

Drew University

**Slave-Girls Speaking Truth:
Slavery and Gender in Luke-Acts and Other Ancient Narratives**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on three female slaves—characters found in Luke 22, Acts 12, and Acts 16. Using Bakhtinian theory, feminist hermeneutics, and Kristeva’s intertextuality, I analyze these characters and argue they are “truth-tellers.” I suggest that Luke’s female slaves function in a unique way within the narrative, as outsiders to the action of the main plot, because of their gender and status. As outsiders, the slave-girls are in a position to see what other characters do not, truth that illuminates aspects of Lukan discipleship and the apostolic message. The first slave-girl that I explore is found in Luke 22, within the narrative of Peter’s denial. As an unnamed slave she is an outsider to the other characters in the story, yet, she is the first to recognize Peter and question him concerning his relationship to Jesus. Ultimately, the narrative juxtaposes the themes of truth and deception through her gaze, outsiderness, position in the light of the fire, and her perceptive statement. The second slave, Rhoda, comically enters the carnivalesque scene found in Acts 12 disguised in the trope of the *servus currens*. I argue that Rhoda functions in an ambivalent way--humorously as a *servus currens* and seriously as a truth-teller. The third and final slave-girl disrupts the narrative of Acts 16 with her loud voice and perseverant following of Paul and Silas. This female slave is often juxtaposed with Lydia, who is the “positive” example while the slave is Luke’s “negative” example. My analysis overturns this juxtaposition, as I show that the slave-girl’s outsiderness allows her to speak truth, while Lydia’s insiderness limits her participation in the narrative. Together, these three slaves interrupt the narrative of Luke-Acts with their hierarchal reversals and words of truth. They each come into contact with free male apostles, Peter

and Paul; their words disrupt the representations of the apostles. Their positionality enable them to see truth and the shifts of focalization that occur in the narrative highlight their words. In this way, these three slave-girls are sites of hidden truth, and their voices and roles are vital to the narrative of Luke-Acts.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: (RE)TURNING TO TRUTH

“And now, reader, I come to a period in my unhappy life, which I would gladly forget if I could.... It pains me to tell you of it; but I have promised to tell you the truth, and I will do it honestly, let it cost me what it may.”

~Harriet Ann Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Acts 16:16-18 tells the story of a slave-girl,¹ a παιδίσκη, who inserts herself into the narrative of Acts, shouting words of truth regardless of the outcome.² Paul and Silas are travelling in Philippi when a female slave with a divining spirit follows them, declaring repeatedly: “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation” (Acts 16:17). Paul is annoyed by the constant testimony from this possessed girl and eventually exorcizes the spirit from her. The irony is that the slave’s testimony is actually true, even as she has a “spirit of the python” within her. In fact, a closer look at her words in this narrative reveals that this slave-girl is a mouthpiece for both Lukan theology and Roman ideologies. This female slave overturns expected

¹ The word παιδίσκη is a diminutive of the word παῖς, meaning “child,” but also “slave.” It is commonly used in early Christian literature, and in ancient Greek literature in general, to mean a female slave, usually a domestic slave. For this dissertation I translate it as “slave-girl” or “female slave.” When referring to a slave, παῖς does not limit the age of the slave. The connection between children and slaves is a result of the pervasive belief in antiquity that slaves were viewed as property and were unable to reason, thus they were often referred to in a similar way as children. For a full discussion of this word as well as its development and use within ancient Greece, see: Mark Golden, “Pais, ‘Child’ and ‘Slave,’” *L’Antiquite Classique* 54 (1985): 91–104.

² Richard I. Pervo, “Slave Girl Healed of a Spirit,” in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, ed. Carol L. Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross Shepard Kraemer (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 464.

hierarchies and, through her position as an “outsider” functions as a focalizer within Acts; she is a truth-teller in this pivotal part of Luke’s narrative.

Yet the slave-girl from Acts 16 is not the first of her gender and status to function as a truth-teller in the narrative of Luke-Acts. Peter encounters a slave-girl (also a παιδίσκη) in Luke 22:54-62, when he denies Christ, and again in Acts 12:1-17 after he miraculously escapes from prison and goes to Mary’s house in Jerusalem. Both of these slave-girls also speak words of truth within Luke-Acts, even as other characters within the narrative do not believe their statements. In antiquity, slaves are typically represented as bodies that do not tell the truth, except through coercion or torture. Yet, three female slaves within Luke’s narrative emerge as truth-tellers without coercion. Why do these characters, doubly marginalized as outsiders within their society, know the truth? Why are these truth-tellers enslaved? How do the declarations of these slave-girls function within the narrative as a whole?

This dissertation addresses these important questions through a Bakhtinian feminist reading of these Lukan narratives and an intertextual exploration of female slaves in other ancient narratives. Utilizing Bakhtinian theory, narratology, and feminist hermeneutics, I highlight the dialogue inherent within the text to show the way these three truth-telling slave-girls insert their voices into Lukan discourse. Through this literary dialogism, the voices of the slave-girls of Luke-Acts surface in this polyphonic text. Using Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality, I read the stories found in Luke 22, Acts 12, and Acts 16 alongside other ancient narratives including several Greek novels and apocryphal Acts of Apostles. I argue that Luke’s female slaves function in a unique way

within the narrative, as outsiders to the action of the main plot, because of their gender and status. Because of their outsideness, the slave-girls are in a position to see what other characters do not—the truth of discipleship and the apostolic message. For this reason Bakhtin’s concept of dialogic truth forms a necessary foundation for this dissertation.

In this chapter, I show how dialogic truth surfaces through multiple voices conversing, even as they appear to be in opposition. When scholars debate concerning a particular issue, such as the role of women in the gospel of Luke, the dialogue itself becomes part of the search for dialogic truth, especially in interpreting texts such as Luke-Acts, which intentionally incorporates multiple voices. Following a brief methodological overview of the theories used in this dissertation, the current chapter provides relevant information on three bodies of literature: Luke-Acts, the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, and ancient Greek novels. I also outline the inclusion and role of women and slaves in these texts, focusing on the various interpretations produced by scholars concerning these two marginalized groups. In addition, fundamental information concerning the institution of slavery in the Greco-Roman world will be provided, especially concerning female slaves.

Dialogic Partners:

Bakhtin and Narratology; Slavery and Truth; and Feminism

Bakhtin and Narratology

Bakhtin's theory is the primary lens through which I approach these three Lukan narratives. The Bakhtinian concepts of polyphony, dialogism, outsidedness, and carnival helpfully illumine certain aspects of the novelistic text that is Luke-Acts, and will be used in this dissertation to produce a literary interpretation that focuses on the words of female slaves as vital and significant. In venturing a Bakhtinian reading of Luke-Acts, I build on the work of Raj Nadella, who highlights the polyphonic and dialogic nature of Luke's gospel and produces an ethical and theological interpretation.³ In order to accomplish this, Nadella first identifies the multiplicity of voices present in Luke's gospel, voices which appear contradictory, and outlines the various interpretations of these diverging voices. Nadella then uses Bakhtinian theory to allow these voices to remain in Luke's gospel as part of literary dialogism. Ultimately, Nadella's Bakhtinian reading of Luke "turns a perceived problem into an asset" as opposing voices transform into dialogue.⁴ By reading the multiple and divergent voices within Luke as polyphonic and dialogic, Nadella's interpretation presents the Gospel of Luke as multivalent, which proves fruitful to ethical and ecclesiological conversations. Nadella concludes, "Luke emerges as a sophisticated literary work and a unique Gospel that is not only engaging but also offers a new, creative, and dialogic vision of truth."⁵ Building upon Nadella's celebration of the

³ Raj Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma: Many Voices in the Gospel of Luke*, Library of New Testament Studies 431 (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2011).

⁴ Ibid., 138.

⁵ Ibid., 5.

multiplicity of voices found in Luke, I apply this theoretical reading to Acts as well. In particular, Nadella's argument that the contradicting voices within Luke are part of the text's dialogism coalesces with my argument that female slaves—against the text's dominant presuppositions about them—function as vital parts of the narrative and theology of Luke-Acts.

Furthermore, the search for truth is not only present within Luke-Acts, but is also a goal of the scholarly conversation about the text. For Bakhtin, truth is found only through multiple voices engaged in dialogue; this strategy for seeking truth exists within narrative as well as life (and scholarship).⁶ For this reason, the idea of polyphony is applicable not only to my reading of Luke-Acts, but also to my interpretation of the conversations on the role of women and slaves in these texts. Bakhtin's theory of polyphony "refers primarily to the presence of multiple, and often divergent, voices in a literary text."⁷ Significantly, polyphonic texts include diverse voices that seem to be autonomous and are able to interact freely within the narrative. Because of this autonomy, characters can (and often do) disagree with the presented opinion or worldview of the author/narrator. The author allows this to happen in order for the opposing voices to dialogue within the text. While the presence of diverse voices fills a polyphonic novel, this does not necessarily mean that all voices are heard equally

⁶ Bakhtin's understanding of "truth" is as a broad philosophical concept, one that has been discussed by scholars from Plato to John Caputo, who writes: "Truth is not confined to scholarly treatises or scientific research, but crosses over every category of life from science to art, from ethics to politics, and bleeds into the crevices of everyday life." John D. Caputo, *Truth: Philosophy in Transit* (London: Penguin UK, 2013), 112.

