesus' claim to be "the Son of God" intensifies Pilate's fear about Jesus' identity. Noticeably, Pilate's attitude abruptly changes from a composed state into one in

[275] Rufus Fears, "Ruler Worship," in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger (New York: Scribner's, 1988), 109-25. S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). In Rufus Fears' words, "ruler worship played a major role in achieving integration of religion and politics which lay at the very heart of the ancient state (1018)."

[276] Cited by Frederick C. Grant, *Ancient Roman Religion*, The Library of Religion, (New York,: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), 175.

which he is "very afraid" (μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη) (v. 8).[277] What indeed matters is the cause of Pilate' fear. Unmistakably, Pilate becomes very afraid when he hears "this word" (τοῦτον τὸν λόγον) (v. 8), referring to the preceding phrase "the Son of God."[278] As explained above, the Roman emperor is reckoned to be "the Son of God" in imperial propaganda. Due to the striking parallel between Caesar and Christ in terms of divine sonship, Pilate becomes very afraid upon hearing the testimony of the Jews that Jesus claims to be "the Son of God" (v. 7). The Jews' description of Jesus as "the Son of God" points to the challenge to Roman imperial theology by the Jews.[279] This testimony is threatening to Pilate since he begins to recognize the potential for Jesus' becoming an anti-imperial character as a counterpart of the Roman emperor. The point to be stressed here is that Pilate reveals his fear for Jesus' sovereignty in contrast to Caesar's sovereignty.

Pilate's anxiety over the (anti-)imperial nature of John's Christology drives him to inquire where Jesus is from (v. 9a).[280] What is interesting is that Jesus assumes a challenging attitude toward Pilate through the power of silence (v. 9b). Jesus' reticence to respond to Pilate's inquiry into Jesus' origin is a signal of resistance against Pilate's authority as a Roman governor.

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[277] Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 542. Contra Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 260. It is controversial whether the use of μᾶλλον in the Greek phrase μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη is comparative or intensive. As C. K. Barret argues, I find it more appropriate to translate it as intensive. If one translates the phrase as a comparative, it is required that Pilate's fear be introduced in one of the previous scenes of the trial narrative. It is not until verse 8 that Pilate's fear appears in the trial narrative. Hermeneutically speaking, it sounds seemingly reasonable that Pilate shows his fear in the first conversation with Jesus, in which he ends up with a question, "What is truth?" Nevertheless, this is insufficient evidence on account of the lack of textual support. Therefore, I translate the phrase μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη as "very afraid."

[278] Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 72.

[279] On Johannine theology in regard to Jesus as "the Son of God in stark contrast to imperial theology, see Thatcher, *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel*, 85.

[280] Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 72. The question of Jesus' origin is one of the main themes of the Johannine gospel (cf. 7:27; 8:14; 9:29).

Moreover, Jesus' refusal to speak not only signifies opposition to the Roman governor but also sparks Pilate's internal anxiety or uncertainty about his political authority.[281] Perplexed by Jesus' attitude, Pilate, in turn, warns Jesus of the authority (ἐξουσία) of the Roman governor over the life and death of the colonial subject (v. 10). Contrary to Pilate's expectation, Jesus is by no means intimidated, but rather points to the source of Pilate's authority. At face value, Jesus seems to acknowledge that Pilate has power over Jesus. But in reality, Jesus stresses that the earthly power coming from below originates in the heavenly power coming "from above" (ἄνωθεν) (v. 11a; cf. John 3:27, 31). This means that Pilate's authority stands under the authority of God. Pilate's fear is increased on account of the concealed power of heavenly sovereignty operating in earthly sovereignty. For example, Jesus' reference to Pilate's sin, which is described as lesser than "the one handing over" (ὁ παραδούς), namely Judas Iscariot, indicates Jesus' authority—representative of God's authority—as a judge over Pilate's sin (v. 11b). Jesus' power to render judgment on Pilate's sin shifts the power dynamics such that Jesus becomes a judge over Pilate rather than vice versa. As Schnackenburg aptly notes, "Pilate, who subjects Jesus to his supposed power, becomes the one subjected, and Jesus, the seemingly powerless one, shows

[281] Kennan Ferguson, "Silence: A Politics," *Contemporary Political Theory* 2(2003): 57. Kennan Ferguson categorizes political silence into three types: denigrated, resistant, and constitutive silence. He argues that as power is essentially indeterminate, the dynamics of silence with power is subject to revision: "Silence can operate in multiplicitous, fragmentary, even paradoxical ways. The politics of silence, in other words, are not reducible to any particular political functionality; even more than its putative opposite, language, silence resists absolution (58)." For example, Jesus' silence about the nature of truth in 18:38 signifies denigrated silence because Pilate is not willing to listen to Jesus' voice, nor ready to grant a chance to let him speak. In contrast, Jesus keeps silent as a form of resistant silence in opposition to Pilate and his authority in 19:9.

On the anxiety of Pilate, see also Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 660. Rudolf Bultmann states: "Without doubt because the Evangelist desires to heighten the enormity of the condemnation of Jesus; he shows how the judge's anxiety before the world engulfs even the anxiety before the numinous that Pilate meets in Jesus, and how anxiety before the world tears asunder not alone the requirements of the law but also those of religion."

himself to be the one who is free and possesses power."[282] That being the case, the power relations between Pilate and Jesus are turned upside down.

What is more, the power dynamics between Pilate and the Jews begin to shake as soon as they point to Pilate's disloyalty to Caesar. When confronted with Pilate's attempt to release Jesus, the Jews outside the *praetorium* menace Pilate by shouting that such an attempt would reveal that Pilate is not Caesar's friend. From the standpoint of the Jews Pilate seeks to release Jesus, despite the Jews' warning that Jesus claims to be a king. Since the claimed kingship is not permitted by the emperor, Pilate appears to be disloyal to Caesar from the Jews' perspective: "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar" (v. 12a). the Jews go even so far as to alert Pilate to the anti-imperial nature of Jesus' kingship by saying, "Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar" (v. 12b). In the process, Pilate faces the dilemma between his judgment and its consequence. If Pilate releases "innocent" Jesus, he would set free the one threatening the emperor's sovereignty. On the contrary, if Pilate condemns Jesus, he would have no choice but to admit that he is threatened by the Jews. Either choice would put Pilate's colonial authority at considerable risk. In the words of Schnackenburg, "He [Pilate] cannot release, as he wants to, the innocent prisoner of whom he is secretly afraid, but he is the helpless victim of the wishes of the Jews."[283] Pilate loses the power to control the colonial subjects, the Jews. Pilate is forced to free the one he believes to be guilty of insurrection (Barabbas) and condemn the one he believes to be innocent (Jesus) because of his fear of the statement of the supposedly powerless, colonized subjects. To conclude, Pilate has become the colonizer transformed from a powerful to powerless governor in the face of the threat derived from both Jesus and the Jews.

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[282] Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3:261.
[283] *The Gospel According to St. John*, 263. My position differs from Schnackenburg by emphasizing the power dynamics between Jesus, Pilate, and the Jews.

Scene Seven (John 19:13-16a)

In the final conversation between Pilate and the Jews Pilate is portrayed as a weak but shrewd character who both taunts Jesus and browbeats the Jews into forsaking Jewish sovereignty and adopting Roman sovereignty. On the one hand, when confronted with the threats from both Jesus and the Jews Pilate, the vulnerable and frail Roman, leads Jesus outside and seats himself on the judgment seat in an attempt to reestablish his own lost authority as governor (v. 13).[284] In this way, Pilate flaunts his colonial authority by sitting on the seat to judge the colonized subject, Jesus. On the other hand, Pilate taunts the Jews with calling Jesus "your king" (ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑμῶν) (v. 14b).

To elaborate, in spite of his vulnerability, Pilate succeeds in recovering his colonial authority by manipulating the Jewish leaders to acknowledge Caesar's kingship and, by implication, abandon God's kingship.[285] In response to the tricky leading question, "Shall I crucify your king?"—the Jews would say "yes" to the crucifixion of Jesus, but "no" to his kingship. In saying "yes" to the crucifixion of he whom Pilate deems "your king," however, the chief priests (as representatives of the Jews at least in the current scene) unwittingly end up affirming the sovereignty of Rome as the only viable sovereignty that remains: "We have no king but Caesar" (v. 15). The announcement of the Jews that they have no king but Caesar suggests that the Jews turn their back on the kingship of Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah and, more importantly, the kingship of God as the only king of Israel (v. 15c; cf. Judges 8:23; 1

[284] On a transitive interpretation of the Greek verb καθίζειν, see I. De la Potterie, "Jesus, Roi Et Juge D'apres Jn 19,13," *Biblica* 41(1960): 221-33. If such is the case, Pilate seats Jesus on the judgment seat. Contra this, see Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 664, n. 2. I agree with Bultmann that Pilate sits on the judgment seat in terms of linguistic usage.
[285] Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*, 187.

Samuel 8:7; Psalms 2:7; Isaiah 26:13).[286] Thus, the dilemma between the desire of the Jews both to crucify Jesus and to deny his kingship leads them to another trap of overestimating Rome' sovereignty and ignoring God's sovereignty.[287] By and large, Pilate is a vulnerable but savvy character who shows his authority as a governor of Jesus and colonizes the Jews through the pledge of allegiance to the Roman emperor.

2.2. Constructing the Jews as an Incongruous Character

Scene One (John 18:28-32)

In conjunction with the previous section, let us look closely at the power dynamics between the Jews, Pilate, and Jesus. First, the Jews are a powerful group. As mentioned earlier, it is important to remember that the Jews as a subset of the Jews in general, refer to the religious *authorities* consisting in the chief priests and Pharisees.[288] In antiquity, note that the religious elites as represented by the Jews were granted power deriving from their religious status. As verses 30-31 suggest, the Jews are such a powerful group, at least as it relates to Jesus since they have the power to make a judgment over Jesus in light of Jewish law.

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[286] On the messianic kingship, Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 665; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 266; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 3:894-95.

[287] The trial narrative ends with Pilate "handing over" Jesus to be crucified (v. 16a). The Greek verb παραδίδωμι is used for the handing over of Jesus by Judas (John 18:2, 5), by the Jewish authorities (John 18:30, 35), and finally by Pilate (John 19:16). The repetition of this verb implies that Pilate assumes partial responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus.

[288] *Scene One* emphasizes the religiosity of the Jews. For example, the Jews are a religious group in that they do not enter the *praetorium* in order to avoid becoming defiled for the sake of the Passover meal in conformity with Jewish customs (v. 28). Bearing in mind the unclean nature of the dwelling place of the gentiles, it would be deemed unclean to enter the *praetorium*, the residence of the Roman governor. This strongly implies that the Jews are assiduously attentive to Jewish religious observances or practices, e.g., Jewish purity law and the Passover meal.

Second, although they are a powerful group, the Jews are a powerless colonized group in relationship to Pilate. Their power stands under the authority of Pilate, as far as it is concerned with the jurisdiction to enforce the death penalty on the colonized subjects. When the Jews bring Jesus to the *praetorium*, Pilate goes outside to meet with them (v. 28-9). As noted earlier, Pilate casts aspersions on the Jews by calling to mind their status as a colonized group. Remember that even though the Jews had their own law allowing them to execute people, they were required to get the permission to execute from the Roman governor in their colonial milieu. In this context, the Jews depend entirely, therefore, on the authority of Pilate for the execution of Jesus, an evildoer (οὗτος κακὸν ποιῶν), supposedly a political agitator in their eyes. the Jews admit that they are a powerless, colonized group by saying: "We [the Jews] are not permitted to put anyone to death" (Ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα) (v. 31b). In the process, it turns out that the Jews are a powerless, colonized group who endure humiliation as a result of their social position as provincial subjects of the mighty Roman Empire.[289]

In sum, even though the Jews have the judicial criteria to judge Jesus, they are bereft of the power to enforce their judgment. Instead, it is Pilate who has the power to implement the death penalty for Jesus, albeit without the judicial criteria to do so. In this sense, both the Jews and Pilate have some measure of power in their different ways. But more crucially, Scene One places greater emphasis on the powerlessness of the Jews the colonized subjects.

Scene Two (John 18:33-38a)

Although they do not appear in this scene, the text still offers an indirect characterization of the Jews. Both Pilate and Jesus portray the Jews as a hostile group to Jesus such that they

[289] Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 128; Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community*, 92.

handed him over to Pilate. In the first place, although Pilate portrays the Jews as a nation under Jesus by saying that he is their king (v. 33), Pilate hints at the animosity between the Jews and Jesus when he describes that the Jews and the chief priests handed Jesus over to Pilate. In the second place, Jesus portrays the Jews as alien to his kingship, confirming that there is hostile relationship by saying "my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews" (v. 36). In the final analysis, the Jews become a hostile group to Jesus and switch back forth between Jesus' nation and enemy, as evidenced by a conflictual portrayal by Pilate and Jesus.

Scene Three (John 18:38b-40)

The Jews are outsiders to the Johannine community. The Jews' request of the release of Barabbas, a "bandit" (λῃστής), indicates that they are excluded from the realm of Jesus' kingship (v. 40). The narrator nudges the reader to recall the characterization of a bandit in the parable of the good shepherd in John 10:1-21. In the parable, a bandit refers to the one who puts a flock of sheep at risk. This also suggests that a bandit does not belong to a flock of which Jesus is shepherd. The reader is told that a bandit does not enter the sheepfold by the gate (John 10:1) and that the sheep do not heed the voice of a bandit (John 10:8). Simply put, a bandit is not a member of the Johannine community at the symbolic level. Thus, the narrator presents Barabbas as a character outside the community specifically by calling him a bandit (v.40). This further implies that the Jews who choose Barabbas, a bandit, alienate themselves from the realm of Jesus' sovereignty as embodied by the Johannine community.[290] Like a bandit, the Jews are not merely

[290] O'Day, "The Gospel of John: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," 818.

a group outside the community, but they also seek to harm the community. Therefore, the Jews are separated from the Johannine community.

Scene Four (John 19:1-3)

The current scene describes the Jews as well as Jesus as mocked by the imperial power as exerted by Pilate, a brutal colonizer. Above all, when the Roman soldiers hail Jesus as "the King of the Jews," mocking is not only on target for Jesus, but also for the Jews (v. 3). Jesus' suffering as "the King of the Jews" is no longer individual, but rather collective on the grounds that Jesus is made a fatuous example of the whole Jewish people. As Pilate flaunts his imperial authority over the colonized body of Jesus, the Jews as the colonized subjects of Rome, thus also become a victim of Roman imperial power.

Scene Five (John 19:4-7)

The Jews are passive characters who rely exclusively on the imperial power of Pilate for the execution of Jesus. When Jesus appears as an imitation of a king worn in the royal garb (v. 5), the Jews cannot help being passive under Pilate's authority in spite of their desire to actively resist the presentation of Jesus as their king. All that the Jews can do is to shout, "crucify! crucify!" (v. 6). To boot, when confronted with Pilate's suggestion that they crucify Jesus for themselves, the Jews certainly feel frustrated with their lack of legal authority (v. 6). The point here is that the Jews eager to murder Jesus according to their law are not allowed to do so without the sanction of the Roman jurisdiction in a colonial context. Accordingly, the Jews attempt to justify their position to crucify Jesus to the Roman authority on the grounds that he commits the sin of blasphemy by claiming that he is "the Son of God" (v. 7). Due to the zeal of

the Jews for the Jewish law and their lack of power in relation to the Roman law, Pilate is able to take advantage of his status as a governor. Therefore, the Jews prove to be a passive character in relation to Pilate.