⁷ Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 13.

throughout the text. In fact, some voices might be outspoken while others are not, yet they have equal weight. Nadella writes:

A polyphonic author is, in theory, not afraid of the presence of multiple consciousnesses that disagree with each other but designs novels in which they meet on an equal footing. Such equality creates situations in which no viewpoint, not even that of the author, is in a position to dominate the conversation. It cannot be true that all voices are indeed equal but, as a principal, polyphony affords equal rights for all voices. In an ideal polyphonic setting, there is no room for hierarchy among the many characters, and no voice is able to monopolize the conversation.⁸

A polyphonic novel allows characters to oppose the author just as they oppose one another. Thus, Nadella argues that the gospel of Luke is a polyphonic novel, filled with opposing voices, and he uses this to explain some of the hotly debated topics within scholarship on Luke, such as the role of women and the view of the poor. In addition to these complex conversations, I bring ideologies of status, particularly through the representations of enslaved characters, into the scholarly dialogue.

Proponents of postmodern narratology also allow opposition to surface within narratives. Mark Currie, for example, shows the ways poststructuralist theorists resist the idea of a coherent narrative that is often sought after in narrative criticism. He writes: “It was a key characteristic of poststructuralist narratology that it sought to sustain contradictory aspects of narrative, preserving their complexity and refusing the impulse to reduce the narrative to a stable meaning or coherent project.”⁹ To free the text from the confines of one meaning is also a goal of this dissertation. As Scott Elliott reminds us,

⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁹ Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 2nd Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 7.

“The ‘story’ in any narrative is an abstraction.”¹⁰ In this way, poststructuralist narratology works hand-in-hand with Bakhtinian theory to disrupt monologic narrative and illuminate its complexity by allowing opposing voices to speak simultaneously within a text.

Polyphony and dialogism are intricately connected to Bakhtin’s idea of dialogic truth. Ultimately, the presence of these multiple and opposing voices in dialogue with one another is the only way that truth, broadly, emerges from a narrative. This is because the author’s voice is not the only voice, as truth is found through dialogue with others. As Bakhtin writes, “Truth is not born, nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction.”¹¹ As the author allows multiple opinions to be presented through numerous opposing voices within the narrative, a dialogic sense of truth emerges from the text. Just as Nadella’s Bakhtinian reading concludes that Luke’s gospel presents truth dialogically, the slave-girl narratives provide a particularly intriguing instance of dialogism in Luke-Acts through their statements of dialogic truth.

¹⁰ Scott S. Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark’s Jesus: Narrative Criticism after Poststructuralism*, *The Bible in the Modern World* 41 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 89.

¹¹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 110.

Slavery and Truth

Truth is also intricately related to slavery and torture, especially in antiquity, as Page duBois has shown. *Torture and Truth* explores the relationship between truth in the ancient world and the practice of torture, specifically as it was enacted on enslaved bodies in antiquity.¹² DuBois connects the Greek word for torture, βάσανος, with the idea of truth, as a goal of torture (in ancient times and also today) is to obtain truth. In ancient Greece, the testimony of a slave under torture was always believed to be true, even when up against a free man's testimony; however, a slave testifying without torture was assumed to lie.¹³ Aristophanes relies on this knowledge in his play *Frogs*, as duBois' shows:

The scene of mock torture, of the beating of Dionysos and his slave, not only sets up the chorus's appeal to the audience's sense of traditional hierarchy; it also shows how commonplace is the language of testing and torture in the ancient city. The comic beating is quite hilarious, of course. But it does not put into question the reality of torture. The exchange has a carnival quality, Dionysos masquerading as slave, slave masquerading as Dionysos masquerading as Herakles, the god beaten like a common slave.¹⁴

¹² See also Virginia Burrus, "Torture and Travail: Producing the Christian Martyr," in *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, vol. 12, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2008), 56–71.

¹³ Page duBois, *Torture and Truth* (New York; London: Routledge, 1991), 36.

¹⁴ Ibid., 33. Jeffrey Henderson, trans., "Frogs," in *Aristophanes IV: Frogs. Assemblywomen. Wealth.*, Annotated Edition, vol. 180, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 618–622; 633–634; 718–730.

DuBois argues that the audience of *Frogs* is familiar with the violence of torture within the context of slavery. Aristophanes uses that understanding of the slave in juxtaposition with the divine, thus producing a comic scene. In this way, according to duBois, torture in antiquity functions to make a clear distinction between enslaved and free people.

This division was one way that the ideology of slavery was perpetuated in the Greco-Roman world, which was a slave society. Enslaved persons made up a large part of the society in antiquity, yet they were viewed as bodies, not as full persons.¹⁵ DuBois writes: “Slaves were ubiquitous, furnishings of the world, invisible and essential, taken for granted as instruments of labor and of pleasure.”¹⁶ It was believed that slaves did not possess reason; this is why slaves could only tell the truth under torture while a free person under torture could still lie—a free person possessed *logos*. Because of this, slaves were considered property, not active members of society. Moreover, in antiquity many people were born slaves, but others became slaves through exposure, capture or

¹⁵ It is difficult to determine the numbers of actual slaves in the Greek and Roman world. While statistics are admittedly slippery, historians such as Walter Scheidel propose that slaves made up between 15 to 25 percent of the population in Italy, which is contrasted with approximately 5 to 10 percent of the population in Egypt. Throughout the entire empire, it is suggested that between 10 to 20 percent of the population were enslaved people. Walter Scheidel, “The Roman Slave Supply,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. David Eltis et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 287–310.

¹⁶ Page duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 220.

kidnapping.¹⁷ Orlando Patterson argues that to be enslaved is to have a social death:

“Alienated from all ‘rights’ or claims of birth, [the slave] ceased to belong in his own right to any legitimate social order. All slaves experienced, at the very least, a secular excommunication.”¹⁸ This view of slavery did not end with the introduction of Christianity to the empire. In fact, Jennifer Glancy stresses that this view of slaves as objects continued through early Christianity and even into the fifth century CE.¹⁹ She writes, “Christian authors nonetheless employ conventions and clichés that construct an image of the slave body as vulnerable to invasion and abuse, reinforcing a range of other evidence from the early Empire.”²⁰ The view of slaves in antiquity as mere bodies is inescapable, as both Glancy and duBois show.²¹

In fact, no texts remain from antiquity that were written by slaves. This makes the scholarly study of ancient slavery difficult. Dale Martin explains: “It must be admitted

¹⁷ One example of a Jewish woman who was captured and enslaved is found on an epitaph from the first century CE. It reads: “Claudia Aster, prisoner from Jerusalem. Tiberius Claudius Proculus (?), imperial freedman, took care [of the epitaph]. I ask you to make sure that no one casts down my inscription contrary to the law. She lived 25 years.” Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 51.

¹⁸ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 44.

¹⁹ Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

²¹ Glancy also notes the intricate connections between truth and torture in this essay: Jennifer A. Glancy, “Torture: Flesh, Truth, and the Fourth Gospel,” *Biblical Interpretation* 13, no. 2 (2005): 107–36.

that every study of ancient slavery attempts to paint a larger portrait of the reality of slavery by using pieces of evidence—the occasional mention of slaves in literature, images of slaves in fiction, scraps of information derived from chance finds of papyri and epigraphy—that could be suspected of limited relevance.”²² Indeed, the sources that we are able to piece together provide us with a portrait of slavery in antiquity that is complex and multifaceted. For instance, some slaves worked outside all day doing hard labor such as turning a corn mill,²³ while others were in domestic settings, inside, cooking or answering the door.²⁴ The novel *Satyricon* by Petronius provides examples of the array of domestic roles that a slave might have had in the ancient world. In this fictional account, the character Trimalchio has a very large staff that includes a variety of domestic servants

²² Dale B. Martin, “Slave Families and Slaves in Families,” in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 208.

²³ There is archaeological evidence that slaves, specifically in Italy, worked in corn-mills and bakeries. According to F. H. Thompson, in some of the large-scale mills excavated in Orvieto and Pompeii, machines were used that perhaps were turned by donkeys or an ass. However, at least one mill found in Pompeii is quite narrow, which has led archaeologists to assume that humans might have turned the mill, instead of animals. F. H. Thompson, *The Archaeology of Greek and Roman Slavery*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London 66 (London: Duckworth, 2003), 189. Additionally, the novelist Apuleius paints a very clear, perhaps even grotesque, picture of slaves working in a corn-mill in his novel *Metamorphoses* (*The Golden Ass*).