Scene Six (John 19:8-12)

In spite of their absence in the scene, the Jews are portrayed as threatening the power of the Roman governor, Pilate. the Jews accuse Pilate of attempting to release Jesus. No doubt, this menaces Pilate by highlighting his alleged lack of allegiance to the Roman emperor (v. 12a). Moreover, the Jews put Pilate in further jeopardy by constructing his attempt to release such an anti-imperial character as Jesus as a revolutionary enterprise. They claim: "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar" (v. 12b). Thus, the Jews become a menacing character in interaction with Pilate by pointing to his weaknesses in his endeavor to set Jesus free.

Scene Seven (John 19:13-16a)

Their last conversation with Pilate depicts the Jews or more precisely the chief priests, as self-contradictory between what they believe and what they say. the Jews are once again exasperated with Pilate's mocking declaration of Jesus as their king (v. 14b). They refuse to accept Jesus as "the King of Israel" (cf. John 12:13) by asking for his crucifixion (v. 15a). This highly suggests that the Jews construct the Jewish kingship, that is, the Messianic kingship of God, as completely distinct from Jesus' kingship. Strikingly, when faced with the trick question of "Shall I crucify your king?" the chief priests, evidently part of the Jews advocate the sovereignty of Caesar adding that they have no king but Caesar (v. 15c). In the trial scene, it is

emphasized that the Jews are meticulously compliant with the Jewish law (cf. John 18:28; 19:7). It is ironic that the Jews abandon the sovereignty of God (cf. Judges 8:23; 1 Samuel 8:7) by advocating the sovereignty of Caesar. They refuse Jesus' kingship because they are convinced that his kingship is not the very kingship promised to them. As C. K. Barret correctly argues: "In denying all claims to kingship save that of the Roman Emperor Israel abdicated its own unique position under the immediate sovereignty of God."[291] Finally, the Jews become an inconsistent character between their belief and reality.

In this section, special attention has been paid to the most powerful, minor characters, that is, Pilate and the Jews in their unceasing interactions with the most powerless, major character, Jesus, particularly in the Johannine trial narrative. In the first place, Pilate is a daunting character who symbolizes the power of the Roman Empire. Pilate, the colonizing character, flaunts imperial power over the colonized characters, Jesus and the Jews. However, there is an ironic twist that Pilate is transformed from a powerful character to a powerless character in that Pilate, the representative of the earthly sovereignty, remains vulnerable to threats from both Jesus, the representative of the heavenly sovereignty, and the Jews. In the second place, the Jews are an ambivalent character between a more powerless character, Jesus, and a more powerful character, Pilate. For example, the Jews are a powerful character (as representative of the Jewish law) for Jesus, a Jew, whereas they are a powerless character for Pilate (as representative of the Roman law). Even at the semantic level, the Jews vacillate between a racial-ethnic group and a religiopolitical group. Eventually, the Jews disclose their incongruity in a way that he simultaneously adopts the Roman sovereignty and abandons the Jewish sovereignty in order to remove Jesus, whom they deem an evildoer in accordance with

[291] Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 546.

the Jewish law. Paradoxically, the end result is that the Jews become a self-contradictory character by forsaking the Jewish law in order to maintain it in the face of the Roman law.

3. Constructing Jesus as a Liminal Character in between Heavenly and Earthly Kingship

In his direct and indirect interactions with Pilate and the Jews Jesus becomes a liminal character standing on the threshold between the Jewish and Roman worlds. Thus, Jesus is an ambiguous character in stark opposition to, but within a liminal zone between, both worlds; from the perspective of the Jews he is an evildoer, whereas, from the perspective of Pilate, he is an innocent Jew. Furthermore, Jesus occupies a liminal space between the earthly and heavenly sovereignties. As such, Jesus' liminality between the clashing sovereignties empowers him to undermine the earthly power in such a way as to become an uncertain character between the imperial and anti-imperial connotations of his kingship.

Scene One (John 18:28-32)

Due to Jesus's absence in the scene where Pilate and the Jews discuss the charges against Jesus, Jesus's characterization is indirect rather than direct. the Jews portray Jesus as an evildoer, that is, a criminal involved in political disturbance, in responding Pilate's inquiry into their accusations against Jesus (v. 30). When Pilate commands the Jews to pass judgment on Jesus, he refuses to label Jesus as an evildoer under the Roman law (v. 31). This moment lays a foundation for the conflict that will arise later between the Jews' portrayal of Jesus as a political criminal and Pilate's portrayal of him as an innocent Jew, as the trial narrative proceeds.

Scene Two (John 18:33-38a)

The scene revolves around Jesus' identity as a king (βασιλεὺς) in conflict with the world (κόσμος), a disbelieving world that turns its back on Jesus, as represented by the Jewish and Roman worlds.[292] The Greek word βασιλεὺς is by far the most dominant of the motifs found in the trial narrative.[293] The crucial point, however, is that, throughout the scene, Jesus never owns the label of a king, but rather refers only to his otherworldly kingship that exceeds but encompasses the Jewish and Roman worlds.

The scene centers on the sovereignty of Jesus as a king, not *of* this world, but *in* this world. Importantly, John's Jesus actively engages with the accusations of being "the King of the Jews" (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων), whereas the other Gospels do not include this conversation. More importantly, Jesus, the interrogated, goes even so far as to interrogate Pilate (v. 34). It seems highly likely that the power balance once, if not for all, shifts between the two characters.[294] Pilate attempts to determine whether Jesus is "the King of the Jews" in particular (v. 33) or a king in general (v. 37). When asked if he is "the King of the Jews" (v. 33), Jesus hints at the heavenly origin and character of his kingship, thereby rebuffing the claim to Jewish kingship alone and thus refusing any constraints on his kingship in racial-ethnic terms (v. 36).

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[292] Contra Thatcher, *Greater Than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel*, 74. Tom Thatcher construes the "world" as the Roman world (not necessarily involving the Jewish world), but I insist that the "world" is characterized as both Roman and Jewish.

[293] The Greek term βασιλεὺς recurs nine times within the narrative (John 18:33, 37 [twice], 39; 19:3, 12, 14, 15 [twice]), whereas it occurs at sporadic intervals four times (John 1:49; 6:15; 12:13, 15) before the narrative and two times (John 19:19, 21) immediately after the narrative. This implies that the trial narrative revolves around the motif of Jesus' kingship. On the prophet-king on the basis of the typology of Moses, see Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*.

[294] Carter, *Pontius Pilate: Portraits of a Roman Governor*, 142.

This also suggests that Jesus' kingship is not restricted by the Roman world or the Jewish world (v. 36).[295]

Thus, Jesus clarifies his kingship as not deriving *from* this world, but existing *in* this world. Cornelis Bennema is correct in interpreting Jesus' kingship as one that "is 'from above' but it exists and operates *in* this world."[296] That is to say, the origin of Jesus' kingship is not from this world, neither from the Jewish world, nor from the Roman imperial world. At the same time, the impact of his kingship may nonetheless exist in this world, whether Jewish or Roman (see John 17:13-18).[297] In the words of David Rensberger:

> Jesus' declaration about his kingship is not a denial that it is a kingship, with social consequences. Rather, it specifies what those consequences are. It is not a question of whether Jesus' kingship exists in this world but of how it exists, not a certification that the interests of Jesus' kingdom are 'otherworldly' and so do not impinge on this world's affairs, but that his kingship has its source outside this world and so is established by methods other than this world's.[298]

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[295] In a bid to further cement his heavenly kingship, Jesus emphasizes that his kingship is fundamentally different from the earthly kingship replete with violence. The Roman imperial world as well as the Jewish world is a subset of this world, which preserves its oppressive societal structures through cruelty. Jesus repeatedly affirms that his kingship does not derive from this world replete with fighting (ἀγωνίζεσθαι) (v. 36b). Jesus' kingship has nothing to do with the violent world of the Jewish, and, by implication, Roman rulers (in the sense that Pilate allows the Jewish authorities to exercise violence).

[296] Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*, 185. Contra Raymond Brown's theological interpretation of Jesus' kingship, see Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 855-56.

[297] Rensberger, "The Politics of John: The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," 408.

[298] Ibid.

Jesus' kingship is neither Jewish nor Roman in that its origin is from heavenly kingship, but its effect echoes around the world in that it exercises its authority over this world. As a consequence, Jesus characterizes his kingship as existing outside the Roman imperial world as well as the Jewish world, but still applying to both worlds.

Scene Three (John 18:38b-40)

After finishing an inquiry into Jesus' case, Pilate returns to the Jews and declares Jesus innocent of their charges. When Pilate offers to release Jesus, the Jews instead prefer Barabbas. The Jews' choice of Barabbas, a known political criminal, reveals that their accusation against Jesus as a political criminal turn out to be irrelevant. It thus becomes all the more clear that Jesus is an outcast from the Jews.

Scene Four (John 19:1-3)

Given the violence inflicted on Jesus at the center of the trial narrative scene, Jesus seems to be a mere victim of Roman imperial power, exerted by its representative, Pilate. No doubt, Pilate is a savage colonizer from the perspective of the colonized subjects. Pilate intends to deride Jesus, and, by extension, the Jews as colonized subjects of Rome, through the actions and words of the Roman soldiers. As mentioned above, it must be a type of derision for the soldiers to put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head, to dress him in a purple robe, to hail him as "the King of the Jews," and to strike him on the face (vv. 2-3). However, despite the soldiers' intention to mock Jesus, their hailing him as "the King of the Jews" may signal their unexpected acknowledgement of his kingship.

Scene Five (John 19:4-7)

A cacophonous conversation between the Jews and Pilate, implicitly rather than explicitly, portrays Jesus as an anti-imperial as well as imperial king. On the one hand, it is significant to note that Jesus continues to wear the crown of thorns and the purple attire for the rest of the trial (v. 5).[299] Jesus' imperial kingship comes into effect from such visual imagery, albeit in a form of mockery.[300] In spite of the soldiers' intent to insult Jesus as a caricature of the Roman emperor, they can no longer control the side effects of their mocking: Jesus' imperial kingship. On the other hand, the Jews' indictment of Jesus that he claims to be "the Son of God" insinuates that Jesus becomes an anti-imperial character opposed to the Roman imperial theology, which worships the emperor not solely as a ruler (in the political arena), but also as a deity (in the religious arena). The sovereignty of Jesus runs counter-parallel to that of the emperors in the religious and political realms. In the final analysis, Jesus becomes an ambivalent king in the undecidable zone between imperialism and anti-imperialism.

Scene Six (John 19:8-12)

The final conversation between Pilate and Jesus presents Jesus as a liminal character resisting the colonial authority of Pilate, the representative of the earthly sovereignty. In the Roman context, Jesus' claim to be "the Son of God" threatens Pilate due to both its imperial and anti-imperial echoes (v. 8). Clearly, the phrase υιὸς θεοῦ runs parallel to Roman imperial

[299] Compare this trial account of John with those of Matthew and Mark. In the case of Matthew and Mark, the Roman soldiers put Jesus' own clothes on him immediately before the crucifixion (Matt 27:31; Mk 15:20). In John's Gospel, the mockery of Jesus is placed in the middle of the trial account rather than its end as with Matthew and Mark. The Gospel of Luke does not even have the scene of mockery by the Roman soldiers.

[300] Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 68-69; Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 132.

theology to venerate the Roman emperor as *divi filius*. But at the same time, the reader familiar with the Roman cult would interpret the divine sonship of Jesus as a parody of the Roman emperor, which subverts his imperial authority. Read in this light, Pilate must be trepidatious about the divine sonship of Jesus because of its ambivalence (v. 8), which motivates him to inquire about Jesus' origin (v. 9a). As the subordinate, Jesus is expected to answer the governor's question, but he keeps silent for a moment (v. 9b). Silence tends to mean submissiveness, but actually, in this particular case, demonstrates resistance. When Pilate vaunts about his colonial authority (ἐξουσία) to exonerate and condemn Jesus as a colonized subject, this indicates that Pilate has interpreted Jesus' refusal to speak as an act of resistance (v. 10). Rather than being intimidated by Pilate's colonizing power, Jesus intimidates Pilate all the more by asserting that the earthly sovereignty has its origin in the heavenly sovereignty (v. 11a). In addition, Jesus demonstrates his superior power over Pilate by pointing to Pilate's sin, even though Pilate's sin is lesser than the sin of the one who hands Jesus over (v. 11b). This statement highlights the inversion of the power relations between Jesus and Pilate since Jesus takes over the role of a judge with special reference to sin (ἁμαρτία).

To make matters more complicated, this power dynamic demonstrates that, although the heavenly sovereignty, as represented by Jesus, does not belong to the earthly sovereignty, as represented by Pilate, the former operates in the latter. To put it otherwise, at the historical level, the sovereignty of Jesus, an agent of God, is governed by the sovereignty of Pilate, an agent of Rome, while, at the cosmological level, the former governs the latter. Jesus' kingship is in force in both political and religious dimensions. To illustrate, in verse 12, the Jews hint at the political dimension of Jesus' kingship in connection with the Roman Empire by stating, "Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

As a consequence, Jesus is situated on the historical threshold of Jewish and Roman contexts and, more fundamentally, on the threshold of historical and cosmological levels. In this redoubled position, Jesus becomes a resistant character against the colonial power of Pilate, causing Pilate's anxiety about Jesus' identity as both imperial and anti-imperial at both historical and cosmological levels.

Scene Seven (John 19:13-16a)

The last conversation between Pilate and the Jews portrays Jesus as a Passover lamb yet to be slaughtered and as a king denied his sovereignty by his people. Throughout the whole narrative, the Gospel of John endeavors to look upon Jesus as "the lamb of God" (ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) (John 1:29, 36). Perhaps most importantly, the temporal setting of the trial narrative is the day of preparation for Passover when the Passover lambs were sacrificed (v. 14b; cf. John 18:28)[301] It is interesting that, in stark contrast to the Synoptic Gospels, in which Jesus' death occurs after the Passover meal, the Gospel of John describes his crucifixion as occurring on the same day the Passover lamb is slaughtered. The implication is that Jesus can be symbolically read as a Passover lamb.[302]

Furthermore, the death of Jesus as the Passover lamb has both religious and political overtones of deliverance.[303] In the religious realm, as Bart Ehrman aptly suggests, "Jesus' death

[301] Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 664, n. 5; Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 545; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 3: 895.
[302] Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 64.
[303] As Jesus becomes a sacrificial lamb for the Passover, he has the potential to become a liminal character in the indistinguishable zones between humanity and animality, especially in the subsequent scene of crucifixion. In these blurred zones, Jesus' humanity and animality no longer exist in a binaristic manner; instead, the one exists in the other, and vice versa. Through the

represents the salvation of God, just as the sacrifice of the lamb represented salvation for the ancient Israelites during the first Passover."[304] In the political realm, the death of Jesus as the Passover lamb indicates a sacrifice for liberation from Roman colonizers in exactly the same way that the first Passover lamb symbolized deliverance from Egyptian oppressors.