²⁴ While male slaves usually had a variety of jobs included both in the urban and the rural spheres, female slaves were typically given domestic jobs and worked on farms or in the rural household. Richard Saller, “Women, Slaves, and the Economy of the Roman Household,” in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 197.

such as cooks, doctors, messengers, record keepers, entertainers, and readers.²⁵ As Keith Bradley points out, “it appears that no occupation in Roman society was closed to slaves.”²⁶

Regardless of which job the slave was assigned, most slaves were susceptible to corporal punishment. DuBois writes, “The slave body was, for one thing, described frequently as fettered, bound, beaten, always vulnerable to beatings and to whipping, with refinements.”²⁷ Since slaves were legally treated as objects, their bodies were regularly used and abused by owners. Even the words used to refer to slaves are indicative of this ideology. In the Greek, the word slave (δοῦλος) was often interchanged with the word “body” (σῶμα); slaves were often called “boy” or “girl” (παῖς, *puer*), regardless of their age.²⁸ Additionally, both male and female slaves were viewed as sexual objects, susceptible to their owner’s advances. Highlighting the ubiquitous nature of the sexual use of slaves, Moses Finley writes, the “unrestricted availability in sexual relations [of slaves was] treated as a commonplace in Greco-Roman literature from Homer on; only modern writers have managed largely to ignore it.”²⁹ Among those who have heeded

²⁵ Keith Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 64.

²⁶ Ibid., 65.

²⁷ duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 103.

²⁸ For a discussion on the Greek words for slave see M.I. Finley, “Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?,” in *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies*, ed. M. I. Finley (Cambridge: Heffer, 1968), 54; See also: Golden, “Pais, ‘Child’ and ‘Slave.’”

²⁹ Moses I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 95–96.

Finley's implicit call to attend to the sexual use of slaves in antiquity are biblical scholars such as Jennifer Glancy, Bernadette Brooten, and Joseph Marchal.³⁰

Slavery is also directly connected gender. This dissertation is specifically concerned with *female* slaves, yet any discussion of slavery incorporates notions of gender, whether it is outwardly identified or not. Sheila Briggs observes this tendency at work: "Always lurking behind modern debates about ancient slavery and early Christianity are contemporary politics of gender and the ontological presuppositions on which they are based."³¹ This connection between slavery and gender can be seen in the relationship between slavery and truth. For example, in duBois' reading of the *Odyssey*, she describes the journey of Odysseus into the underworld, an in-between space where truth can be found. She compares the underworld to the interior of the female body to suggest that this space *is* woman. DuBois writes, "As such, she is like the slave under torture, the physical space, unknowable, inaccessible to the real subject of truth, yet through which the knower must pass in order to acquire truth, like the slave whose body bears a message that the slave is unable to see, let alone read."³² With this in mind,

³⁰ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*; Jennifer A. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Bernadette J Brooten and Jacqueline L Hazelton, eds., *Beyond Slavery: Overcoming Its Religious and Sexual Legacies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Joseph A. Marchal, "The Usefulness of an Onesimus: The Sexual Use of Slaves and Paul's Letter to Philemon," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 4 (December 2011): 749–70.

³¹ Sheila Briggs, "Slavery and Gender," in *On the Cutting Edge: The Study of Women in Biblical Worlds: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, ed. Jane Schaberg, Alice Bach, and Esther Fuchs, 2004, 171.

³² duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 82–83.

duBois notes that many people in antiquity found truth within the words of the female oracle, the Pythia, located in Delphi, Greece. In this way, truth was sought in the body and words of a woman. Ultimately, duBois shows the ways in which truth is buried in the body of the female and the body of the slave. It is precisely this intricate relationship between slavery and gender that I explore in the narratives of the three slave-girls presented in Luke-Acts. As duBois elegantly writes: “The truth is thus always elsewhere, always outside the realm of ordinary human experience, of everyday life, secreted in the earth, in the gods, in the woman, in the slave.”³³ In Luke-Acts truth is found in the “other” as well—in the words of three female slaves.

Feminist Hermeneutics

This dissertation explores the connections between slavery, gender, and truth through a specifically feminist hermeneutic. While there are many strategies to read texts within feminist studies, I follow the method and practice introduced by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza.³⁴ This feminist hermeneutic recognizes the power dynamics inherent within all texts as well as the kyriarchal context out of which these texts developed.

³³ Ibid., 105–106.

³⁴ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001).

Schüssler Fiorenza coined the term kyriarchy to expand the understanding of domination from the previously used terms patriarchy and androcentric to acknowledge that systems of oppression always involve not only gender but also class and ethnicity.³⁵ Similarly, the history of interpretation of biblical texts evolved out of kyriarchal contexts, which leads to the perpetuation of oppressive ideologies, both within texts and in the discourse that follows.³⁶ For this reason, biblical scholars committed to a feminist hermeneutic often read with suspicion, attentive to the oppressive patriarchal structures present in texts and scholarship; many use feminist hermeneutics or strategies in a variety of forms such as liberationist, postcolonial, African-American, Asian-American, Jewish, *mujerista*, and ecofeminist readings.³⁷

I actively integrate feminist hermeneutics with Bakhtinian theory and Kristeva's intertextuality, both of which I argue are quite compliant to feminist reading strategies.³⁸

³⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza notes, "Feminism is a theory and practice of justice that seeks not just to understand but to change relations of marginalization and domination." Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 7.

³⁶ Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, "Texts and Readers, Rhetorics and Ethics," in *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 217–31.

³⁷ Early feminist projects in biblical studies focused on highlighting oppression and reading against the grain to recover the stories of women out of the patriarchal language. See: Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*; Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, *Overtures to Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). For an outline and overview of current feminist reading strategies, see: Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed., "Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement" (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 217–31.

³⁸ Chapter two provides this argument as well as several feminist Bakhtinian scholars who use these two methodological strategies side by side.

As mentioned above, Bakhtin recognizes the multiplicity of voices in dialogical texts, and this, as I show, can easily include female voices. Moreover, Bakhtin's theory is concerned with overturning hierarchies within the text, a reading strategy that also provides hope for the upheaval of oppressive structures within society. In this way, feminist hermeneutics and Bakhtinian theory have much in common when applied theologically and politically. As Dale Bauer argues: "Bakhtin offers us a way to move beyond this question of inscription in language as a totalizing regime since language can never be completely totalizing; he theorizes a way to make the dominant (authoritative) languages into internally persuasive (resisting) ones."³⁹

Slaves and women are both oppressed. As mentioned above, the topic of slavery is intricately connected to societal constructs such as gender and also race. In antiquity, slavery became a useful metaphor to describe differences in people, such as men and women. Sandra Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan illustrate this: "the analogy of slavery was used to define the position of the free woman in her presumed inferiority and subordination to the free man."⁴⁰ Yet, a free woman in antiquity still had privileges that a slave did not. In fact, slaves are not referred to in literature as gendered; slaves had a biological sex, of course, but they were not assigned the same gendered characteristics or constructs that free people were in antiquity. The expectations of masculinity and

³⁹ Dale M. Bauer, *Feminist Dialogics: A Theory of Failed Community* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), xii.

⁴⁰ Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan, "Introduction: Differential Equations," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*, ed. Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 4.

femininity were not placed upon slaves, and even the words used to refer to slaves (such as δουλός) could refer to either a male or a female slave.⁴¹

The correlation between slavery and gender in antiquity is illustrated through the often quoted verse, perhaps a pre-Pauline baptismal formula, quoted in Galatians 3:28, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” The hierarchal structures concerning gender and status laid out in this verse (free/slave; male/female) operated in similar ways in antiquity.⁴² Briggs reminds us: “To be a woman was always to be a slave or a free woman, to be slave was always to be either a male or female slave. All these configurations of identity (as well as other markers of lower status) were defined as incomplete or defective.”⁴³ Indeed, patriarchal relationships are not confined to that of men ruling over women, but instead include a vast amount of oppressive hierarchical relationships—kyriarchal, to use Schüssler Fiorenza’s term—that includes women

⁴¹ Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y. MacDonald, and Janet H. Tulloch, *A Woman’s Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 96; Carolyn Osiek, “Female Slaves, Porneia, and the Limits of Obedience,” in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 255–74.

⁴² The hierarchal construction Jew/Greek also functions in similar ways. See, for example: Cynthia Baker, “When Jews Were Women,” *History of Religions* 45, no. 2 (November 2005): 114–34; Brigitte Kahl, “Reading Galatians and Empire at the Great Altar of Pergamon,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 59, no. 3–4 (January 1, 2005): 21–43.

⁴³ Briggs, “Slavery and Gender,” 174.

dominating other women and free people oppressing enslaved persons.⁴⁴ Yet, the existence and persistence of this egalitarian baptismal formula suggest that there were some individuals within early Christianity who “subverted the hierarchies assigned to them within a hierarchical social order and performed new Christian identities within an egalitarian and emancipatory early Christian community.”⁴⁵

Elizabeth Dowling provides an illustration of the relationship between slavery and gender within Luke through her feminist reading of the parable of the pounds, found in Luke 19:11-28.⁴⁶ Dowling argues that Luke’s version of this parable is about power dynamics; the master in the story is oppressive and abuses his power through his relationships with his slaves. She suggests that the third slave, who refuses to participate in the struggle for power (by hiding his pound instead of investing it), is the one who acts honorably.⁴⁷ This parable celebrates those who participate in the kyriarchal structure and punishes those who resist this display of oppression. Likewise, the gospel of Luke frequently punishes those who resist oppression; the main example is the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, but John the Baptist is an exemplar as well. Dowling connects the parable of the pounds to Jesus’ arrest, and in her reading the “pound” represents all that

⁴⁴Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation: With a New Afterword*, Tenth Anniversary Edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 114–115.