When Pilate presents Jesus as their king, the Jews are aggravated and consequently call for his crucifixion (v. 14b-15a). This demonstrates that the Jews consistently repudiate Jesus' kingship. In addition, it is manifest that the high priests, as the representative of the Jews once more refuse to admit Jesus' kingship when they shout, "We have no king but Caesar" (v. 15). The high priests' proclamation further suggests that the political dimension of Jesus' kingship is entangled with the religious dimension of his kingship. Hence, Wayne Meeks notes:

> This last statement ["We have no king but Caesar"] brings to its fullest expression the political theme which has been observed at several points in the Johannine trial and the preceding narratives, but at the same time it shows that the political element in Jesus' kingship cannot be separated from its religious significance. The high priests' denial expresses *in nuce* the tragic irony of the entire trial: in rejecting Jesus as "King of the Jews" for political expediency, the Jews reject the eschatological king toward whom their highest hopes were directed. Rejecting the

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metaphor of a Passover lamb, one can see Jesus' humanity in the animal realm and at the same time his animality in the human realm. Therefore, the human and animal realms are merged into the so-called humanimal realm, which justifies the violence imposed on the colonized subject by the Roman Empire. In the final analysis, Jesus as an abandoned king remains none other than a Passover lamb.

[304] Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 64-65.

> "King of the Jews," the Jews cease to be "Israel," the special people of God, and become only one of the ἔθνη subject to Caesar.[305]

As Meeks argues, Jesus' political kingship has to do with his religious kingship. According to Meeks, the statement of the Jews that they have no king but Caesar implies that they forsake their religious conviction that God is their sole King.

Thus far, we have interpreted Jesus as an elusive character in the uncertain zones between the Jewish and Roman worlds, and moreover, between the earthly and heavenly realms in his ongoing interactions with Pilate and the Jews. Jesus' heavenly sovereignty subverts earthly sovereignty. In the indistinguishable zones between the Jewish and Roman worlds, and between the earthly and heavenly sovereignties, Jesus becomes an elusive but resistant character who undermines earthly powers. He does this by simultaneously revealing the self-contradiction of the Jews in their ostensible adherence to Jewish law yet adoption of Roman law. Furthermore, Jesus causes Pilate's anxiety because he cannot fully understand Jesus' ambiguous identity, both imperial and anti-imperial.

4. Conclusion: The Implications of Otherness *Without*

In sum, the Johannine trial narrative presents an opportunity to complicate the typical understanding of Pilate and the Jews as powerful but minor characters interacting with the major character, Jesus, who is usually portrayed as powerless. Importantly, Pilate is altered from a powerful character to a powerless character in that he runs the risk of losing power in his

[305] Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 76.

interactions with the colonized, the Jews and Jesus. Additionally, the Jews become ambivalent characters in-between a more powerless character, Jesus, and a more powerful character, Pilate, as their group identity fluctuates between a racial-ethnic group and a religiopolitical group. the Jews fall into the trap of self-contradiction by embracing Roman sovereignty and, by implication, forsaking Jewish sovereignty to the effect that they embrace the second within the first. By contrast, Jesus, in the uncertain zones between the Jewish and Roman worlds, and between the earthly and heavenly sovereignties, becomes a liminal but subversive character who challenges the earthly Jewish and Roman powers.

I have reconsidered Pilate and the Jews as others from the perspective of the Johannine community. My view is thus an inversion of the typical understanding of the power dynamics between Pilate, the Jews and Jesus. By showing that Jesus, an ostensibly marginalized character, threatens the more powerful characters, Pilate and the Jews I have demonstrated that the concept of otherness is flexible and mutable beyond the limits of binary thinking. On the one hand, the colonizing character, Pilate, is repeatedly threatened by the colonized characters, the Jews and Jesus. More specifically, the Jews jeopardize Pilate by questioning his fidelity to the Roman emperor. Jesus more fundamentally menaces the imperial authority of Pilate in the undeterminable zone between the Jewish and Roman laws, and between the earthly and heavenly sovereignties, in that Jesus' sovereignty extends to both sides of each pair's thresholds. Thus, Pilate, seemingly the most powerful character, confronts differing forms of resistance from the more powerless characters—diametric resistance from the Jews and ambiguous resistance from Jesus. On the other hand, by espousing the sovereignty of Caesar to get rid of Jesus, the Jews lose their source of power, that is, the sovereignty of God in the Jewish religiopolitical system. In the long run, the otherness of Pilate and the Jews proves that the power of the dualistic and

hierarchical structure of earthly sovereignty is vulnerable to subversion through the intervention of heavenly sovereignty. Jesus becomes a liminal character between empowerment and disempowerment who ultimately resists the dualistic, hierarchical power structure in the zone of undecidability between the Jewish and Roman worlds.

CHAPTER V

THE MOTHER OF JESUS, THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, AND JESUS: READING THE OTHERNESS *BEYOND*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to construct the otherness of both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as an otherness arising from *within* the Johannine community. A brief comparison between the otherness of the Samaritan woman, as constructed in Chapter 3, and the otherness of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, as undertaken in this chapter, reveals the following distinction: first, the former points to an unresolved tension deriving mainly from the racial/ethnic and gender differences between Jesus (as a Galilean Jewish man) and a Samaritan woman; and second, the latter indicates unity beyond racial/ethnic and gender differences between Jesus, his mother (as a Galilean Jewish woman), and the Beloved Disciple (as a Judean Jewish man). Thus, this chapter envisions the otherness of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as a transcendent otherness, transgressing clear-cut racial/ethnic and gender boundaries for the sake of solidarity by means of ambiguous performances in both respects.

The crucifixion scene (John 19:25-27, 34) calls attention to racial/ethnic transgression immediately before and after Jesus' death by the creation of the Johannine community as one consisting of males as well as females from different racial/ethnic groups. Within the Johannine community, the mother of Jesus represents the Galilean Jewish group, whereas the Beloved

Disciple represents the Judean Jewish group.[306] In spite of their anonymous identity, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple represent these heterogeneous groups as part of a hybrid Johannine community. Traditional Johannine scholarship has tended to present a rather monolithic construction of the Johannine community, especially in terms of race/ethnicity and gender.[307] I, however, will demonstrate that the Johannine community can be seen instead as a

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[306] A reader response analysis could also read the identity of the Beloved Disciple as representing the Gentile group within the Johannine community based on his/her anonymity, thereby inviting the readers to take part in the story of John and identify the disciple's story with their own stories in the diasporic context, both transhistorical and transcultural.

[307] Cf. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*; Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*; Sharon H. Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 10-28. My contention is that the Johannine community is a multi-racial/ethnic and gender-inclusive community.

On the one hand, the community is diverse in terms of racial/ethnic profile. First, it is to be emphasized is that, in spite of its hostility against Judean Jews, the Johannine community is predominantly a Judean Jewish community. See J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187.J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King:*

heterogeneous and hybrid community composed of both men and women of various racial/ethnic backgrounds, thus uniting gender and racial/ethnic differences within the community. For the discussion of racial/ethnic and gendered characterization, I will engage the theories of Shaye Cohen and Mikhail Bakhtin.

To begin with, Cohen, in his book *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, seeks to define the semantics of the term Ἰουδαῖοι according to the following categories: ethnicity, geography, politics, religion, and culture.[308] When narrowly defined, Ἰουδαῖοι refers merely to Judeans, the inhabitants of the ancestral land of Judea in an ethnic and geopolitical sense. When broadly defined, it also includes the Jews who are not Judeans in an ethnic and geopolitical sense but become Jews in a religious and cultural sense. I would further argue that the meaning of Ἰουδαῖοι as Judeans may be seen as overlapping with that of Ἰουδαῖοι as Jews insofar as racial/ethnic and geopolitical identity sometimes interlocks with religious and cultural identity in the Diaspora. Along these lines, I will reexamine the term Ἰουδαῖοι in the

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Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 187. In addition, some Judean Jews start to believe in Jesus after observing the miracle performed by Jesus (2:23; 7:31; 11:45; 12:11, 17). Second, Jesus and his disciples are from Galilee (1:43, 46; 2:1, 11; 7:41, 52). Third, the Samaritan woman leads her people to believe in Jesus as "the Savior of the world" (ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου), with the result that the Samaritans are incorporated into the Johannine community (4:42). Subsequently, Jesus hints at his association with the Samaritans by leaving unanswered an indictment brought against him as a Samaritan (8:48). Fourth, the appearance of the Greeks witnesses to their presence in the Johannine community (12:20-22).

On the other hand, the community is an open one in terms of gender. The Samaritan woman becomes the first so-called missionary to her townspeople (4:28-30). Martha proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, which is ascribed to Peter in the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 16:13-20; Mk 8:27-30; Lk 9:18-20). Mary's washing the feet of Jesus has an impact on Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples (12:1-8; 13:1-17). Mary Magdalene, one of the bystanders at Jesus' crucifixion, becomes the first to witness the risen Jesus to his disciples (20:11-18). In addition, the Beloved Disciple and Jesus as gender-ambiguous characters perform both masculinity and femininity. Therefore, the Johannine community is transformed into a multi-racial/ethnic and gender-inclusive community in the diasporic context.

[308] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, 69-106.

Gospel of John, which incessantly oscillates between Judean Jews, Galilean Jews, and Diasporic Jews in an elastic manner.

Second, Bakhtin's concept of double-voicedness allows for an understanding of a newly complex en-gendering of Jesus, since John's Gospel is replete with both male and female voices. Bakhtin distinguishes between single-voiced and double-voiced discourse. Single-voiced discourse "is directed toward its referential object and constitutes the ultimate semantic authority within the limits of a given context."[309] Double-voiced discourse thrusts "a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own."[310] Simply put, single-voiced discourse contains the author's voice, whereas double-voiced discourse includes both the author's voice and the other's. There is a scholarly trend to read John's Gospel as a genderly single-voiced Gospel full of androcentric voices alone. However, a closer look at gender politics reveals that John's Gospel can be considered as a genderly double-voiced Gospel representing both androcentric and gynocentric voices. When it comes to the gender trouble of Jesus, a critical engagement with double-voicedness reveals a gender discourse that conceals Jesus' identity as Sophia and highlights his identity as Logos. With this in mind, I will bring into focus John's gender discourse in order to uncover a double voice that constructs Jesus as both Logos and Sophia.

In order to draw out the otherness of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, I shall take a closer look at the scene (John 19:25-27) immediately before and after the crucifixion of Jesus. First, both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple transgress the boundaries of race/ethnicity by means of Jesus' instructions to take the other as son and mother, respectively (John 19:26-27). Given that the mother of Jesus is a Galilean Jewish woman and the Beloved

[309] Bakhtin and Emerson, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 189.
[310] Ibid.

Disciple is, by implication, a Judean Jewish man, this mutual entrustment would and should symbolically constitute an example of the phenomenon of crossing the boundaries of race/ethnicity in a diasporic context.

Second, I will argue that Jesus crosses over the gender boundary by taking on the female role of giving birth to the children of God. In particular, the pouring of Jesus' blood and water out of his side recalls the imagery of delivery (John 19:34). A brief survey of the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish wisdom literature, and Philo's works suggests that John's Jesus stands alongside the Sophia tradition. Thus, by revealing his hidden identity as Sophia, Jesus becomes an ambiguous character in terms of gender performance.

Third, I conclude by speculating about the deconstructive postcolonial implications of the otherness of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple in conjunction with Jesus's gender performance for the broader Johannine community. The creation of a familial bond between the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple embraces a transcendent otherness across differences (cf. John 11:52). Meanwhile, Jesus, as Sophia rather than Logos, initiates a heterogeneous and hybrid community, which is, however, unified in spite of differences (John 19:27b). Under the aegis of Jesus' gendered performance as Sophia, the Johannine community becomes a paradoxical community, both maintaining the differences between minor characters and moving beyond them for the sake of unity. In this way, the type of unity advocated by the Johannine community is shown to be based on difference and heterogeneity, rather than sameness and homogeneity.

2. Constructing the Mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as Transgressive Characters (John 19:25-27)

My purpose in this section is to construct the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as crossing their racial/ethnic boundaries through Jesus' command (John 19:26-27) to take the other as a son and a mother, respectively. The reason is that the mother of Jesus, as a Galilean Jew, and the Beloved Disciple, as a Judean Jew, are united as a family of God through Jesus' death (John 19:34). I also believe it significant to note that the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple function as representatives of the Galilean and Judean community, respectively. Consequently, this means that Jesus creates a third racial/ethnic group, inclusive of both Galileans and Judeans, within the Johannine community.

Prior to the racial/ethnic characterization of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple (John 19:25-27), I shall look briefly at their significant roles as ideal characters in narratives. Interestingly, the Gospel of John alone addresses their presence in the crucifixion, in stark contrast to the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 23:49). This strongly suggests that the narrator seeks to bring into focus the role of both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple.

2.1. The Mother of Jesus

On the one hand**,** the mother of Jesus as a Jewish Galilean woman becomes a leading exemplar of the Johannine community, given the role that she plays in both Jesus' first ministry in Cana and last ministry in Jerusalem. First, she seizes the initiative to prompt Jesus to perform

his first sign (σημεῖον) in Cana of Galilee (John 2:3-5; 11).[311] Second, she plays a vital role at the foot of the cross by contributing to the creation of a new family through his death. Thus, the mother of Jesus is the only character who bears witness to Jesus' initial ministry at Cana and final ministry on the cross.

Jesus' mother appears for the first time in the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12). She is introduced by the narrator prior to the appearance of Jesus and his disciples. As Francis J. Moloney puts it, "The singling out of this character hints that she may have an important role to play in the narrative that follows."[312] More specifically, it is his mother, not Jesus, that plays a central role in advancing the story, which she does by directing Jesus' attention to the lack of wine, the issue at hand (John 2:3).

In response, Jesus rebukes his mother for her indirect request by saying: "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?" (τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί γύναι) (John 2:4b). Here, the vocative γύναι does not convey any disrespectful connotations, as is also true in the case of 19:26b.[313] It is common in the Johannine narrative for Jesus to address female characters—for instance, the Samaritan woman (John 4:21), the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:10), and Mary

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[311] Concerning the mother of Jesus as an ideal disciple, see Ritva H. Williams, "The Mother of Jesus at Cana: A Social-Science Interpretation of John 2:1-12," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (1997): 679-92. Drawing on a social-scientific reading strategy, Ritva H. Williams portrays the mother of Jesus as a challenging character in that she takes the initiative to encourage him to come to terms with the shortage of wine. On the mother of Jesus as an ideal character, see also John McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), 388-403; Raymond F. Collins, "Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel," *Downside Review* 94, no. 315 (1976): 120. On the patriarchal and androcentric characterization of the mother of Jesus, see also Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 32-40.

[312] Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 66-67.

[313] Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 116-17. Rudolf Bultmann does not consider it impolite for Jesus to address his mother "woman," given its usage in the Greek and Jewish literature. Cf. McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*, 402. Contra Williams, "The Mother of Jesus at Cana: A Social-Science Interpretation of John 2:1-12," 688.

Magdalene (John 20:15)—as "woman" (γύναι) (cf. Matthew15:28; Luke 13:12). In this light, it comes as no surprise that Jesus should call his mother "woman" as well. Such action does not carry, therefore, any negative connotations at the level of narrative, even if it may unconsciously follow the structure of patriarchal reality reflected in the narrative.