⁴⁵ Briggs, “Slavery and Gender,” 188.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth V. Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound: Women, Theology and the Parable of the Pounds in the Gospel of Luke*, Library of New Testament Studies 3 (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.

can be lost when one stands up to authority.

Dowling uses this parable as a lens through which to view the stories of women found in Luke's gospel. While the slave in the parable (as well as John the Baptist and Jesus) is punished for resisting power structures, women in Luke are not punished directly within the narrative. Yet, Dowling argues that the silencing of women in Luke is the "pound" that is lost for women.⁴⁸ However, "As the Lukan Gospel narrative shows, those who challenge oppressive practices stand with Jesus and God vindicates them against their opponents."⁴⁹ The power dynamics in the parable concerning slavery is shown to directly connect to the gendered dynamics in the gospel. Additionally, Dowling includes multiple understandings of the way power structures are subverted within Luke in her interpretation through an appeal to Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia. Dowling's monograph provides an example of a reading that incorporates Bakhtinian theory alongside feminist hermeneutics, and also addresses issues of slavery in antiquity. While Dowling views the women in Luke as silenced within the narrative yet ultimately empowered through their oppression, I read the three slave women as vocal and persistent in the narrative.

Returning to Luke-Acts

I approach Luke-Acts as a two-volume narrative text intentionally crafted by a

⁴⁸ Ibid., 206.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 208.

Greek-speaking author.⁵⁰ Read as separate texts, Luke and Acts notably share common literary motifs, characters, phrases, and theology.⁵¹ While there are a few differences in the genre of the texts, the content, word choice, and style of writing connect the two.⁵² This is seen through the prologues of both books, Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1, where the author unites the two through the dedication of to Theophilus, perhaps the author's patron.⁵³ According to the gospel's prologue, the author intentionally referenced other sources when compiling the text, and many scholars argue those consisted of Mark, Q, and another source or sources known only to the writer. Concerning Acts, the author does not specify whether sources were used; however, both Luke and Acts incorporate a number of literary motifs from ancient Greco-Roman novels, and Acts does this most

⁵⁰ The narrative unity of Luke-Acts has been demonstrated by a number of scholars. In fact, looking to the length of papyrus scrolls in antiquity, Joel Green suggests that the similar length of the two books (Luke—19,400 words; Acts—18,400 words) suggest a “purposeful proportionality.” See also: Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, Foundations and Facets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

⁵¹ Luke Timothy Johnson writes, “Although ancient manuscripts do not place them together, virtually all contemporary scholars think that the Gospel and Acts were conceived and executed as a single literary enterprise, which they have come to call Luke-Acts.” Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 1.

⁵³ Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1*.

clearly and intentionally.⁵⁴ Throughout this dissertation, I assume that the author of Luke-Acts read ancient novels and appropriated a number of motifs from this corpus of literature.

Scholarly consensus is that the Gospel of Luke was written outside of the area of Palestine, but beyond that scholars do not agree as to a particular city.⁵⁵ Concerning Acts, there have been a number of suggestions as to the place where it was written, but as with Luke, there is no scholarly consensus. One suggestion that received a great deal of attention is that Luke wrote Acts in the city of Ephesus, in Asia Minor.⁵⁶ Richard Pervo writes, “Ephesus suits the geographical perspective of Acts, is almost undoubtedly its

⁵⁴ See, for example: Loveday Alexander, “Fact, Fiction and the Genre of Acts,” *New Testament Studies* 44, no. 3 (July 1998): 380–99; Loveday Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*, Early Christianity in Context 298 (New York: T & T Clark International, 2005); Richard I. Pervo, *The Gospel of Luke*, The Scholars Bib (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2014); Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Gospels and Homer: Imitations of Greek Epic in Mark and Luke-Acts*, vol. 1, The New Testament and Greek Literature ; v.1; Variation: The New Testament and Greek Literature. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014).

⁵⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson writes, “We are unable to determine precisely the place of Luke’s writing or his readership. Ancient tradition wavers on the place of composition, and the text itself gives no reliable clues. Neither can we have any confidence concerning the first readers of this narrative. Certainly, Luke’s readers were Greek-speaking and sufficiently acquainted with scriptural traditions to grasp at least the gist of his many allusions.” Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 3.

⁵⁶ In the interest of this dissertation, the suggestion of Ephesus as the setting for Acts is intriguing as the port of this city was one of the centers for the slave trade in antiquity. If Acts was indeed written in Ephesus, then Luke’s inclusion and utilization of these three slave-girls has further consequences, since Ephesus would have been a space where the institution of slavery was very prominent. Peter Thonemann, *The Maeander Valley: A Historical Geography from Antiquity to Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 104–105.

focus, and is the most likely site of its actual provenance.”⁵⁷ Yet, many scholars admit the difficulty in identifying the location. As Virginia Burrus notes, “The perspective of Luke-Acts is, moreover, not only distinctly universalizing (Acts 1.8) but also explicitly transcultural (Acts 2.5-13), a fact that has made it extraordinarily difficult to tie its author to a specific social or geographic location.”⁵⁸ Burrus observes the ways in which Luke-Acts is interested in power, and her reading locates Luke-Acts squarely within imperial discourse. Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo also reads Acts as a product of imperialization; his postcolonial reading reveals instances of hybridity, mimicry, mockery, and alterity within Luke’s hidden transcript of Acts.⁵⁹ While not attempting a postcolonial reading of this sort, in this dissertation I also position Acts as within imperial discourse and I agree that Luke-Acts includes signs of resistance to empire within the narrative.

Concerning dating, I follow scholarly consensus that Luke was written in the late first century (85-90 CE), while Acts was written in the early second century CE (110-120

⁵⁷ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, ed. Harold W Attridge, Hermeneia-A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 6.

⁵⁸ Virginia Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles,” in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. Fernando Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Postcolonialism* 13 (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 133.

⁵⁹ Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo, *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles* (Peter Lang Pub Inc, 2011), 231.

CE).⁶⁰ The time between the writing of these two texts accounts for a number of differences in genre as well as for the more novelistic sense of Acts. While novelistic literature was certainly in circulation in the first century, by the early second texts such as the Greek novels had a much larger readership.⁶¹ Traditionally, Acts has been dated to just a few years after Luke was completed, by the end of the first century CE. Today, however, scholars are challenging that assumption, especially after the results from the Acts Seminar, a group that concluded that Acts was written in the second century.⁶² To get to this late date, the seminar argues that the author of Acts used the letters of Paul, a collection of which appeared around 100 CE, as well as the later books in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, completed in 93/94 CE.⁶³ Therefore, the earliest possible date that

⁶⁰ This dating of Luke is the scholarly consensus today. See various introductions to the gospel: Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997); François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002); Pervo, *The Gospel of Luke*. Concerning Acts, this new date is a result of the research concluded by the Acts Seminar. See Dennis E. Smith and Joseph B. Tyson, eds., *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report* (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2013), 6.

⁶¹ Robert M. Price, "Implied Reader Response and the Evolution of Genres: Transitional Stages Between the Ancient Novels and the Apocryphal Acts," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 53 (November 1997): 909–38.

⁶² The Acts Seminar included between 25 and 35 New Testament scholars who met from 2000 to 2011 in order to address new scholarship that has changed the way many scholars view Acts. During the meetings, the fellows in attendance would hear a paper and then deliberate on the content of the paper and the conclusions this raises about Acts. After these conversations, the seminar voted on the issues at hand. The participants of these seminars made a total of ten "accomplishments" related to the study of Acts. The ten accomplishments listed reflect a general agreement from the fellows of the Acts Seminar.

⁶³ Dennis E. Smith and Joseph B. Tyson, eds., *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report* (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2013), 5.