More precisely, Jesus' appellation of his mother as "woman" can be understood as a way to distance himself from a physical bond with his mother.[314] Jesus goes on to set an uncanny distance between himself and his mother with a pugnacious question, "What concern is that to you and to me?"[315] Jesus associates his unwillingness to be involved in the issue of the wine shortage with his "hour" (ὥρα) (John 2:4c). As Colleen Conway suggests, this hour signals the last hour of Jesus, that is, his crucifixion and glorification (John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27-28; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1).[316] The central point to be remembered is that, although Jesus initially refuses to get involved in the matter of the lack of wine, his mother is, in turn, so persistent and bold as to instruct the servants to do "whatever he commands" (ὅ τι ἂν λέγῃ) (John 2:5). This suggests that the mother of Jesus has an unwavering certainty in the power of Jesus' word.

The mother of Jesus is portrayed as a "determined mother who functions in this role to advance the narrative."[317] Her command over the servants is put into effect in a way that they comply with exactly what Jesus tells them to do (John 2:7). Even though Jesus is initially aloof

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[314] McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*, 363.
[315] Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 191; Raymond E. Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 191-94; Matthew S. Collins, "The Question of Doxa: A Socioliterary Reading of the Wedding at Cana," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 25, no. 3 (1995): 103.
[316] Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization*, Dissertation Series / Society of Biblical Literature (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 73.
[317] *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization*, Dissertation Series / Society of Biblical Literature (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 74.

from his mother's request, he ultimately responds positively to it. This suggests that the mother of Jesus has agency, to some degree, in engaging with Jesus' ministry. As Conway clearly notes: "It is her persistence, not Jesus' refusal, that carries the day and that results in the revelation of his glory."[318] Therefore, the mother of Jesus, a persistent character, even in the face of a blatant rebuke from her son, plays a crucial role in moving the plot by helping Jesus perform the first of his signs and reveal his glory (δόξα) (John 2:11).

The mother of Jesus does not reappear until she observes his death. It is important to note that she first appears at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and finally reappears at the end of his ministry. The mother of Jesus, as the only character to take part in Jesus' initial and final ministry, functions as an ideal character in John's narrative. Therefore, even though she remains anonymous throughout the Gospel in its entirety, the mother of Jesus contributes to revealing Jesus' identity as a creator of new wine and family in Cana and on the cross, respectively.

She is literally given no name; rather, the narrator unchangingly calls her "the mother of Jesus" (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) (John 2:1, 3) or "his mother" (ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ) (John 2:5, 12; 19:25). Her anonymous name emphasizes her maternal identity with respect to her relationship with Jesus.[319] Remarkably, unlike the rest of the anonymous characters, except for the Beloved Disciple, the epithet "the mother of Jesus" places stress on her distinctive relationship with Jesus.[320] It is also noteworthy that the Hebrew Bible observes the significant role of a type of

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[318] *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization*, 78.
[319] Turid Karlsen Seim, "Roles of Women in the Gospel of John," in *Aspects on the Johannine Literature*, ed. Lars Hartman and Birger Olsson (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), 61. On various interpretations—symbolical, historical, and polemical—about the anonymity of "the mother of Jesus, cf. Troy W. Martin, "Assessing the Johannine Epithet "the Mother of Jesus"," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (1998): 64-68.
[320] Judith Lieu, "The Mother of the Son in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 1 (1998): 63.

character called a "mother of an important son."[321] In addition, as David R. Beck argues, the mother of Jesus can be labeled as a type of anonymous character who functions as an exemplary disciple.[322] In general, such anonymous characters as the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the Beloved Disciple serve to help Jesus reveal his identity in John's Gospel. In similar fashion, Jesus' mother functions as an ideal character by stimulating him to reveal his identity. Above all, the mother of Jesus plays a central role in the creation of a new family by following his command to take the Beloved Disciple as her son.

2.2. The Beloved Disciple

The Beloved Disciple is the disciple who exemplifies perhaps the most intimate relationship with Jesus. Despite the ambiguity of his identity in terms of race/ethnicity, the Beloved Disciple is a symbolic character representative of an "ideal disciple as a foil to Peter and an example for the reader."[323] In a similar vein, Raymond Brown describes the Beloved Disciple as "the witness par excellence (John 19:35; 21:24), guaranteeing the validity of the Johannine

[321] On the role of the mother of Jesus like a "mother of an important son" character-type in the Hebrew Bible, see Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel*, 25-28.
[322] Cf. David R. Beck, "The Narrative Function of Anonymity in Fourth Gospel Characterization," *Semeia*, no. 63 (1993): 150. David Beck contends that the anonymous characters in the FG function as model disciples on the part of the readers. In this light, Beck regards the mother of Jesus as a woman of faith.
[323] Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1972), 457. Contra Barnabas Lindars, see Richard Bauckham, "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, no. 49 (1993). Richard Bauckham argues that the Gospel does not represent the Beloved Disciple as the ideal disciple but as the ideal author (19:35; 20:30-31; 21:24).

community's understanding of Jesus."[324]As with the mother of Jesus, in spite of the disciple's anonymity, the descriptive epithet "beloved" betokens a special relationship with Jesus.

The Beloved Disciple comes into sight for the first time at the last supper (John 13:23-25). When Jesus announces that one of his disciples will betray him, they are not certain to whom he refers (John 13:21-22). At this point, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is portrayed as reclining (ἀνακείμεναι) on Jesus' bosom (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) at the table (John 13:23). The physical position of the Beloved Disciple insinuates his physical intimacy with Jesus. The relationship between the two characters is rendered all the more striking when compared to the relationship between God and Jesus. In John 1:18, Jesus—the begotten Son of God—is depicted as "being close to the bosom of the Father" (ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς). As C. K. Barrett aptly notes, "the specially favoured disciple is represented as standing in the same relation to Christ as Christ to the Father."[325] Simply put, we can see the relationship between the Beloved Disciple and Jesus as analogous to that between Jesus and God.

Probably aware of the Beloved Disciple's privileged posture, Peter signals this disciple to ask Jesus who it is that will betray him (John 13:24). Lying upon the breast of Jesus (ἀναπεσὼν ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), the disciple is in a position to speak more confidentially with him (John 13:25).[326] In the narrative units subsequent to Jesus' crucifixion, the Beloved Disciple

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[324] Raymond Edward Brown, Paul J. Achtemeier, and United States Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue (Group), *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 211.

[325] Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 446.

[326] Ibid. Barrett goes to some length to explain the custom of reclining in a meal thus: "Persons taking part in a meal reclined on the left side; the left arm was used to support the body, the right was free for use. The disciple to the right of Jesus would thus find his head immediately in front of Jesus and might accordingly be said to lie in his bosom. Evidently he would be in a position to speak intimately with Jesus, but his was not the place of greatest honour; this was to the left of

continues to prove himself to be an ideal character. To illustrate, the Beloved Disciple believes the resurrection of Jesus even in the sight of the empty tomb (John 20:8) and thereafter recognizes the risen Jesus prior to Peter (John 21:7). All in all, the Beloved Disciple qualifies as a significant member of the Johannine community. Thus, like the mother of Jesus, the Beloved Disciple deserves to be identified as a leading exemplar of the community.

Considering the crucial roles of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as ideal characters, it is important to remember that both characters equally play a role in contributing to the creation of a new family through Jesus' mutual entrustment of one another at the foot of the cross (John 19:25-27). However, theological tradition can make a difference in understanding their respective positions in this regard. A look at both the Catholic and the Protestant interpretive traditions very much brings this across. While the Catholic tradition has a tendency to interpret Jesus' mother as the Mother of the Church, the Protestant tradition has a tendency to interpret the Beloved Disciple as the model of discipleship.[327] The two stand at odds with each other, drawing their own theological rationale for church foundation from the narrative.

Conway offers an alternative to these dichotomous interpretations. She argues: "Indeed, what can be stated with certainty is that Jesus accords special significance to both his mother and his disciple, so that efforts to elevate one or the other are misguided. It is more the case that through her relationship with the Beloved Disciple, the mother of Jesus contributes to the establishment of the family of God."[328] I agree with Conway's position. However, to my mind,

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the host. The place occupied by the Beloved Disciple was nevertheless the place of a trusted friend."

[327] On a mariological interpretation, see Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 504. On an ecclesial interpretation, see Seim, "Roles of Women in the Gospel of John," 65.

[328] Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization*, 84; Margaret M. Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: A Genuine Discipleship of Equals* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 178.

she does not demonstrate the point in relation to the narrative. Therefore, I will go further by looking at narrative with the sociocultural context in mind. Such an approach suggests that the role of each character is of equal importance.

Read from the point of view of the Beloved Disciple, mutual entrustment does not come to completion until the Beloved Disciple performs Jesus' words by immediately taking his mother to his/her own home (John 19:27b). It is noteworthy that it was the Greco-Roman custom for a male to take care of the mother of his deceased friend on his behalf, which shows somewhat patriarchal and hierarchical characteristics. The issue at stake is that, in spite of such patriarchal, hierarchical nuances embedded in the narrative, mutual entrustment applies to both characters to the same degree.

Thus, from the point of view of the mother of Jesus, it should be remembered that she first adopts the Beloved Disciple as her son in a newly instituted relationship rather than the other way around.[329] If we see Jesus' act of mutual entrustment merely in the light of filial piety, we miss the fact that the Beloved Disciple is entrusted to the mother of Jesus before she is entrusted to the disciple. Clearly, when lifted up on the cross, Jesus calls upon his mother to see and, by implication, receive the Beloved Disciple as her son: "He [Jesus] says to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son'" (λέγει τῇ μητρί γύναι ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου) (John 19:26b).[330] Jesus then tells the disciple to see and, by implication, receive the mother of Jesus as the disciple's mother: "Then he [Jesus] says to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'" (εἶτα λέγει τῷ μαθητῇ ἴδε ἡ μήτηρ

[329] In terms of narrative flow, the role of the mother of Jesus is simply emphasized in the narrative because the Greek word μήτηρ, which means "mother," comes into use five times within the pericope (cf. vv. 25 (twice); 26 (twice); 27 (once)).
[330] Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Mary: Glimpses of the Mother of Jesus* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 93. Interestingly, Gaventa suggests that the "son" in verse 26 might encourage the readers to associate it with Jesus rather than the Beloved Disciple. However, as she admits, the narrator in verse 27 makes it plain that the term refers to the Beloved Disciple.

σου) (John 19:27a). This implies that the Beloved Disciple is by no means the sole or primary caregiver. To put it otherwise, the mother of Jesus has as much agency as the Beloved Disciple in implementing Jesus' request to adopt each other as a family member. This agency recalls the active nature of Jesus' mother in the first sign of his transforming water into wine (John 2:1-11).

This mutual entrustment is rooted in an adoption formula equally performed by each character in the establishment of the new family. Jesus' performative words for reciprocal entrustment between his mother and the Beloved Disciple play a formulaic role in adopting the disciple as a son and the mother of Jesus as a mother.[331] Joan Cecelia Campbell notes: "Jesus establishes a new relationship between his mother and the Beloved Disciple: the latter is to assume Jesus' role in relationship to her, and she is to accept the disciple as her son, a factor that implies that she now has some kind of duty toward him as well."[332] This mutual assumption of each role, based on Jesus' adoption formula, is performative in that each character enacts the command of Jesus.

Here, adoption hints at a new family formed through Jesus' death. As such, this adoption formula is put to work "from that hour" (ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας) (cf. John 2:4) in such a way that the mother of Jesus accepts the Beloved Disciple as her son, followed by the disciple taking the

[331] On an adoption formula in connection with a revelatory formula, see Cf. Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: A Genuine Discipleship of Equals*, 179; Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 552.
[332] Joan Cecelia Campbell, *Kinship Relations in the Gospel of John* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2007), 40. On the familial unity focused on paternal-filial relationship, see also Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 83-84. As Conway argues, it would be fair to say that the mother of Jesus is so essential a character as the Beloved Disciple in forming a new family of Jesus.

mother of Jesus into "his own" (τὰ ἴδια) (John 19:27b; cf. John 1:11; 10:3, 4; 13:1).[333] This means that both the mother of Jesus and his Beloved Disciple accept his word without reservation. While the narrative in sociohistorical context may raise a contested matter in terms of differentiation of agency, I contend that agency resides in both characters.

2.3. Racial/Ethnic Characterization of the Mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple

Having said that, I will now reexamine the racial/ethnic characterization of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple in John's Gospel. As noted earlier, each character can be seen as a representative of different groups in the Johannine community. To take it a step further, the mutual entrustment between the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple signifies the symbolic union between two different groups within the Johannine community.[334] Both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple form oneness in solidarity with each other.[335]

In this regard, Rudolf Bultmann interprets the mother of Jesus as a representative of Jewish Christianity and the Beloved Disciple as a representative of Gentile Christianity.[336] Bultmann argues further that both Jewish Christianity embodied by the mother of Jesus and Gentile Christianity embodied by the Beloved Disciple equally constitute the Johannine community at large, although he specifies that the former is the matrix of the latter. Bultmann puts emphasis on the theme of "being one" (ἕν εἶναι) within the community by drawing attention

[333] It is noteworthy that the hour (ὥρα) of Jesus in his first ministry dramatically overlaps with that in his final ministry. It is also significant to note that τὰ ἴδια may convey either a physical sense (i.e., one's own home) or a spiritual sense (i.e., one's own spiritual influence).
[334] On the unitedness at the individual level, cf. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 503. "As a result of the lifting up of Jesus on the cross the Beloved Disciple and the Mother become one."
[335] Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, 353-54.
[336] Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 673; 483-85.

to Jesus' prayer (John 17:20-23) that "they [Jesus' followers] may all be one" (πάντες ἓν ὦσιν) (John 17:21; cf. John 11:52).[337] He contends that Jesus petitions his followers for "the inner oneness of the community" based on his unity with God (John 17:21-23).[338] Bultmann adamantly remarks:

> the community's oneness expresses the fact that it is the eschatological community, in which the world is annulled, and in which the differences of human individuality, that are typical of any human association and in fact help to make it up, are simply excluded. This unity stands for the radical other-worldly orientation of the community, that binds all individual believers and every empirical association of faith into a supra-worldly unity, across and beyond all differences of a natural, human kind.[339]

By and large, Bultmann is correct that the mutual entrustment stands for the unity of the Johannine community, which consists of two different groups represented by the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, respectively. Bultmann's argument is quite attractive insofar as he construes the Johannine community as an ideal community that exceeds all human differences for the sake of unity. However, it is naïve to deem the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as representing Jewish and Gentile Christianity without qualification. The fundamental problem with Bultmann's presumption is that he turns a deaf ear to the subtle differences in race/ethicity between the two characters. In doing so, Bultmann conceives of the Johannine community as

[337] *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 673; 512-18.
[338] *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 512.
[339] *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 517.

blended at the macro level, while erasing the nuanced differences of the two groups at the micro level.

My contention is that in terms of race/ethnicity the unity between the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple is more complex and nuanced than Bultmann envisions. Opposing Bultmann's attempt to focus on the unison of the Johannine community through the flattening of racial/ethnic differences, I construct its unity through the diversification of racial/ethnic differences. Given different geographical connotations associated with racial/ethnic identity, the Beloved Disciple and the mother of Jesus, in my view, can be perceived as a Galilean Jew and a Judean Jew, respectively. My assumption is that these characters are representative of the Johannine community, whose origins are Jewish rather than Gentile. Therefore, the group dynamics as represented by the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple are internal to the Jewish community.

The mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple represent a Judean Jewish group and a Galilean Jewish group from an internal, microscopic perspective rather than a Jewish and a Gentile group from an external, macroscopic perspective. Richard Bauckham correctly claims that "Israel" and "Israelites" are internal terms used among the Jews, whether they be Judean, Galilean, or Diasporic, while *Ioudaioi* is an external term used for and by the Gentiles.[340] For example, Nathanael and the crowd in Jerusalem call Jesus "the King of Israel" (John 12:12–13; cf. John 1:49; 6:15) as a Davidic messianic title, but Pilate calls him "the King of the Jews" (John 18:33, 39; 19:3, 19, 21). When seen in this racial/ethnic perspective, the unity between a

[340] Richard Bauckham, "Messianism According to the Gospel of John," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 59-60. Opposing the scholarly view to see only the mother of Jesus as representative of Israel, I would consider both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple to be symbolically constitutive of Israel in unity.

Judean Jew and a Galilean Jew alludes to that of Israel as constitutive of Judean Jews and Galilean Jews.

In the first place, when read from a microscopic perspective, the mother of Jesus symbolizes the Galilean Jewish group rather than simply the imagined Jewish group within the Johannine community. There is a distinct line between a Judean and a Galilean in terms of geography. For instance, as the geographical epithet "Jesus of Nazareth" suggests, Jesus can be identified as a Galilean rather than a Judean (John 1:45; 18:5, 7; 19:19), with special reference to place of origin.[341] Here it is noteworthy that Judeanness is not identical to Jewishness, but that Jewishness is a broader concept. Thus, it would be wrong to separate Jesus from any connection to Jewishness on the grounds that he is a Galilean in a geographical sense.

As far as the semantics of Jewishness is concerned, it is important to remember that the Greek term *Ioudaios* is ambiguous and flexible. It has a gamut of meanings, ranging from a Judean Jew, through a Galilean Jew, to a Diasporic Jew. As noted above, my position is based on the argument of Cohen that *Ioudaios* means a Judean in a racial/ethnic and geopolitical sense and a Jew in a religious and cultural sense.[342] In spite of my agreement with Cohen in general, I disagree with him in that the meaning of *Ioudaios* as a Judean can sometimes, though not always, overlap with that of *Ioudaios* as a Jew. The reason is that the connotation of a Jew is more fluid and flexible than that of a Judean. Therefore, racial/ethnic and geopolitical Judean identity can be interlocked with religious and cultural Jewish identity.[343]

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[341] On the issue of the translation of *Ioudaios*, see Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*, 214-17.
[342] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*.
[343] Cf. Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 159-66.

Amy-Jill Levine convincingly notes: "Rather than just claiming Jesus is a Galilean as opposed to a Judean and so losing any connection to the term 'Jew,' preferable is to see Jesus as a 'Galilean Jew.'[344] Following Levine, I am of the opinion that it is not appropriate to present Jesus as a Galilean in opposition to a Jew based on an either/or logic. Nonetheless, in distinction from Levine, I make it clear that there exists a stark contrast between a Galilean and a Judean rather than a contrast between a Galilean and a Jew. This means that a Galilean is not a Judean in a racial/ethnic and geopolitical sense, but can still be a Jew in a religious and cultural sense. Simply put, Jesus is both a Galilean and a Jew, that is, a Galilean Jew (or a Jewish Galilean) based on a both/and logic.[345] In this light, the Johannine Gospel presents *Ioudaios* as an ambiguous term. As a result, its meaning ceaselessly swings back and forth between Judean Jew, Galilean Jew, and Diasporic Jew in elastic fashion throughout the Gospel.[346]

As noted earlier, there is a further difference between intra- and extra-Jewish perspectives in the Johannine narrative. In the intra-Jewish perspective, Jesus is considered a Galilean, not a Judean, while in the extra-Jewish perspective, Jesus is considered an *Ioudaios*, without any clear distinction between a Judean and a Galilean.[347] To illustrate, outsiders to the Judean/Jewish

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[344] *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 162.

[345] On Jesus' (Jewish) Galilean identity, see Seán Freyne, *Jesus, a Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus-Story* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2004); Sean Freyne, "The Galilean Jesus and a Contemporary Christology," *Theological Studies* 70, no. 2 (2009); Jouette M. Bassler, "The Galileans: A Neglected Factor in Johannine Community Research," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1981). Sean Freyne argues that Jesus himself has both Jewish and Galilean identity, with the result that Jesus can be recognized as a Jewish Galilean or a Galilean Jew.

[346] Cf. Freyne, *Jesus, a Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus-Story*, 8. Sean aptly states: "Thus, places and their identities should be seen as unfixed, contested and multiple."

[347] On Jesus' origin and father land in the FG, Meeks, "Galilee and Judea in the Fourth Gospel," 159-69. Interestingly enough, Wayne Meeks argues that Jesus has Galilean origin, but Judean fatherland (*patris*). Meeks understand the Johannine geographical distinction at the symbolic

community, such as the Samaritan woman (John 4:9) and Pilate (John 18:33, 39; 19:3, 13, 19; cf. John 19:21), make little or no distinction between a Judean Jew and a Galilean Jew. On account of a lack of knowledge regarding Jesus' racial/ethnic and geopolitical identity, those outside the Judean/Jewish community take the liberty to call him *Ioudaios*. That is to say, the outsiders perceive Jesus to be a Judean/Jew in ambiguous manner, since they cannot detect an obvious distinction between a Judean Jew and a Galilean Jew. However, from the perspective of the Judeans as insiders, well aware of contemporary inner conflict between Judeans and Galileans, they recognize Jesus as a Galilean Jew rather than a Judean Jew (John 7:41, 52). If this is right, the mother of Jesus can be seen as a Galilean Jew, as insinuated by her biological connection with her son, Jesus, who is a Galilean Jew.[348]

In the second place, the disciple whom Jesus loves symbolizes the Judean group within the Johannine community. Largely due to his sustained anonymity throughout the Gospel, the identity of the Beloved Disciple has been variously and tendentiously cast: John the son of Zebedee, Thomas, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha—to name but a few.[349] John's Gospel strongly

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level; for instance, Jerusalem is "the place of judgment and rejection," whereas Galilee and Samaria are "the places of acceptance and discipleship (169)."

[348] On this, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 138-39. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza constructs the mother of Jesus as one of the Galilean women disciples.

[349] On this, see James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995), 127-224; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 325-33. Cf. Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

Charlesworth argues that the Beloved Disciple is a real historical person rather than a fictional literary character. He points out that it would be inaccurate to see the Beloved Disciple as merely a symbolic character. He demonstrates that at least the redacted version of chapter 21 attests to the historicity of the Beloved Disciple. He further contends that the Beloved Disciple is male. By contrast, Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that Martha of Bethany would be *a* Beloved Disciple: "As a 'Beloved Disciple' of Jesus she [Martha] is the spokeswoman for the messianic community (329)." In similar fashion, Schüssler Fiorenza portrays Mary of Bethany as "the true

implies that Lazarus is the best candidate for this title. The epithet "the one whom he loved (ἠγάπα)" (cf. John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2) recalls the figures of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, all of whom he loved (ἠγάπα) (John 11:5; cf. the use of the Greek verb φιλέω in John 11:3, 36).[350] Given this use of the Greek verb, the Beloved Disciple is highly likely to refer to the family of Bethany. Out of three siblings, Lazarus is the best qualified to serve as the Beloved Disciple, given that the Greek noun (μαθητής) and following relative clause (ὅς) in "the disciple whom he loved" (τὸν μαθητὴν ὃν ἠγάπα) indicate masculinity (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2). In addition, the masculinity of the Beloved Disciple is assumed by the fact that Jesus designates the disciple as a new "son" (υἱός) of his mother (John 19:26). Significantly, Lazarus embodies, to a large extent,

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disciple and minister in contrast to the betrayer who was one of the twelve (331)." In addition to these historical reconstructions, Reinhartz attempts, on the literary level, to identify the Beloved Disciple as the implied author—a construction by the reader (cf. John 21:24-25). As will be demonstrated, my contention is that, from a linguistic, literary, and theological perspective, the best candidate for the Beloved Disciple would be Lazarus of Bethany more than any other characters.

From a postmodern perspective, one, however, would go a step further to say that the Beloved Disciple is rendered anonymous so that the Gospel may invite readers across time and space to identify themselves with this ideal disciple. The context of diaspora (διασπορά), ancient and modern, in the Gospel of John especially allows for this identification (on the use of the Greek word διασπορά see, John 7:35; see also James 1:1; 1 Peter:1; on the use of the Greek word διασκορπίζω, see John 11:52; 16:32; on the use of the Greek word διασπείρω, see also Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19). Reinhartz (*Why Ask My Name?: Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998] 13) argues that: "The reader therefore 'becomes' the character and is invited by the anonymity of the character to adopt his or her position or point of view in the text." If such is the case, readers, ancient and contemporary, with multifaceted racial/ethnic and gender backgrounds would be attracted to the anonymity of the Beloved Disciple in the process of identification. In this way, the readers, regardless of their racial/ethnic and gender identity, identify themselves with the Beloved Disciple. Therefore, the anonymity of the Beloved Disciple may facilitate the crossing of the boundaries of race, ethnicity, and gender.

[350] I would argue that the Gospel of John interchangeably uses the Greek verbs φιλέω and αγαπάω. First, the Gospel uses both verbs to express Jesus's love of the family of Bethany (φιλέω: John 11:3, 36; αγαπάω: John 11:5). Second, the narrator alternatingly uses both verbs in the conversation between Jesus and Peter (John 21:15-17). Third, the narrator uses both words in reference to the Beloved Disciple (φιλέω: John 20:2; αγαπάω: John 13:23; 19:26). Finally, the narrator demonstrates the love of the Father toward the Son by using the two verbs (φιλέω: John 5:20; αγαπάω: John 3:35). It follows that the Fourth Gospel interchangeably uses the Greek verbs φιλέω and αγαπάω throughout.

Johannine resurrection theology. The resuscitation of Lazarus foreshadows the resurrection of Jesus (John 11:43-44). Thus, the racial/ethnic identity of the Beloved Disciple alludes to the Judean Jewish group in that Lazarus of Bethany is the best candidate for the disciple.[351]

In the final analysis, the mutual entrustment suggests that both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple cross the racial/ethnic boundaries between a Galilean Jew and a Judean Jew in such a way as to become the same family of God through Jesus' command to adopt each other as family members. Clearly, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple represent separate racial/ethnic groups. However, they both gain a third racial/ethnic identity that crosses, but does not erase, the differences between Galileans and Judeans. In other words, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple become transgressive characters by simultaneously retaining and crossing their racial/ethnic lines.

In sum, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple become transgressive characters crossing over their racial/ethnic boundaries. The mother of Jesus as a Galilean Jew and the Beloved Disciple as a Judean Jew demonstrate racial/ethnic transgression in that they both become the children of God, a new race/ethnicity, while retaining and sustaining their own race/ethnicity. Moreover, the solidarity at work in this mutual entrustment is a hint at the transnational phenomenon of crossing racial/ethnic boundaries, which accounts for the hybrid nature of the Johannine community.

3. Constructing Jesus as an Ambiguous Character (John 19:34)

[351] Philip Francis Esler and Ronald A. Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha: A Social-Scientific and Theological Reading of John* (London: SCM, 2006); Floyd Vivian Filson, "Who Was the Beloved Disciple," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 68, no. 2 (1949).

Drawing on the racial/ethnic characterizations of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, I shall now proceed to construct Jesus as an ambiguous character who crosses over gender lines.[352] When seen in the light of double-voicedness, Jesus transgresses boundaries of gender through his ambiguous performance. As a gender-ambiguous character, Jesus plays a male role as the Son of God on the public level, whereas he plays a female role as the mother of God's children on the hidden level.

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[352] In effect, Jesus also crosses over his racial/ethnic identity as a Galilean Jew by highlighting his role as a mother bearing these two characters as children of God and incorporating their racial/ethnic identities into a new identity as members of his new family. Jesus' command of mutual entrustment between his mother and the Beloved Disciple allows him to acquire a new race/ethnicity, inclusive of a Galilean Jew and a Judean Jew. This scene is the climax of Jesus' racial/ethnic transgression wherein Jesus crosses his racial/ethnic identity as a Galilean Jew in a way that he paradoxically becomes a spiritual mother to his physical mother.

It is noteworthy that Jesus is always portrayed as transgressing his racial/ethnic identity by emphasizing his heavenly identity as the Logos and hiding his racial/ethnic origin as a Galilean Jew. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus hides his racial/ethnic identity as a Galilean Jew, in spite of the extant trace as such. In the framework of Johannine dualism, John's Gospel conceives of Jesus' family relationship at two contrasting levels, the heavenly (or spiritual) and the earthly (or biological), with emphasis on the former rather than the latter. In this regard, it is worthwhile to note that the Johannine prologue (John 1:18) introduces Jesus as the enfleshed Logos, the Word of God (John 1:14), adumbrating the conflict between his heavenly and earthly identities. For the most part, the Gospel of John has a tendency to emphasize Jesus as the only begotten Son of God rather than the son of Joseph and Mary. On the one hand, the heavenly family relationship between Jesus the Son and God the Father is persistently emphasized throughout the entire Gospel (John 1:14; 3:16-18, 35; 5:20; 8:16, 18, 28, 38; 49, 54; 10:17, 30; 14:7; 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24-25). On the other hand, the earthly family relationship between Jesus and his father, brothers, and mother constantly remains in the background. First, even though Joseph is referred to as the father of Jesus (John 1:45; 6:42), he by no means shows up in the narrative. Second, Jesus' brothers are negatively portrayed as disbelieving in him (John 7:5) after their first, neutral appearance (John 2:12). Third, the mother of Jesus is somewhat distantiated from him (John 2:1-11), although she is finally affiliated with and incorporated into a fictive family relationship with the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the cross (John 19:25-27). Thus, the implication is that the earthly or biological family can be deemed valuable only if it contributes to the creation of a new fictive family within the parameters of the heavenly or spiritual family. By incorporating his biological mother into the spiritual family of God, Jesus implicitly admits his racial/ethnic identity as a Galilean Jew. Yet, at the same time, he explicitly transgresses his earthly racial/ethnic identity by performing his heavenly identity as one who produces children of God. On Jesus' heavenly and spiritual family, see Campbell, *Kinship Relations in the Gospel of John*, 6.

When it comes to gender discourse in John's Gospel, the dominant male voice and the hidden suppressed female voice become internally embedded in the Gospel. The reason is that the androcentric voice takes center stage as the dominant public level, while the gynocentric voice remains offstage as the suppressed hidden level. Therefore, John's Gospel as a double-voiced discourse hints at a jarring contestation between androcentric and gynocentric voices. In a similar fashion, Sandra Schneiders insightfully notes:

> Feminist interpretation also attempts to extract from the biblical text the "secrets" about women that are buried beneath its androcentric surface, especially the hidden history of women, which has been largely obscured and distorted, if not erased altogether, by male control of the tradition. Sometimes the feminist task involves pointing to that which is plainly in the text but has remained "unnoticed" or even been denied by exegetes.[353]

In the light of double-voicedness, Schneiders' arguments can be re-read to suggest that the biblical text has the double voices of men and women, but with men's voices recorded on the public level and women's voices neglected on the hidden level. She further proposes that it is incumbent on a feminist biblical scholar to recover the hidden voices of women, which still linger in the ears of the readers. For Schneiders, the bottom line is to subvert the domination of the male-oriented public voices by bringing into focus the female-oriented hidden voices. Paying full attention to solidarity among gender differences, I will demonstrate that a more fundamental issue at hand is to challenge John's gender binaries, which function as an exclusive system

[353] Sandra Marie Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 185.

serving both to elevate the masculine over the feminine and to subordinate the latter to the former. In this regard, gender ambiguity breaks down the gender role barriers.