Acts could have been written is 100 CE. For the latest possible date, the seminar decided upon 130 CE, based on the likelihood that Polycarp and the Pastoral Epistles knew and referenced Acts.⁶⁴

The final aspect of Luke-Acts to discuss is the genre of these two texts. Luke is similar to Mark and Matthew, and it has been suggested that the gospel writers formulated their own genre of a “gospel” by including various other genres from antiquity to fit their goal of recounting the ministry, teaching, and death of Jesus.⁶⁵ Along with many other scholars I think that Luke drew from genres such as biography, epic, and novels when composing both texts.⁶⁶ Admittedly, the genre of Acts has come under more intense scrutiny than that of Luke; this is because of the inclusion and use of literary motifs such as prison breaks, shipwrecks, and the “we” passages. Yet, I view the multiple

⁶⁴ For a provocative argument that the final version of the Gospel of Luke was completed in the early second century alongside Acts (120-125 CE), see: Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

⁶⁵ Charles H. Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?: The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Mercer University Press, 1977); Adela Yarbro Collins, *Is Mark's Gospel a Life of Jesus?: The Question of Genre* (Marquette University Press, 1990); Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Fortress Press, 1996); Justin Marc Smith, *Why B'Áos? On the Relationship Between Gospel Genre and Implied Audience* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

⁶⁶ Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); Alexander, “Fact, Fiction and the Genre of Acts”; Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context*; Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus*; MacDonald, *The Gospels and Homer: Imitations of Greek Epic in Mark and Luke-Acts*; Pervo, *The Gospel of Luke*.

genres evident in both texts as confirmation that Luke-Acts was a part of the developing menippean genre,⁶⁷ as I will show in the following chapter. Along with other scholars, I believe that Luke and Acts should be read in the context of other novelistic literature from antiquity, in order to fully understand his creative appropriation of generic convention.⁶⁸

Other Ancient Narratives:

Greek and Roman Ancient Novels and The Apocryphal Acts of Apostles

During the first three centuries of the Roman empire, a number of fictional texts were written and widely read that scholars now refer to as the Greek and Roman novels.⁶⁹ While these texts certainly utilize motifs from previous literature such as Hellenistic narratives, plays, and epics, the extant novels form what appears to be a new

⁶⁷ Bakhtin suggests that the genre of menippea actively incorporated a variety of genres within it and was being developed during the first century. He mentions the gospels and Acts as fitting within this body of literature. Nadella includes Luke as menippea, and Acts fits the description of this genre even more fully.

⁶⁸ Concerning the gospel, see: Ronald F. Hock, "Why New Testament Scholars Should Read Ancient Novels," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 121–38; Scott S. Elliott, "'The Son of Man Goes as It Is Written of Him': The Figuration of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University, 2009); Concerning Acts, see: Pervo, *Profit with Delight*; MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer?*; Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context*.

⁶⁹ Perkins notes that the onset and ceasing of these novels was rather short lived, as there are no novels written after the fourth century. She then connects this to the rise of Christianity in the Roman empire and argues that the shift occurred as a result of Christianization. Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 2009), 11.

genre.⁷⁰ The novels were widely read, and certainly many New Testament authors were familiar with this body of literature. The corpus of novelistic texts usually includes five Greek novels and two Roman novels, written in Latin. The five Greek novels are: Chariton's *Callirhoe*; Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale*; Achilles Tatius' *Clitophon and Leucippe*; Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*; and Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Tale*. Petronius' *Satyricon* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* are the two Roman novels.

The basic plots of the Greek novels are similar, focusing more on romantic relationships, and are often conflated into one discussion. B.P. Reardon provides a concise description:

Hero and heroine are always young, wellborn, and handsome; their marriage is disrupted or prevented by separation, travel in distant parts, and a series of misfortunes, usually spectacular. Virginity or chastity, at least in the female, is of crucial importance, and fidelity to one's partner, together often with trust in the gods, will ultimately guarantee a happy ending.⁷¹

While this is generally true, scholars have more recently begun noting the complexity and variation of the ancient novels. As Tim Whitmarsh reminds us, "each novel needs to be taken on its own terms, as an individual creation."⁷² Even the idea of a "happy" ending has been challenged.⁷³ In fact, some scholars have noted the ways novels incorporate

⁷⁰ Tim Whitmarsh, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2–3.

⁷¹ B.P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 2.

⁷² Whitmarsh, "Introduction," 6.

⁷³ Stephen A. Nimis, "The Sense of Open-Endedness in the Ancient Novel," *Arethusa* 32, no. 2 (1999): 215–38.

political, social, and ethical ideologies into their entertaining plots. For instance, Burrus reads the novels as she approaches Luke-Acts, through a postcolonial lens, which reveals the ambivalence and colonial resistance within the texts: “The romance is thus revealed as a field of ambivalent play, a literary ‘contact zone’ in which the interwoven discourses of empire and city, marriage and love, Greekness and nativity, are exposed as no more or less than the effects of mimicry—an exposure that calls into question any claims for ‘original’ authority.”⁷⁴

There are a number of aspects of the Greco-Roman novels that warrant discussion, but for the purposes of this dissertation, I focus on the consistent inclusion of female and enslaved characters in these texts. The female protagonists in the Greek novels are often young, independent, educated women who are in charge of their romantic future, which inevitably includes marriage. Indeed, the female characters in the novels experience a great deal of adversities that they handle on their own. The inclusion of strong female heroes such as Callirhoe, Leucippe, and Chloe are infrequent in ancient literature, which led some scholars to associate the Greek novels with the “feminine,” and suggest these novels must have been written by or for women.⁷⁵ Kate Cooper opposes this view with her argument that these novels are not merely romances, but are tools used

⁷⁴ Virginia Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance,” *Arethusa* 38 (2005): 85.

⁷⁵ Brigitte Maria Egger, “Women in the Greek Novel: Constructing the Feminine” (University of California, 1990).

to encourage the broader expansion of the empire.⁷⁶ Similarly, Katharine Haynes argues that female characters in the novel are constructions of femininity rather than mirroring lives of actual women.⁷⁷ Indeed, as Judith Perkins notes, “The romance world is the traditionally patriarchal one and as such is informed by an inherent hierarchy.”⁷⁸

While not as prominent as nobly born female characters, slaves also appear frequently and significantly in the narratives of the novels. As Whitmarsh notes, this is not new, as slave characters can be found in epics and are quite prominent in Greek and Roman theater as well.⁷⁹ Yet, Bakhtin notes the inclusion of the diversity of classes as an aspect of the novels’ burgeoning polyphony.⁸⁰ In the novelistic inclusion of slaves, the characters often fit into stereotypes made popular by the influence of plays. Whitmarsh argues, “It is rare to find any challenge to the truisms that bandits and pirates are bad, slaves are deceitful and manipulative, nurses are untrustworthy.”⁸¹ While this is true for

⁷⁶ She writes, “As the young couple’s reciprocal desire is turned to the purposes of the common good through marriage, so the interests of individual families give way to the needs of the city.” Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 40.

⁷⁷ Katharine Haynes, *Fashioning the Feminine in the Greek Novel* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁷⁸ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 81.

⁷⁹ Tim Whitmarsh, “Class,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 84.

⁸⁰ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 145.

⁸¹ Whitmarsh, “Class,” 85.

the majority of the novels, there are examples where slaves are faithful; yet, this portrayal functions not to suggest that slaves are human but to place slaves into the categories of “good” and “bad,” a typical representation in ancient literature.⁸²

The Apocryphal Acts of Apostles, written in the second and third centuries CE, mimic the structure and themes found in the Lukan Acts as well as the Greco-Roman novels. For example, each of the extant Acts follows one of Jesus’ apostles and depicts the preaching, miracles, and death (often through martyrdom) of the chosen apostle. Yet, the Apocryphal Acts take this narrative structure a step further than the Lukan Acts through the inclusion of spectacular stories, miracles, eroticism, and marginalized characters. In this way, the Apocryphal Acts utilizes tropes from the ancient novels even more readily than the Lukan Acts, which lacks the erotic plot so important to the novels. Most of the Apocryphal Acts include this erotic element, yet the eroticism present in these Christian texts is one based on spiritual devotion, usually of a woman to an apostle. Additionally, the Apocryphal Acts incorporate a much larger number of female characters than Acts; this is true of slave characters as well.

The five texts frequently cited as the literary corpus of the Apocryphal Acts include: Acts of John, Acts of Andrew, Acts of Peter, Acts of Paul and Thecla, and Acts

⁸² See, Lawrence M. Wills, “The Depiction of Slavery in the Ancient Novel,” in *Slavery in Text and Interpretation*, ed. Allen Dwight Callahan, Richard A. Horsely, and Abraham Smith, Semeia 84/85, 1998, 113–32. Additionally, Keith Hopkins explores this “seamier” side of slavery, especially in the representations of clever, educated slaves, who were able to trick their masters and climb the social ladder. He argues that the novel *Life of Aesop* reflects reality especially in the relationships between slaves and their masters. In this way he also argues that novels in general provide beneficial information concerning slavery, even though the accounts are fiction. Keith Hopkins, “Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery,” *Past and Present* 138 (1993): 3–27.

of Thomas. These five texts are included in a third century psalm written by a religious sect active in Persia called the Manicheans.⁸³ This reference to the stories from these five Apocryphal Acts suggests that early Christian groups read these texts as a corpus.

Although scholars commonly refer to these five narratives as the Apocryphal Acts, there are several other texts that fit within this genre, such as Acts of Philip, Acts of Timothy, Martyrdom of Matthew, and Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena.⁸⁴ Each of these texts is similar in that they are written in narrative style, focus upon a specific apostle(s), and describe the career of this apostle in spectacular ways. The apostle preaches, teaches, performs miracles and in a majority of the narratives, dies through martyrdom.⁸⁵

As a collection, the Apocryphal Acts have much in common with the canonical Acts. The length is similar, and all except the Acts of Thomas were also written in *koine* Greek.⁸⁶ The plots follow a chronological pattern, usually including a travel narrative with the authors noting the geographical settings of the stories. The canonical Acts features speeches given by the main apostles (namely Peter and Paul), and the content of these speeches focuses upon salvation through Jesus' death on the cross and subsequent

⁸³ Richard I. Pervo, "Early Christian Fiction," in *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*, eds. J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman (London: Routledge, 1994), 242.

⁸⁴ François Bovon, "Canonical and Apocryphal Acts of Apostles," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 167; Stevan L. Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), 6.

⁸⁵ The Acts of John does not include the martyrdom of John, but instead implies that the apostle died of natural causes.

⁸⁶ Bovon, "Canonical and Apocryphal Acts of Apostles," 168.

resurrection. While the Apocryphal Acts also includes speeches from various apostles, the content included in these sermons is more ethical in nature, and sexual purity plays a large part in the apostle's message.⁸⁷ The main protagonists in the Apocryphal Acts are apostles, yet these later texts also include other characters who have large roles in the plot; many of these characters are women and some of them are slaves.

Along with most scholars, I presume that the original texts of the majority of the Apocryphal Acts were written in the second and third centuries. The first known reference is from Tertullian, who mentions the Acts of Paul in his writing on baptism in 200 C.E.⁸⁸ Although scholars quibble concerning exact dates, the majority date the earliest Apocryphal Act to the middle of the second century and the latest to the first part of the third century (150—220 CE).⁸⁹ Because of the Manicheans, we know that the majority of these texts were in wide circulation by the end of the third century. Subsequently, while these texts certainly used the tropes and motifs from other ancient novelistic literature, some of these texts were written around the same time as the later novels.

⁸⁷ Fred Lapham, *An Introduction to the New Testament Apocrypha* (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 136.

⁸⁸ Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 48.

⁸⁹ In support of this consensus, Hans-Josef Klauck provides the following order: 1) Acts of John (150-160 CE); 2) Acts of Paul (170-180 CE); 3) Acts of Peter (190-200); 4) Acts of Andrew (200-210); 5) Acts of Thomas (220-240). Ibid., 3. Alternatively, J.K. Elliott places the Acts of Paul and Peter first in his sequence. J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 29.

Similar to the novel, the Apocryphal Acts includes a notable number of female characters, yet one difference between the Apocryphal Acts and the novels is that the female characters often refuse marriage or leave their husbands because of the apostle's message. In most narratives, a male apostle is paired with a female (usually a wealthy woman) who converts to Christianity. The most well known example of this is found in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, as Thecla takes over the story for a large part of the narrative, and even travels on her own as a preacher and missionary without Paul.⁹⁰ Additionally, one of the later Apocryphal Acts, the Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, focuses on women, even more than male apostles in this case.⁹¹ These instances led scholars to suggest that the stories in the Apocryphal Acts demonstrate a critique of social hierarchies. Through these texts scholars such as Burrus argued that early Christianity offered a chance for women to gain independence and autonomy, especially when they

⁹⁰ Much has been written on Thecla, including a wide range of various interpretations. For example, see Virginia Burrus, "Word and Flesh: The Bodies and Sexuality of Ascetic Women in Christian Antiquity," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 10, no. 1 (April 1994): 27–51; John C. B. Petropoulos, "Transvestite Virgin with a Cause: The Acta Pauli et Theclae and Late Antique Proto-'Feminism'," in *Greece and Gender*, ed. Brit Berggreen and Nanno Marinatos (Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1995), 125–40; Melissa M. Aubin, "Reversing Romance?: The Acts of Thecla and the Ancient Novel," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative*, ed. Ronald Hock (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 257–72; Burrus, "Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance"; Susan A. Calef, "Thecla 'Tried and True' and the Inversion of Romance," in *A Feminist Companion to the New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Cleaveland: T&T Clark International, 2006), 163–85; Gail P.C. Streete, "Buying the Stairway to Heaven: Perpetua and Thecla as Early Christian Heroines," in *A Feminist Companion to the New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Cleaveland: T&T Clark International, 2006), 186–205; Diane B. Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion: Hermas, Thecla, Aseneth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁹¹ Jill Gorman, "Thinking with and about 'Same-Sex Desire': Producing and Policing Female Sexuality in the 'Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena,'" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 3/4 (July 1, 2001): 416–41.

chose celibacy.⁹² Indeed, these narratives focus on chastity in a similar way as the Greek novels, yet women in the Apocryphal Acts repeatedly refuse to marry or else leave their husbands. In this way, texts such as the Acts of Thecla, function to “reverse the romance” in that the female characters subvert traditional gender expectations pressed upon women.⁹³

Yet, scholars such as Cooper, Burrus, and Daniel Boyarin soon altered this interpretation to include the ways in which these texts were negotiating imperial power within developing Christian communities. Cooper, for instance, argues that the Apocryphal Acts are not about women but are “essentially a conflict *between men*.”⁹⁴ Boyarin posits: “Early Christian sainthood, I wish to suggest, is as much about sexuality and about the resistance to, critique of, and oppositional positioning with respect to a certain regime of power/knowledge about sex as it is about anything else.”⁹⁵ Additionally, Burrus returns to the Acts of Thecla through a postcolonial reading of several novels and Apocryphal Acts where she states:

⁹² Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1987).

⁹³ Aubin, “Reversing Romance?,” 260.

⁹⁴ Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 55, author’s emphasis.

⁹⁵ Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 87.

It may be that the less-than-subtle subversions of the Apocryphal Acts, when read comparatively, do not so much invert as simplify and intensify certain aspects of the pagan romances' already ambivalent views of eros and *gamos*, city and empire—or, conversely, that the pagan romances complicate and render more ambiguous the strident social critique already conveyed by the Apocryphal Acts.⁹⁶

In this way, Burrus notes the similarities between the Apocryphal Acts and the novels, both of which, she argues, are ambivalent to empire.⁹⁷

While the Apocryphal Acts include a notable number of female characters, slaves are integrated within the narrative as minor characters, and slavery is also used frequently as a metaphor. Similar to the scholarly conversation on women, these texts are often interpreted as challenges to the social hierarchy, and this includes references to slaves.⁹⁸ Admittedly, there are references to slaves in the Apocryphal Acts that support the institution and corporal punishment of slaves, such as the story of the female slave Euclia in the Acts of Andrew who will be discussed in chapter four. On the other hand, the Acts of Andrew includes another female slave, Iphidama, who is portrayed as “faithful” and included in the Christian community alongside her owner, Maximilla. Glancy argues that the Acts of Thomas “includes several critiques of slavery, both implicit and explicit.”⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance,” 55.

⁹⁷ Notably, in an essay that reviewed many of the arguments briefly mentioned here, Shelly Matthews argues that feminist historiography should include projects that attempt to reconstruct a history including women. Shelly Matthews, “Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 17, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 39–55.

⁹⁸ Jennifer A. Glancy, “Slavery and the Rise of Christianity,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, vol. 1: The Ancient Mediterranean World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 461.

⁹⁹ Jennifer A. Glancy, “Slavery in the Acts of Thomas,” *Journal of Early Christian History* 2, no. 2 (2012): 12.

Within this early Christian narrative, slavery is viewed as unnatural, especially when the apostle himself is enslaved. Ultimately, the Acts of Thomas, as well as several other Apocryphal Acts, challenges aspects of the institution of slavery, yet slavery is still an unavoidable part of the world from which these texts come.

Dialogic Voices in Luke-Acts: Women and Slaves

The history of scholarship involving the role of women in Luke is particularly fraught with disagreement. The views of scholars range from those who dub Luke the “gospel for women” to those who argue the text is “dangerous” for women.¹⁰⁰ While there is not such a robust debate concerning the role of slavery in Luke-Acts, varying perspectives remain due to the intricate connection between gender and slavery, as outlined above. For this reason, Luke can be read as dangerous as well as liberating for oppressed groups such as women and slaves. Reading Luke-Acts as a dialogic polyphonic narrative allows the text to remain open to these varying perspectives, as characters simultaneously speak and are silenced. Yet their words remain. Shelly Matthews alludes to this feature of Luke’s narrative as she “examine[s] gaps, fissures and

¹⁰⁰ The title a “gospel for women” is attributed to: Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to Saint Luke*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1981), xlii–xliii; Barclay also notes that Luke prioritizes women. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1956); Schaberg notably dubbed Luke a “dangerous” text for women. See: Jane Schaberg, “Luke,” in *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol Ann Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, Expanded Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 363 This commentary was first published in 1992.

counter narratives within Luke's text—the places where unwieldy traditions concerning spirit phenomena escape the author's controlling hand."¹⁰¹

Women in Luke

Compared to the gospels of Mark and Matthew, Luke increases the sheer number of female characters in his gospel, and also focuses more on women.¹⁰² This is obvious from the beginning of the narrative when Luke highlights the roles of Elizabeth and Mary in the infancy narratives (Luke 1:5-7, 24-58; 2:1-7, 19). In fact, comparison with Mark and Matthew suggests that male-focused stories are redacted to include a female exemplar. Constance Parvey was one of the first to point out this aspect of Luke's gospel:

Luke is especially interesting because it has many more stories that include women than do Mark and Matthew. Though all three draw on common material about Jesus, Luke appears to be addressing his gospel to a setting in which there were a substantial number of women present either as students of the primitive catechism or as potential converts to the early missionary churches. Since the literary style of both Luke and Acts shares many similarities with the missionary literature of Hellenistic Judaism, both of these works may have been compiled in

¹⁰¹ Shelly Matthews, *The Acts of the Apostles: Taming the Tongues of Fire*, Phoenix Guides to the New Testament 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 76.