Thus, the Gospel of John publicly presents Jesus' masculine identity as Logos, while simultaneously hiding his feminine identity as Sophia. There is no doubt that the Gospel of John is replete with male-dominant images that highlight the father-son language between God and Jesus (cf. John 1:14; 3:16-18, 35; 5:20; 8:16, 18, 28, 38; 49, 54; 10:17, 30; 14:7; 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24-25). However, it would be too hasty a conclusion to argue that John's Gospel contains merely masculine-oriented gender language. Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch aptly argue: "Yet the Johannine Jesus, however much he may seem to exemplify *andreia*, is also the incarnate feminine wisdom figure, agent of God's creation, who calls all to a meal and even feeds them with her own flesh like a nursing mother, and gives living water to drink like a well-organized mother of a household."[354] Given his feminine-oriented gender role (e.g., John 4:10, 13-14; 6:35, 50-51), it would be more appropriate to say that Jesus crosses over the line between gender roles, albeit with a penchant for the masculine role rather than the feminine one.

Indeed, Jesus, even though introduced as the enfleshed Logos (John 1:14), becomes the great model for the transgression of gender roles. In this regard he stands in the tradition of wisdom literature as Sophia.[355] With this in mind, I will show the femininity of God as it appears in the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish wisdom literature, and Philo's works, with the aim of recovering the erased, long-standing Sophia tradition, which forms the background for the femininity of Jesus.

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[354] Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*, The Family, Religion, and Culture (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 143.
[355] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:CXXII-CXXV.

First, the maternal image of God in the Hebrew Bible is worth mentioning as backdrop for the Gospel of John.[356] I give but a few instances. God is portrayed as a begetter: "You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth" (Deuteronomy 32:18). God likens himself to a woman with a nursing child, or even the child itself in a rhetorical question: "Can a woman forget her nursing-child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb?" (Isaiah 49:15a). Likewise, God is compared to a mother comforting her child: "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isaiah 66:13). Thus, feminine imagery related to birthing and nursing is attributed to God in the Hebrew Bible.

Second, within the strands of Jewish wisdom tradition, Israel's God is envisioned as Sophia. For instance, Proverbs 8:22 presents God as begetting wisdom (חכמה), which is equivalent to Sophia (σοφία) in Greek, even before the creation of the world (cf. vv. 23-31): "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago." Sophia is even portrayed as a goddess who creates the world and elects Israel as her children. Against this backdrop, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza describes in detail the female images of divine Sophia: "Divine Sophia is Israel's God in the language and *Gestalt* of the goddess. Sophia is called sister, wife, mother, beloved, and teacher. She is the leader on the way, the preacher in Israel, the taskmaster and creator God … Goddess-language is employed to speak about the *one* God of Israel whose gracious goodness is divine Sophia."[357] Schüssler Fiorenza goes even further by bringing into focus the challenge that divine Sophia as goddess poses to a partiarchal monotheistic tendency in Jewish and Christian theology. Rather than upholding the patriarchal,

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[356] J. Massyngberde Ford, *Redeemer Friend and Mother: Salvation in Antiquity and in the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 39-45.
[357] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, 133.

monotheistic construction of God, she suggests that Jewish wisdom literature presents a female picture of God by incorporating goddess worship. If this is right, Jewish wisdom literaure lays bare femininity as well as masculinity in the understading of Israel's God.

Lastly, Philo of Alexandria (c.20 BCE -40 CE), a Hellenized Jew, well aware of a stark gendered conflict between the traditions of Sophia and Logos, describes Sophia as transgressing the boundaries of gender.[358] Philo suggests that the feminine Sophia is equivalent to the masculine Logos of God and thus is unconstrained by gender boundaries. The issue of Sophia's gender fluidity has much to do with the tradition of Jewish literature, which reveals the tendency of Sophia—a female representation of God—to encroach on the male gender role of Yahweh. To illustrate, the Wisdom of Solomon construes Sophia as coterminous with Yahweh (cf. 7:22-26; 8:3; 9:4). However, Philo undertakes to subdue Sophia by replacing her with the Logos.

It is important to note that, in an effort to prevent Sophia from weakening patriarchal, Yahwistic monotheism, Philo represses her feminine traits in such a way as to remove her from the lower earthly realm and restrict her within the upper heavenly realm.[359] According to Philo, Sophia remains in the heavenly realm (ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ), but imparts a mere representation (ἀπεικόνισμα) and copy (μίμημα) of herself in the earthly realm (ἐπὶ γῆν) (*Quis Rerum*

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[358] On the relationship between Logos and Sophia in the strands of Jewish wisdom tradition and Philo's works, see Burton Lee Mack, *Logos Und Sophia: Untersuchungen Zur Weisheitstheologie Im Hellenistischen Judentum*, Studien Zur Umwelt Des Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973); Martin Scott, "Sophia and the Johannine Jesus" (Originally presented as the author's thesis (doctoral), Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 91-94. It is still a matter of dispute whether the FG relies only on Philo for the idea of the Logos. At a minimalist level, one can argue that Philo is one of the significant sources in understanding John's religious and philosophical context. For instance, it is quite interesting to note that Philo presents the Logos, the ambassador (πρεσβευτής) or suppliant (ἱκέτης) of God the Supreme Being, as mediating between God and humanity (Her. 205), just as John describes Jesus, the incarnation of the Logos, as mediating God and the world (κόσμος).

[359] *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1992), 60.

Divinarum Heres Sit 112). On her behalf, the Logos descends (κάτεισι) from the fountain of Sophia into the world (*De Somniis* 2.242).

Moreover, Philo goes even so far as to represent Sophia as male in an attempt to eliminate her femininity (*De Fuga et Inventione* 51-52). Nevertheless, this is problematic in that he confronts a grammatical error in Greek in terms of gender: the Logos is masculine, while Sophia is feminine. Given the grammatical demonstration of traits, there is a conflict of gender between Logos and Sophia. Oddly enough, Philo goes on to describe Sophia as performing masculine functions. Philo notes: "Let us, then, without paying any heed to the discrepancy in the names, say that the daughter of God, Wisdom, is both masculine and a father, sowing and begetting, in souls, learning, education, knowledge, prudence, good and laudable actions" (λέγωμεν οὖν μηδὲν τῆς ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι διαφορᾶς φροντίσαντες τὴν θυγατέρα τοῦ θεοῦ σοφίαν ἄῤῥενά τε καὶ πατέρα εἶναι σπείροντα καὶ γεννῶντα ἐν ψυχαῖς μάθησιν παιδείαν ἐπιστήμην φρόνησιν καλὰς καὶ ἐπαινετὰς πράξεις) (*De Fuga et Inventione* 52).[360]

In Philo's view, Sophia as the daughter of God and the father of virtues is to be seen as "female-passive in relationship to God and male-active in relationship to man."[361] Sharon H. Ringe argues: "The influence of platonic dualism further compels Philo to minimize the female imagery so powerfully present elsewhere in the wisdom traditions, including the assumption of many roles assigned elsewhere to the grammatically feminine σοφία by the grammatically

[360] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of the works of Philo are mine.
[361] Richard Arthur Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 62. In this light, the faculty of both "sowing" (σπείρειν) and "begetting" (γεννᾶν) relates to masculinity rather than femininity. Striking is Philo's view that the masculine image of sowing and the feminine image of begetting are all included in the fathering image of Sophia.

masculine λόγος."[362] Thus, Philo attempts to masculinize the nature of Sophia by replacing the female role of Sophia with the male role of Logos.

As noted above, Philo assimilates Sophia into the Logos with a view to sustaining a patriarchal and monotheistic aspect of God (cf. Wisdom of Solomon 9:1-2, 17). In this regard, Martin Scott rightly asserts:

> It becomes clear, then, that for Philo, Logos and Sophia are virtually synonymous in meaning and function, while at the same time retaining some individual characteristics……By this combination and exchange of categories, Philo manages both to push Wisdom speculation into new territory related to his philosophical environment and at the same time to maintain his Jewish identity within the confines of that faith's monotheistic structure.[363]

In other words, Philo interchanges Sophia and Logos within the blended traditions of Judaism and Platonic Philosophy. Given her status as in-between God and wo/man, Sophia can cross over gender boundaries without difficulty, thereby having a feminine as well as a masculine gender.[364] More specifically, Philo portrays Sophia as alternating between male and female rather than as bisexual (in the sense that s/he is both male and female simultaneously).

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[362] Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel*, 42.
[363] Scott, "Sophia and the Johannine Jesus," 93.
[364] Contra Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female*, 66. Baer notes: "For Philo, God is asexual, i.e., completely beyond or outside of the male-female polarity (66)." I disagree with his view that the deity (e.g., God, Logos, and Sophia) is asexual. Instead, I would argue that Philo presents Sophia as freely playing with gender parameters rather than simply transcending them.

The writings of Philo shed invaluable insight into the en-gendering of Jesus. Philo's works help to understand the background of the Johannine Gospel, a Hellenistic Jewish Gospel. In particular, readers can envision Jesus, the enfleshed Logos, as Sophia on a hidden level.[365] Since Jesus is unquestionably a male character, there would be a gender problem in looking upon him as both the masculine Logos and the feminine Sophia at the same time. Thus, the Johannine Gospel seeks to erase Jesus' femininity and stress his masculinity by dropping the Greek feminine term σοφία and stressing the Greek masculine term λόγος, because the latter is more fitting to his masculinity than the former.

It is worth remembering that both Philo and John have trouble in terms of constructing God's gender. The solution, for Philo, is to masculinize Sophia, the daughter of God, by rendering her into the father who produces values in human beings (*De Fuga et Inventione* 52). Similar to, but distinguishable from, Philo, John leaves out the feminine nature of Jesus as Sophia, thereby focusing on the masculine nature of Jesus as Logos. Martin Scott states:

> There is obviously a *gender problem* if Jesus the man is to be called Sophia incarnate, but at the same time, the author wants to be able to express the fact that this man is indeed the embodiment of Sophia. The term Logos offers itself as the most appropriate vehicle for making this expression, being at one and the same time an already established synonym for Sophia and a masculine term (emphasis added).[366]

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[365] Scott, "Sophia and the Johannine Jesus," 83-173. Cf. On Philo and John, A. W. Argyle, "Philo and the Fourth Gospel," *Expository Times* 63, no. 12 (1952); "The Logos of Philo: Personal or Impersonal?," *Expository Times* 65, no. 1 (1954); Thomas H. Tobin, "The Prologue of John and Hellenistic Jewish Speculation," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (1990).
[366] Scott, *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus*, 114.

Scott allows for the possibility that, while Jesus is portrayed as the Logos on the public level, he is also Sophia on the hidden level. Jesus as Sophia on the hidden level and Logos on the public level subtly, but fundamentally, transgresses the boundary of gender between the femininity of Sophia and the masculinity of Logos.[367] Simply put, the Gospel of John represents Jesus as the Logos in an attempt to conceal that Jesus is identifiable with Sophia.

However, there is similarity between Sophia and Jesus the Logos. Brown elaborates on this, noting: first, both Sophia and Jesus preexist (Proverbs 8:22-23; Sirach 24:9; Wisdom of Solomon 6:22; John 1:1; 17:5); second, both are presented as the light, in contrast to darkness (Proverbs 8:22; Wisdom of Solomon 7:26, 29-30; 8:13; Sirach 4:12; John 1:4, 5, 9); third, the motif of the acceptance and rejection is applicable to both (Wisdom of Solomon 7:27; Sirach 15:7; John 1:11-12); and lastly, both Sophia and Jesus descend from and return to heaven (Proverbs 8:31; Sirach 24:8; Baruch 3:37; Wisdom of Solomon 4:10; Enoch 42:2; John 1:14; 3:31; 6:38; 16:28; 6:62; 20:17).[368] Brown is correct in comparing John's Jesus, the Logos, with the Sophia traditions. He adamantly argues: "The evangelist has capitalized on an identification of Jesus with personified divine Wisdom as described in the OT."[369] I would go further by saying that the Gospel of John itself retains the traces of femininity under the hidden influence of the Sophia tradition in the construction of Jesus' gender identity.

With this in mind, we can discover Jesus' crossing of gender boundaries by his taking on feminine imagery relating to delivery. Like Sophia or the Logos as presented in the works of

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[367] My contention is that Jesus has masculine trait as Logos explicitly and feminine trait as Sophia implicitly. Jesus involves and goes beyond the limits of masculinity and femininity.
[368] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:CXXIII; Scott, "Sophia and the Johannine Jesus," 115-68.
[369] Cf. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:CXXII.

Philo, Jesus blurs the boundary between masculinity and femininity. Notably, the birthing image (John 16:21) applicable to Jesus hints at his fluid gender identity.[370] When Jesus explains his impending death to his disciples, he compares their pain to a woman's birth pangs during delivery, which turn into joy afterwards. In doing so, Jesus foreshadows his imminent passion and resurrection and implicitly identifies himself with a pregnant woman in labor.[371] Especially, Jesus' passion itself can be likened to the act of giving of birth to a child. Thus, Jesus, a male character, assumes a feminine role of giving birth through his death, which is compared to birth pangs.[372]

Here, one should recall that the image of begetting or birthing (γεννᾶν) is used prominently throughout the Gospel of John. It remains ambiguous whether the Greek verb γεννᾶν relates to the act of begetting by a father or the act of birthing or bearing by a mother.[373] As Maarten J. J. Menken argues, the important point is that the agency of the Greek verb γεννᾶν determines its meaning between begetting and birthing: if the agent is male, it has the meaning of begetting; if the agent is female, it has the meaning of birthing.[374]

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[370] On John's gender fluidity, see Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Queering Closets and Perverting Desires: Cross-Examining John's Engendering and Transgendering Word across Different Worlds," in *They Were All Together in One Place?* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 251-88.

[371] On this, see McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*, 383. It is worth remembering that the experience of a pregnant woman in a risky situation can be comparable to a seed that dies to produce many seeds (12:24). Moreover, Jesus compares his own death to the death of a seed. On the metaphor of a seed and a woman in labor, see Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, 108-09.

[372] Ford, *Redeemer Friend and Mother: Salvation in Antiquity and in the Gospel of John*, 164-67.

[373] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:130. Brown recognizes the use of the Greek verb γεννᾶν in connection with both fatherhood and motherhood, which means begetting by a man and birth from a woman, respectively. However, he leans toward begetting rather than birthing in the Gospel of John.