¹⁰² Stories that highlight female characters found only in Luke include: Elizabeth (1:5-7, 24-25, 39-45, 57-66), Mary (1:26-56; 2:1-52), Anna (2:36-38), Gentile widow (4:25-27), Widow of Nain (7:11-17), Woman who anoints Jesus at the house of the Pharisee (7:36-50), Mary Magdalene (8:1-3), Joanna (8:1-3), Susanna (8:1-3), Martha and Mary (10:38-42), Woman who blesses Jesus (11:27-28), Bent-over woman (13:10-17), Parable of the woman with the lost coin (15:8-10), Parable of the widow demanding justice (18:1-8), and the Women at the cross (23:26-32). This list does not include female characters also found in Mark or Matthew.

a Hellenistic setting and may well reflect the more emancipated attitudes toward women in that setting.¹⁰³

Parvey argues that Luke includes women in his gospel to reflect their activity in the community of early Christianity. Parvey concludes her essay with a call to the “present-day church” to dispense with sexism in order to become more like the early Church.¹⁰⁴

Because of the work of Parvey and other feminist scholars, the Gospel of Luke became a crucial text for feminists working in biblical studies and theology. In addition to the notable women found in Luke’s infancy narratives, women are paired with men in many of Luke’s parables and are present in several stories found only in Luke such as Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). These two characters provide an example of the diversity of interpretations concerning women in Luke. For instance, Parvey argues that Mary’s invitation to sit at the feet of Jesus represents the changing status of women from a domestic role to an educational role, a disciple.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Schüssler Fiorenza reads the same story as one that attempts to denigrate women, particularly Martha. Yet, reading the text using her now well known hermeneutic of suspicion, Schüssler Fiorenza argues that the text attests to the role that Mary and Martha played as disciples of Jesus and leaders in the early church.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Mary Rose D’Angelo suggests that Mary and Martha were historically partners in ministry while revealing the

¹⁰³ Constance F. Parvey, “The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament,” in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 138.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁰⁶ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “A Feminist Critical Interpretation for Liberation: Martha and Mary: Lk 10:38-42,” *Religion and Intellectual Life* 3, no. 2 (1986): 21–36.

ambiguity present in Luke-Acts as a source for women's history. She identifies an anxiety present in the text about the involvement that women had in the early Christian movement.¹⁰⁷ Loveday Alexander recounts the "popular exegesis" enacted upon this story, then reads Luke 10:38-42 with attention to transitivity narrative patterns to argue that this is really Martha's story, not Mary's.¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, she concludes that since Luke chooses to tell this story about two women, discipleship cannot be "men's business only."¹⁰⁹ These are just a few of the numerous interpretations that have been offered on this Lukan story; more are bound to follow.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ See Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women Partners in the New Testament," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, March 1, 1990; Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 441-61; Mary Rose D'Angelo, "(Re)Presentations of Women in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts," in *Women & Christian Origins*, ed. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 171-95.

¹⁰⁸ Loveday Alexander, "Sisters in Adversity: Retelling Martha's Story," in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 3 (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 197-213.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹¹⁰ As Alexander points to, many interpretations of this story are examined through "popular exegesis," taught and heard through sermons; this is one reason this story is well known by so many Christians today. See, for example: Joanna Weaver, *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World: Finding Intimacy with God in the Busyness of Life* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2009); Mary Stromer Hanson, *The New Perspective on Mary and Martha: Do Not Preach Mary and Martha Again Until You Read This!* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013). Recently a few psychologically based interpretations have surfaced as well. See: Mary Rose Bumpus, "Awakening Hidden Wholeness: A Jungian View of Luke 10:38-42," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 29, no. 3 (September 2010): 229-39; Cassandra M Klyman, "A Psychoanalytic Perspective of Women in the Bible," *Cross Currents* 64, no. 1 (March 2014): 135-52. Several other interpretations of this story can be found in: Barbara E Reid, *Choosing the Better Part: Women in the Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996); Warren Carter, "Getting Martha Out of the Kitchen: Luke 10.38-42 Again," in *A Feminist Companion to*

The examples of the various interpretations of this one Lukan story illustrate the complex views on women that are presented in Luke. Luke was certainly written within a kyriarchal world by an author who embraced patriarchal ideas; this foundation certainly must not be forgotten when one engages Luke in exegetical dialogue. Yet, as scholars have shown, there are moments in the text where marginalized persons in particular find an opening to increase their agency or status.¹¹¹ For instance, Stephanie Crowder writes,

The Gospel of Luke begins by presenting Jesus as a Savior accessible to all people. This Jesus not only transcends race and ethnicity but also wealth and poverty. Luke's Jesus confronts the rich so that rich and poor are given equal footing. (6:24-26; 12:13-21; 16:1-13, 19-31). Women, the lame, the hungry, and those deemed 'other' are brought to the forefront by Luke presenting Jesus as one of and for the oppressed. Lukan theology is grounded in a Jesus who comes not just to offer compassion to those who are wounded but to speak to the evil of those who wound."¹¹²

This view of a liberative Jesus is rooted within a narrative that supports hierarchal structures, while also standing in opposition to these structures. As Claudia Janssen and

Luke, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings 3* (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 214–31; F. Scott Spencer, *Salty Wives, Spirited Mothers, and Savvy Widows: Capable Women of Purpose and Persistence in Luke's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 145–189.

¹¹¹ James Malcolm Arlandson notes this tendency for women in Luke-Acts and argues that women in lower social circumstances tend to be exalted (he calls this vertical movement), while women who are wealthy do not rise or fall socially. Wealthy men, however, do fall from their position when they engage the gospel message. In this way, Arlandson's analysis also incorporates class structures. Ultimately, Arlandson concludes through this study that women in Luke-Acts are viewed favorably, especially when compared to men in the gospel narrative. James Malcolm Arlandson, *Women, Class, and Society in Early Christianity Models from Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 4; 193.

¹¹² Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, "The Gospel of Luke," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 158.

Regene Lamb note, “Luke as a whole should be understood as a document testifying to a dynamic process of working out differences over questions of equal rights.”¹¹³ This process is what I believe to be dialogism; the text’s search for dialogic truth reveals itself in the opposing voices present in the text that are given equal weight.

Women in Acts

In a similar way to Luke, the beginning of Acts includes a particular episode that is inclusive of women, the scene at Pentecost. Here, in Acts 2:17-21, Peter quotes the prophet Joel, who foresees that in the last days both women and slaves will prophesy. In the sermon that includes this passage, Peter suggests that Joel’s prophecy is complete—which implies that women and slaves will receive the spirit and act as prophets. Many scholars see Acts 2 as laying the foundation for the entire book of Acts. Demetrius Williams, for example, writes, “Just as a quotation from Isaiah supplies the starting point of Jesus’ sermon and ministry in Luke 4, Joel’s prophecy summarizes the nature of all that follows in the rest of Acts and is paradigmatic for the ministry of the apostles, actualizing what was already implicit in the quote from Joel.”¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, just as

¹¹³ Claudia Janssen and Regene Lamb, “Gospel of Luke: The Humbled Will Be Lifted Up,” in *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*, ed. Luise Schottro and Marie-Theres Wacker (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 648.

¹¹⁴ Demetrius K. Williams, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. Brian K. Blount (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 218.

Luke's gospel presents opportunities for women yet simultaneously silences them, Acts sets up this opening for women and slaves yet the majority of the narrative then focuses on free male characters. In fact, Acts does not include nearly the amount of female characters that the gospel does, and they are given substantially less narrative space. Further, many of the women in the narrative are not depicted positively, or as prophets.¹¹⁵

While Acts includes numerically less women than Luke, some scholars view it as essential to the conversation involving women in the early church. For instance, Parvey views Acts as the "best source of information in the New Testament on the prominent role of women in the primitive Church," pointing to several communities in Acts that included influential women.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that Luke intentionally diminished the involvement of women in the early Christian movement when he wrote Acts. Evidence of the roles that women played in these communities can be found when one reads Acts with a hermeneutic of suspicion, she argues, and women as leaders are also named in Paul's letters.¹¹⁷ Additionally, Gail O'Day argues that Luke

¹¹⁵ Women in Acts include: Mary and other women in upper room (1:14); Sapphira (5:2-11); Tabitha (9:36-43); Mary, the mother of John (12:12); Rhoda, the slave girl (12:13-17); Lydia (16:14-15, 40), Slave girl of Philippi (16:16-18), Damaris (17:34), Priscilla (18:2, 18, 26), Philip's four prophesying daughters (21:8-11), Drusilla (24:24), Bernice (25:13, 23, 26, 30).

¹¹⁶ Parvey, "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," 142.