[374] Maarten J. J. Menken, ""Born of God" or "Begotten by God"?: A Translation Problem in the Johannine Writings," in *Jesus, Paul, and Early Christianity: Studies in Honour of Henk Jan De Jonge*, ed. Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, Harm W. Hollander, and Johannes Tromp (Leiden: Brill, 2008),

On the one hand, the prologue is bent on the paternal image of begetting, based on the relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son in John 1:12-13. All believers are given the power to become God's children (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι), that is, children begotten of God (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν). It is important to notice that the Greek phrase ἐκ θεοῦ stresses that God is a source of origin, which intimates the image of conception rather than that of birth. This suggests that God, as a creative male agent, begets his children. On the other hand, as with the case of John 16:21, in close connection with the image of death and rebirth in John 12:24, the Johannine Jesus, as a supposedly female creative agent, is exposed to the moment of feminine birthing, which entails the jeopardy of death.

Remarkably, Menken generalizes the translation of the Greek phrase ἔκ τινος γεννᾶσθαι in the Johannine Gospel as meaning "to be begotten by" in the Hellenistic context. He goes even so far as to state: "In both the Johannine writings and Philo, there is on the divine level only one generating principle, represented as male and begetting."[375] Given Jesus' gender ambiguity, I, however, disagree with his view, instead asserting that Jesus as incarnate Sophia on the hidden level becomes an agent to bear God's children.

Hence, I argue that maternal imagery is more predominant than paternal imagery in the Gospel as it concerns Jesus. To illustrate, Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus centers on the issue of "being born again or above" (γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν) (John 3:3-8). As Nicodemus implies, the state of being born again in the mother's womb is more likely to relate to the feminine

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337-43. See also Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 206; Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*, 181: n. 407.

[375] Menken, ""Born of God" or "Begotten by God"?: A Translation Problem in the Johannine Writings," 343.

imagery of birthing.[376] As can be seen below, "being born of water and the Spirit" (γεννηῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος) has to do with Jesus' female generative agency of bearing God's children (John 3:5). Jesus, disguised as Sophia, has the faculty of giving birth to God's children. All things considered, God the Father on the public level has the masculine imagery of begetting, whereas Jesus the Son—masked as Sophia—on the hidden level has the feminine imagery of birthing. Despite his performance of a masculine role as a male character on the public level, Jesus' performance of a feminine role as Sophia on the hidden level permits him to take the liberty to cross the boundaries between masculinity and femininity.

More than any other scene, the crucifixion witnesses to the birthing image of Jesus and his gender-crossing by playing a feminine role. Jesus, a male Galilean Jew, takes on female imagery by en-gendering "children of God" (τέκνα θεοῦ) through his own death. Jesus' effusion of blood and water from his side (αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ) recall the blood and water discharged by a woman during delivery (John 19:34; cf. 7:37-39; 1 John 5:6; 4 Maccabees 9:2).[377] As 1 John 5:6-8 suggests, there is a connection between the birth from water and Spirit (γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος) (John 3:5) and the blood and water (αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ) issuing from Jesus' side (John 19:34).[378] Taken together, Jesus' blood and water hints at his symbolic agency of birthing

[376] On John's use of birth imagery in general, see Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, 168-88.
[377] On the symbolic meaning of blood and water, see Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel*, 127. For theological reflection on blood and water, see also Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 200-03. For Koester, the blood and water gushing from the wound of Jesus' side are symbolic of the humanity and divinity of Jesus, respectively.
[378] Cf. Ford, *Redeemer Friend and Mother: Salvation in Antiquity and in the Gospel of John*, 195. As Ford suggests, it would be intriguing to notice that there is the theme of "the birth from above" (3:3, 7), as embodied in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus (3:1-16), which becomes complete with Nicodemus' reappearance (19:39) in a macrostructure of *inclusio*.

God's children through his death.[379] Interestingly, Jesus, a male character, takes the place of his mother's female role of birthing by himself en-gendering God's children. In this connection, Jesus transgresses the gender boundary between masculinity and femininity by assuming the female role of birthing.

In sum, Jesus, as a male character, crosses over the lines of gender that divide femininity from masculinity by performing the feminine role of childbirth.[380] What is more, Jesus' ambiguous performance ultimately turns out to destabilize gender binaries in such a way as to underscore fluidity. Jesus as Logos and Sophia disrupts the stark binary between masculinity and femininity. The birthing story in the crucifixion crosses the threshold between Jesus' masculinity as Logos and his femininity as Sophia. Jesus goes so far as to cross the boundary that separates life and death on the symbolic dimension. It is paradoxical that the death of Jesus causes the birth of the Johannine community. Therefore, Jesus becomes an ambiguous character in terms of his gender performance and its impact on the Johannine community.

In the long run, Jesus' ambiguity undercuts the exclusivism that arises from binary thinking and moves toward diverse thinking. In particular, Jesus as Sophia highlights the

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[379] Cf. Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel*, 121-31. In spite of agreement on female imagery, it is controversial whether such imagery stresses matrilineage or patrilineage. Adeline Fehribach charges the FG with the androcentric tendency to transplant birthing imagery from a female characteristic to a male characteristic. As she suggests, this birth motif in the FG derives from Gen 2:21-22, which describes the creation of the first woman out of the side (πλευρά) of the first man, Adam. Like the birth story of the first woman, the birth story in John 19:34 is one of the examples of "male appropriation of the female generative ability (126)."

[380] On the masculinity of the Johannine Jesus in Roman imperial context, cf. Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man : Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 143-57; 75-84.

feminine value of ambiguity and diversity reenacted in permeable boundaries.[381] Froma I. Zeitlin is to the point here: "Through the natural workings of the feminine body, the woman experiences herself as a diversity in unity. Biological constraints subject her to flux and change and put her at odds with herself, creating an internal *dustropos harmonia*, in short, a "natural" oxymoron of conflict and ambiguity."[382] As such, Jesus' embodied femininity creates a more inclusive community wherein a demarcation between insiders and outsiders is obfuscated.

4. Conclusion: The Implications of Otherness *Beyond*

Thus far, I have pursued a narrative construction of the mother of Jesus, the Beloved Disciple, and Jesus with a focus on the scenes (John 19:25-27; 19:34) immediately before and after the crucifixion of Jesus. On the one hand, I see both the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as crossing the boundaries of race/ethnicity through their voluntary engagement with Jesus' instruction to adopt each other as mother and son, respectively. Keeping in mind that the mother of Jesus is a Galilean Jewish woman and the Beloved Disciple is arguably a Judean Jewish man, such a reciprocal entrustment indicates the transgression of racial/ethnic sociocultural norms by acceptance of each other as part of a new family of God. On the other hand, I see Jesus—Sophia incarnate—as transgressing gender constraints by symbolically re-bearing the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple as children of God. Therefore, the mother of Jesus, the Beloved Disciple, and Jesus all become transgressive characters through their ambiguous racial/ethnic and gender performances.

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[381] J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 145-47. J. Cheryl Exum construes the clash between patriarchal and matriarchal ideology as that between a desire for unity and diversity.
[382] Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature*, 237.

Paradoxically, such ambiguity provides ample space to both sustain and exceed the differences between the three characters. Within the Johannine community, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple remain outsiders to Jesus due to their gender and racial/ethnic differences. To put it simply, the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple are *internal others* to Jesus, representing the otherness from within the community. Through his death on the cross, Jesus creates the Johannine community by uniting them into a new family of God. They all cross the boundaries of differences with the aim of unity. However, the crucial point is that those differences are not erased but sustained, for the sake of solidarity. The end result is that the Johannine community becomes a hybrid, heterogeneous community aimed at unity across differences.

The Johannine community becomes both a multi-racial/ethnic and gender-inclusive community. The community is multi-racial/ethnic in that it comprises Judean Jews, Galilean Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks. In addition, the community is gender-inclusive in consideration of the active gender roles performed by female characters and Jesus as Sophia. Thus, the otherness of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple constructs a transcendent otherness, which goes far beyond dualism in affirming the value of diversity in unity.

When read from a deconstructive postcolonial perspective, the Johannine community's grounding in hybridity and difference has implications for the stability of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire cultivates discord within and between racial/ethnic minority groups in order to circumvent any potential uprisings. Jesus' request to unite different racial/ethnic groups into a community is a savvy maneuver against a Roman rule grounded in a hierarchical and exclusivistic structure. Jesus' gender performance as Sophia facilitates the unity of different ethnic groups and thus gives rise to the potential for resistance. Thus, the Johannine community's

embrace of a theology of diversity ultimately poses a threat to the Roman supremacy that espouses the ideology of homogeneity.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: OTHERNESS, IDENTITY, AND SOLIDARITY

In marked contrast to a hierarchical dichotomy between self and other, the present study pursues a dialogical construction of the otherness of minor characters and the identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Deeply entrenched in a dialectical framework of inclusion and exclusion, the recent trend of Johannine scholarship has been to perpetuate positive portrayals of Jesus on the one hand and negative portrayals of the minor characters on the other hand. Read in this light, Jesus has been portrayed as a superior, omniscient, and omnipotent character, with minor characters as inferior, uncomprehending, and powerless. At the root of such portrayals lies the belief that the Johannine dualistic Weltanschauung warrants such a sharp differentiation between Jesus and minor characters. This study has argued, to the contrary, that John's minor characters actually challenge and destabilize Johannine hierarchical dualism within a both/and framework.

Through an analysis of the narrative construction of characters by way of a deconstructive postcolonial lens, this study envisions the otherness of John's minor characters as variously ambiguous, internal, external, and transcendent. That is to say, the minor characters divulge the multifaceted nature of otherness in the Gospel, beyond the limits of traditional scholarship: otherness *in-between* (Nicodemus), otherness *from within* (the Samaritan woman), otherness *from without* (the Jews and Pilate), and otherness *beyond* (the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple). This reworking of otherness advances a new understanding of Jesus and the *others*, as represented by the minor characters. The end result is that the minor characters play a

major role in deepening our understanding of the identity of Jesus by means of their polyvalent alterity.

1. Summary of Findings

Chapter 1 presents a brief critical survey of the representation of the minor characters in modern Johannine scholarship. Its goal is to forge an interpretive framework through which to take a fresh look at the otherness of minor characters and the identity of Jesus. After examining a variety of critical approaches (historical, sociocultural, literary (-theological), ideological), I conclude that a combination of narrative criticism (as method) and deconstructive postcolonial criticism (as critical optic) is conducive to a new construction of the minor characters, one that aims at wrestling with John's dualistic worldview as a literary and ideological production.

In chapter 2, employing Judith Butler's theory of performativity, I construct the otherness of Nicodemus as variegated—ambiguous, ambivalent, and subversive—through the dramatic unfolding of the story (John 3:1-5; 7:45-52; 19:38-42), hence resisting binary oppositions, such as insider/outsider, believer/unbeliever, and understanding/misunderstanding. An elusive character, Nicodemus, crosses the borderlines among the Jewish, Christian, Roman worlds in such a way that he undermines the hierarchy of powers. In turn, Jesus lays bare his double identity: between heaven and earth, between Galilean and Jew, and between ruled Jew and ruling Jew. As a consequence, Jesus turns out to be a more fluid character than Johannine scholarship has envisioned. Eventually, the otherness *in-between* as presented by Nicodemus disrupts the starkly dualistic worldview of John's Gospel.

Chapter 3 delves into the internal otherness of the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42; cf. 8:48-49). Using Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry, I portray her as an active and resistant character: in part, because she is keen to hunt for the identity of a strange traveler, Jesus; in part, because she is bold enough to mimic what Jesus says and does in an anti-colonial sense. Consequently, Jesus becomes an ambivalent character in relation to his racial-ethnic and political identity in the sense that he switches back and forth between Jewish and Samaritan identity, between imperial and anti-imperial identity. Thus, the Samaritan woman's otherness blurs and destabilizes the boundary drawn between Samaritans and Jews, between colonizers and colonized. Consequently, the otherness *from within* proves unfixable within a binaristic framework.

In Chapter 4, drawing heavily on Giorgio Agamben's theory of biopolitics, I demonstrate that the external otherness of Pilate and the Jews, as most powerful minor characters, inverts their power relations with Jesus, a most powerless major character, in the trial narrative scene (John 18:28-19:16a). First, Pilate, the representative of the earthly sovereignty, drastically transforms himself from a powerful to a powerless character, exposed to the threat from Jesus, the representative of the heavenly sovereignty. Second, the Jews become an ambivalent character in negotiating between the Roman sovereignty and the Jewish sovereignty in order to put Jesus to death. Finally, Jesus—a bare life confronted with the fuzzy zone between the earthly and heavenly sovereignties and between the Jewish and Roman sovereignties—emerges as a subversive, albeit liminal, character, in resistance against the earthly powers. Therefore, the otherness *from without* derived from Pilate and the Jews reveals, given such a zone of indistinguishability, its liability to Jesus' decentering power.

Chapter 5 explores the transcendent otherness of the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple in the crucifixion scene (John 19:25-27, 34), employing Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of double-voicedness. A closer reading indicates that the mother of Jesus—a Galilean Jew—and the Beloved Disciple—a Judean Jew—traverse their racial/ethnic borderlines in such a way as to become God's offspring, a new race/ethnicity, while at the same time maintaining their perceived race/ethnicity. In doing so, Jesus also transgresses the gender lines between masculinity (as Logos) and femininity (as Sophia) by taking on the symbolic role of bearing the children of God. Jesus goes on to transcend the line between life and death in the sense that his death brings about a new birth of the Johannine community. The Johannine community generated by Jesus' fluid gender performance becomes a heterogeneous, hybrid community, inviting people of different backgrounds, racial/ethnic or gendered, to become part of the community. No doubt, the Johannine community is a multi-racial/ethnic and gender-inclusive community. However, one should remember that the boundaries between race/ethnicity and gender are not eradicated, but rather perpetuated for the purpose of establishing solidarity across differences within the Johannine community. All things considered, the otherness *beyond* as symbolized by the mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple ultimately undermines the ideology of homogeneity, as enforced by Roman supremacy, through upholding unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

Thus, a narrative reconstruction of minor characters from a deconstructive postcolonial perspective invites the readers to plumb the abyss of otherness in John's Gospel beyond the parameters of binarism. My variegated representation of otherness—ambiguous, internal, external, transcendent—leads to a paradoxical conclusion: the role of John's minor characters is by no means *minor* but rather *major*, insofar as they fundamentally challenge the Johannine

dualistic *Weltanschauung* in the Jewish and Roman imperial context. By subverting the binaristic thinking embedded in the Gospel of John, I demonstrate that a more subtle reading of the interactions of the minor characters with Jesus, the major character, destabilize their negative portrayals, particularly in consideration of the colonial-imperial context.

2. A Fresh Look at Interactions between Jesus and the *Others*

The various constructions of John's minor characters have yielded a variety of crucial insights regarding their interactions with Jesus, the major character. I should like to emphasize the following: (1) the performative, dialogical, and transformative aspect of characterization; (2) the agency of minor characters; and (3) the porous boundaries of binarism between major and minor characters. It is my conviction that a fresh understanding of minor characters can culminate in a fresh understanding of the major character, Jesus.

First, the present work establishes that there is no such thing as essential identity as it pertains to the building of a character, whether it be major or minor, in John's Gospel. The reason is that all characters perform their identities throughout the Gospel, which entails the readers' construction of characters in context. That is to say, characterization is performative at a textual and readerly level. In addition, character building involves the mutual interactions between major and minor characters. Just as Jesus influences minor characters, so do minor characters influence Jesus. Contrary to the tendency of recent Johannine scholarship, my project concentrates on the impact of minor characters on Jesus rather than vice versa. As a corollary, each and every character is liable to transformation in endless interactions with other characters and readers.

Second, this work calls for the recovery of the suppressed voice and agency of minor characters in their relationships with the major character, Jesus. The minor characters are presented as marginalized in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, and so forth. For instance, Nicodemus, the Jews, the Beloved Disciple of Jesus, the mother of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, and Pilate reveal different racial/ethnic backgrounds—Judean Jewish, Galilean Jewish, Samaritan, and Roman. More specifically, the Samaritan woman and the mother of Jesus embody the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender. Drawing heavily on cultural theory by Butler, Bhabha, Agamben, and Bakhtin, to name but a few, I can reconstruct the suppressed voices of minor characters, while deconstructing the centering voice of Jesus. Such a deconstructive and postcolonial reading of the minor characters makes it possible to recognize that the minor characters have the creative agency to resist the hierarchical dualism inscribed in the Gospel of John.

Lastly, the work highlights the blurred boundaries between major and minor characters. In opposition to the assumption that Jesus, as the major character, influences the minor characters in a one-sided manner, my work argues that the minor characters influence Jesus in such a way as to show their suppressed but hidden agency. If this is the case, Jesus himself turns out to be an ambiguous character, switching back and forth between the ruled and the ruler, Jews and Samaritans, heavenly and earthly realms, and masculinity (as Logos) and femininity (as Sophia). One should remember that, near the end of the Gospel, Jesus becomes a more liminal character, who is in pursuit of the creation of a hybrid Johannine community. In consequence, it would be arbitrary to demarcate between major and minor characters at a theological level, since the minor characters can play a major role in deconstructing and reconstructing the identity of

Jesus. It is through the reconstruction of minor characters that the readers can gain fresh insights into Jesus' identity.

3. Implications for Biblical Interpretation

Now I would like to take into consideration the implications of the current project for biblical interpretation. Specifically, I want to emphasize the significance of the concept of otherness for critical analysis in other areas of inquiry—politics, ethics, and theology. In the first place, the political dimension of otherness leads us to explore the power dynamics between self and other within a colonial-imperial framework.[383] In particular, the postcolonial optic helps to scrutinize the interactions between colonizers and colonized in the Roman imperial system. It is, however, worth remembering that a resisting appeal to a dualistic framework of colonizer/colonized results in an inversion of power relationships, thereby intensifying the centeredness of the self and the marginality of the other. In order to wrestle with the dualistic exclusivism entangled with centeredness of self and marginality of other, it is imperative to rethink the dynamics of colonial power beyond binaristic thinking. A deconstructive postcolonial approach can tackle a dualistic worldview in the name of the liberation of marginalized others.

In the second place, the ethical dimension of otherness calls for the recovery of the voices of others in biblical texts and interpretive communities.[384] As already discussed, many biblical figures—such as Jews, Samaritans, women, children, the disabled, the poor, and so forth— have been marginalized through the history of biblical interpretation. Clearly, the voices of the

[383] Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity*.
[384] Cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: Decentering Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107, no. 1 (1988); Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity*.

marginal groups have been overwhelmed by the voices of the dominant group. Still, given the double-voiced nature of biblical texts, one can discover the traces of oppressed voices in the texts, besides those of oppressing voices. In order to recover such voices, one should interpret biblical texts from the margins. As such, a reading from the margins is taken to mean an engaged reading by interpretive communities that have withstood marginalization, either direct or indirect, in contemporary society. In doing so, the voices of others in biblical texts and discourses would no longer remain peripheral, but rather would become central, to biblical interpretation.

In the last place, the theological dimension of otherness espouses a theology of inclusion in pursuit of human dignity.[385] In an increasingly globalized world, Christianity today witnesses the proliferation of cultural antagonistic forces that fear rising diversity. What is worse, biblical interpretation is, consciously or unconsciously, exposed to the risk of disseminating negative representation of cultural others—such as women, foreigners, the poor, and so forth—in a dominant society. For example, the otherness of the Jews tends to be negatively exaggerated in order to reinforce Christian identity. Nonetheless, it is not to be forgotten that Christian identity can become all the more Christian when Christians embrace, rather than exclude, differences. Biblical interpretation oriented toward otherness can lead to inclusive theology, which embraces *others* in both the biblical world and the real world.

4. Suggestions for Today's Church: Exclusion, Inclusion, and Liminality

The time has come for us to consider the repercussions of the present project for today's church— in an increasingly globalized world where we can encounter the so-called *others*—with

[385] See also Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

the aim of fostering a deeper understanding of otherness vulnerable to the negative effects of stereotypes by a dominant group. The Holocaust during the Second World War has alerted us to the dangers of negative images of our neighbors, namely, Jews. In addition, we has thus far observed a variety of genocides all over the world in connection to the anxiety caused by otherness derived from race, ethnicity, religion, and politics, to name only a few. Wrestling with the negative conceptualization of otherness, I have demonstrated a multi-layered approach to otherness beyond a binary imagination: otherness *in-between*, otherness *from within*, otherness *from without*, and otherness *beyond*. Drawing on the insights gained from this reworking of otherness as ambiguous, internal, external, and transcendent, the aim of this section is to examine the possibilities of building a more inclusive church committed to the making of a tolerant society through the example of the Johannine community.[386]

To do so, I will first examine the inclusive characteristics of the Jewish community and Roman imperial society generated by excluding the Johannine community. Second, I will investigate the inclusive nature of the Johannine community created by being excluded from the dominant societies. Third, I will handle the issue of exclusionary forces operative within the heterogeneous Johannine community. Fourth, I will consider inclusive gestures beyond exclusive practices in the Johannine community. Fifth, I will assess the given four paradigms to build a more inclusive community: excluding (or exclusive) inclusivity; excluded inclusivity; exclusivity within inclusivity; inclusivity across exclusivity. Sixth, I will construct the Johannine community as a liminal community within and without. Finally, I will propose a liminal community as the

[386] On the issue of inclusion and exclusion in the FG, see R. Alan Culpepper, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," in *Word, Theology, and Community in John*, ed. John Painter, R. Alan Culpepper, and Fernando F. Segovia (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2002), 85-108.

best model for a more inclusive church, which can overcome exclusive forces both inside and outside the community.

Excluding (or Exclusive) Inclusivity

Basically, otherness indeed matters in the formation of boundaries between the in-group and the out-group. In a dialectical framework, the in-group establishes its own group identity by excluding any out-group from its own realm.[387] The formation of the in-group stands in juxtaposition to the formation of the out-group; inversely, the out-group is an invention running parallel to the in-group. At this point, the otherness of the out-group serves to draw the borderline between the in-group and the out-group. The in-group portrays the otherness of the out-group negatively in order to buttress a belief of its own dominance over any out-group. Thus, the in-group exercises the power of "exclusive inclusivity," i.e., exclusion-oriented inclusivity.[388]

If this is the case, the FG presents an exclusive inclusivity through the examples of the dominant societies—the Jewish community and Roman imperial society—, which exclude the Johannine community from their own realms. Especially, the otherness *from without*—namely, external otherness—in chapter 4 describes the Jewish community and Roman imperial society as the dominant in-groups and the Johannine community as the marginalized out-group. Through using the powers of exclusion, the Jewish community and Roman imperial society within themselves form inclusivity exclusive of the Johannine community.

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[387] On Exclusivity as a consequence of otherness, see Dalit Rom-Shiloni, *Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts between the Exiles and the People Who Remained (6th-5th Centuries B.C.E.)* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 27-29.

[388] *Exclusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts between the Exiles and the People Who Remained (6th-5th Centuries B.C.E.)* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1-30.

Excluded Inclusivity

In turn, there is another type of inclusivity diametrically opposite to this excluding or exclusive inclusivity: excluded inclusivity. The out-group within itself establishes its own identity by being excluded by the dominant in-group. Let us take an example from the Johannine community. Discriminated against by the in-groups of the Jewish community and Roman imperial society, the Johannine community creates its own community as a counterpart of those dominant in-groups. Through the process of marginalization, the Johannine community experiences the formation of group identity as an out-group isolated from the oppressive in-groups. R. Alan Culpepper notes: "At least in its historical context, that of a struggling community separated from the synagogue and establishing its own self-identity, John advocates a sharp social exclusivism based on one's response to the revelation that has come through Jesus."[389] As a consequence, the Johannine community in itself contains excluded inclusivity, i.e., excludedness-oriented inclusivity.

Exclusivity within Inclusivity

However, a closer examination of the dynamics between the in-group and the out-group hints at subdivisions of both exclusion and inclusion occurring even within the out-group. In the first place, we can detect substantial inner exclusivity even in the out-group due to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, social status, political affiliation, religious belief and practice, and so forth. Generally, even in seemingly homogeneous groups, there is always some differentiation, which could be misused and abused as the rationale for discrimination against *others* within the

[389] Culpepper, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," 105.

group. Noticeably, exclusionary forces remain operative constantly even in the marginalized out-group too.

In this light, the Johannine community seems to be entirely inclusive but, in reality, is exclusive within that excluded community. To illustrate, there are racial-ethnic differences between Judean Jews, Galilean Jews, Diasporic Jews, Samaritans, and gentiles, within the Johannine community. In addition, there are gender differences between the males and females in the community. Specifically, the otherness *from within* in chapter 3 shows racial-ethnic and gender differences between the Samaritan woman (as a Samaritan female character) and Jesus (as a Galilean Jewish male character). This internal otherness indicates inner conflicts between Jews and Samaritans, and between men and women within the Johannine community. We can also take another example from the otherness *in-between* in chapter 2, which brings to light racial-ethnic and religious tensions between Nicodemus (as a Judean Jew) and Jesus (as a Galilean Jew). This ambiguous otherness signals a potentially internal dispute between Judeans Jews and Galilean Jews in the formation of the Johannine community. Thus, the Johannine community grapples with the issue of exclusivity within inclusivity.

Inclusivity across Exclusivity

In the second place, we can discover the inclusive tendencies of the out-group going beyond the limits of exclusive powers dormant within. Given the potential presence of exclusive forces stemming from varied differences, a group can make painstaking efforts to build a healthy community by being tolerant of—rather than discriminatory against—differences widespread among its members. By establishing inclusivity across exclusivity, the marginalized out-group can thus put into force solidarity across differences within its own community.

The otherness *beyond* in chapter 5 substantiates the case where unison is established, while maintaining racial-ethnic and gender differences. For instance, the mother of Jesus (as a Galilean female Jew) and the Beloved Disciple (as a Judean male Jew) simultaneously maintain and cross their gender and racial/ethnic borderlines. Jesus also negotiates between masculinity (as Logos) and femininity (as Sophia). Through Jesus' symbolic life-giving death, the Johannine community becomes a hybrid community, which invites people of diverse backgrounds to become members of its community. The FG presents Jesus as "accepting persons from every segment of society and the calling for the unity of the church."[390] This transcendent otherness indicates a more inclusive community, at least in terms of race/ethnicity and gender. In this way, Johannine community effectuates inclusivity beyond exclusivity.

Assessment of Four Paradigms for an Inclusive Community

Of the four different paradigms, I adamantly claim that the paradigm of inclusivity across exclusivity will best lead to an inclusive community devoted to the making of a more tolerant society. To illustrate, the paradigm of excluding inclusivity demonstrates that the dominant group splits from the marginalized group by using the rhetoric of inclusion internally and the rhetoric of exclusion externally. On the contrary, the paradigm of excluded inclusivity indicates the opposite side of the paradigm of excluding inclusivity in that the marginalized group also isolates itself from the dominant group. Surprisingly, the paradigm of exclusivity within inclusivity reveals that the mechanisms of exclusion are not merely an external problem between the dominant and marginalized groups but are also an internal problem within both groups. It is the paradigm of inclusivity across exclusivity that conscientiously challenges the mechanisms of

[390] "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," 105-06.

exclusion within and without the community. Therefore, it is imperative that today's church should adopt the paradigm of inclusivity across exclusivity in order to become a more inclusive community.

The Johannine Community as a Liminal Community Within and Without

To take this argument a step further, I also assert that the paradigm of inclusivity across exclusivity comes into effect only as long as the Johannine community remains a liminal community where the borders between inclusion and exclusion are crossable both within and without the community. On the one hand, the Johannine community is, in and of itself, a liminal community because such boundary markers as race/ethnicity and gender become so negotiable through the generative agency of Jesus as Sophia that the members of the Johannine community all equally become children of God. The Johannine community is thus a community in which the differences between its members become traversable for the sake of solidarity within the community.

On the other hand, the Johannine community also creates a liminal space in its relationships with the dominant groups, both Jewish and Roman. The community does not passively isolate itself from them, but rather actively intervenes in them by challenging the mechanisms of exclusion arising between the dominant and marginalized groups. The Johannine community resists the dominant society, not in the sense that it seeks the reversal of the social order, but rather in the sense that it crosses the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Just as John's Jesus exists in this world but belongs to the other world, so does the Johannine community reside in earthly sovereignty but belong to heavenly sovereignty. The Johannine community nullifies powers of exclusion between the dominant and marginalized groups by

complying with heavenly sovereignty. Taken together, the Johannine community becomes a liminal community that subverts the mechanisms of exclusion both inside and outside.

The Church as a Liminal Community in Solidarity with Others

When all is said and done, I insist that the church of today should play its significant role as a liminal community based on the paradigm of inclusivity across exclusivity in order to create a more inclusive society. First of all, the church has to seek to get over its potential internal conflicts while paying due respect to the differences between its members, especially in a mode of solidarity. Second, the church must be well aware of its intervening task in the dominant society by resisting earthly mechanisms of exclusion. In the long run, the church should commit itself to the making of a more tolerant and inclusive society. The church as a liminal community can lead us to a society enduring differences in the name of unity facilitated by Jesus' crossing of social boundaries.[391]

4. Concluding Remarks

The present work has examined the otherness of the minor characters in John's Gospel in order to reconstruct the identity of Jesus. Throughout, the alterity of minor characters helps to fathom Jesus' identity in a fresh manner. In contrast to the scholarly tendency to exclude the concept of otherness, my research explores biblical hermeneutics for inclusive theology, with the aim of enhancing *tolerance of others* in a rapidly globalizing world by exploring otherness in

[391] "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," 90.

solidarity across differences. My hope is that this work will strengthen a multi-ethnic and gender-inclusive perspective that is conducive to human dignity and social justice.

In the broad ecclesial context, my work intends to contribute to reimagining the relationship between self and others in religious life by stressing the mutually formative, performative, and transformative nature of religious identity, along with the crucial significance of granting agency and dignity to those Christians previously marginalized in Anglo-American religious discourse and practice. First, the work points to the fact that the identity of the self in relation to religion is reciprocally formed, performed, and transformed in unceasing interaction with others. As a result, Christians should recognize the others as part of their social and religious lives, thereby bringing more hospitality into the church. Second, it stresses the agency of marginalized Christians with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, and class by wrestling with the politics, ethics, and theology of otherness in order to enrich the diversity of the church today and sustain the inherent dignity of all God's people. In doing so, my efforts at re-envisioning the relationship between self and others will, I hope, foster *tolerance of difference* among Christians and their institutions in the expectation that diversity and justice will flourish among all the populations that make up Global Christianity.

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