¹¹⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 161. Schüssler Fiorenza writes, "Acts is one-sided, however, in its presentation of the Christian missionary movement and of women's involvement in it. By stressing their status as prominent and wealthy, the author neglects their contribution as missionaries and leaders of churches in their own right. We are able to correct this one-sided picture of the degree that additional information derived from the Pauline literature allows us to question Acts' historical accuracy." *Ibid.*, 167.

limits the roles for women in Acts for two reasons: to present Paul as the primary character and to offer a portrait of Christianity that fits within the social context of the Roman empire.¹¹⁸ Mitzi Smith, on the other hand, argues that women in Acts function as “internal others” in order to “redeem Peter from his negative characterization in the Gospel of Luke.”¹¹⁹ Alternatively, Ivoni Richter Reimer finds liberative significance in the women mentioned in the book of Acts through the lens of Latin American liberation theology.¹²⁰ Yet, she notes the juxtaposed voices when she writes, “there are two tendencies that can be traced to the very beginnings of the Christian tradition: one liberating and one oppressive, and the two exist simultaneously and side by side.”¹²¹

Of the feminist scholars focusing on Acts, I find the work of Shelly Matthews to be conducive to this study. Matthews argues that the author of Acts presents a number of women as active in the narrative yet ultimately limits the roles of women within society

¹¹⁸ Gail R. O’Day, “Acts,” in *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol Ann Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, Expanded Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 394–402.

¹¹⁹ Mitzi J. Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles: Charismatics, the Jews, and Women*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 154 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 130.

¹²⁰ Ivoni Richter Reimer, *Women in the Acts of Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). Liew’s reading is also attentive to the simultaneously liberative and oppressive aspects of Acts. Benny Tat-siong Liew, “Acts,” in *Global Bible Commentary*, ed. Danie Patte and Teres Okure (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 419–28.

¹²¹ Ivoni Richter Reimer, “Acts of the Apostles: Looking Forward and Looking Back,” in *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*, ed. Luise Schottro and Marie-Theres Wacker (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 696.

and the church. Matthews suggests that there are “glimpses of women with agency” presented in Acts, citing Lydia and Priscilla as examples.¹²² Yet, when comparing Acts to other texts such as the early gospel accounts and Pauline letters, Matthews shows that the author of Acts is circumscribing women’s roles, particularly within the church. I agree that Luke-Acts often suppresses the voices of women in the narrative, yet the polyphonic dialogic nature of the text still allows these voices to surface; Matthews observes this as well as “glimpses of women with agency.” Additionally, in *First Converts* Matthews identifies a reading strategy that provides a helpful framework for this dissertation. Referencing the work of Barbara Gold,¹²³ Matthews writes, “Enabling the mute to ‘push through the fabric of the text’ required resisting the reading position engineered by a given text in order to read it against the grain and against other texts, paying close attention not only to what the text says about women, but also to how it constructs what it

¹²² Shelly Matthews, “Women in Acts,” in *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report*, ed. Dennis E. Smith and Joseph B. Tyson (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2013), 193.

¹²³ Gold’s words are helpful as well: “We can see a “space” in the fabric, where there is an uneasiness in the representation of gender for both the author and reader, where the language seems to have more potentiality to be interpreted from many different perspectives, where the marginalized characters seem to be trying to “speak,” and where there are border challengings (voices speaking against the text)...all of these have been seen, or could be seen, as places where the mute are pushing through the fabric of the text.” Barbara Gold, ““But Ariadne Was Never There in the First Place’: Finding the Female in Roman Poetry,” in *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, ed. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin, *Thinking Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 84.

says and does not say.”¹²⁴ Here, Matthews resists the dominant reading of Acts and shows the ways in which elite women were a part of the early Christian community.

Finally, Matthew’s interpretation of the scene of Pentecost is also demonstrative of her view and the dialogic voices found in the scholarship on women in Acts.¹²⁵ Referring to Peter’s quotation of Joel in Acts 2, Matthews argues that this speech takes place in a male space, “a public, open-air setting where Peter stands alongside his fellow apostles and employs oratorical finesse to persuade a group of ‘men, brothers’ of the truth of his message.”¹²⁶ Peter’s message includes important elements of Luke’s theology: that Jesus is God’s promised messiah, the involvement of “Jews” in his crucifixion, and the availability of salvation for everyone as a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus.¹²⁷ Yet, Joel’s prophesy remains unexplained and Luke, through the speech of Peter, does not appear to limit the inclusion of women or slaves in the future Christian community. Acknowledging the egalitarian nature of this quote, Matthew ultimately concludes,

¹²⁴ Shelly Matthews, *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity*, Contraversions (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 8.

¹²⁵ Matthews describes her rhetorical feminist reading in this way: “As a feminist historical reading, it has an eye to questions of gender-domination, along with other forms of domination, in the ancient past. It presumes that women and other marginalized persons were actors and agents in the time of emerging Christianity, but that their presence has been diminished, their roles distorted and their voices muted in the kyriarchal, androcentric master narrative of the early Christian movement that was, eventually, accepted as orthodoxy. Thus, it works to recapture those voices and make present their agency in the form of a historical narrative.” Matthews, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 74.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

“There are no instances, in the chapters that follow, of male slaves and female slaves prophesying or speaking in tongues, though they are a part of the believing communities.”¹²⁸ While I argue in this dissertation that there is prophetic speech found in the mouths of female slaves in Acts, the work of Matthews is not contrary to the goals of this dissertation, as her reading strategy allows for a Bakhtinian reading attentive to marginalized voices in the text. Moreover, Matthews notes the gaps in the Pentecost narrative that leaves it open to readings such as the one she produces as well as my own. In fact, for Matthews the use of the Joel prophecy at the beginning of Acts is when Luke “has let the cat out of the bag—that is, where the author has revealed what he was attempting to conceal.”¹²⁹ Instead, readers realize that the spirit, as presented in Acts, is a force unable to be controlled, even by the author. In this way, the spirit is one more voice of the many speaking within the polyphony of Acts, along with women and slaves.

Slaves/Slavery in Luke and Acts

Luke 22:47-53 tells of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus at the Mount of Olives. During the arrest, one of Jesus’ disciples drew a sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his right ear (22:50). This story is found in all four canonical gospels, yet only in Luke does Jesus heal the slave’s ear (22:51); in the other three canonical

¹²⁸ Ibid., 81. Matthews notes the slave in Acts 16 but argues that her prophecy is through Apollo, not the God of Israel. This suggestion and others like it will be addressed thoroughly in chapter five of this dissertation.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 84.

gospels, the slave is left wounded and ear-less (Matthew 26:51, Mark 14:47, John 18:10). Scholars tend to view this Lukan redaction as solidifying the aspect of Jesus' healing ministry, in addition to his command to love one's enemies.¹³⁰ Others point to the non-violent nature of Jesus' message.¹³¹ Regardless of the reason, Luke's inclusion of the healing of the slave presents an unusual view of the torture and treatment of slaves in antiquity, in that Luke's Jesus views the slave of the high priest as worthy of healing, and of *hearing* as well. In Luke's gospel, Jesus chooses to heal the slave (παῖς) of a centurion as well, yet in this story it is the faith of the centurion slave owner that warrants the healing of his slave, who is not physically present in the story (7:2-10).

While not major characters in the gospel, slaves and slavery metaphors appear with regular frequency in Luke.¹³² Similar to the text's view of women, representations of slaves in Luke often appear contradictory and do not present one coherent

¹³⁰ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 353; R. Alan Culpepper, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Luke - John*, vol. 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 436; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 784.

¹³¹ Justo González, *Luke, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 252; John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 447–448; François Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28-24:53*, Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 217. In contrast to this, Stephanie Crowder reads Jesus instruction to the disciples to buy swords not as metaphorical (22:36), but as a means to protect themselves. She notes, "Until now, Luke does not portray Jesus as a violent person." Crowder, "The Gospel of Luke," 182.

¹³² Luke incorporates a variety of Greek words that refer to slaves including δοῦλος, παῖς, οἰκέτης, οἰκονόμος, and διάκονος. Passages that mention slaves/slavery in Luke include: 1:38, 48; 1:54, 69; 7:2, 7; 12:35-38; 12:42-48; 14:12-24; 15:11-32; 16:1-12; 16:13; 17:7-10; 19:11-28; 20:9-19; 22:26-27; 22:50; and 22:56.

understanding of slavery in the narrative. On the one hand, Luke utilizes slavery as a metaphor throughout both Luke and Acts, and in these cases it is usually viewed as a coveted trait, to act as a slave in relation to God. On the other hand, slaves are used as characters in seven of the parables told by Jesus; the slaves in these parables are owned by a master, and are treated as such, even being beaten in many of the parables.¹³³ When the slave does not act properly in relation to the master, it is assumed that slave will be punished. An example of this can be found in the parable of the Overseer (Luke 12:42-48), which clearly perpetuates ideologies of slavery, including that of corporal punishment.¹³⁴ As Glancy observes, “The parable of the overseer ends with a scene of gruesome corporal abuse, as the angry slaveholder cuts his overseer into pieces.”¹³⁵ Yet, many readers do not view the parables as indicative of this view of slavery, but instead as metaphors for the way a disciple or follower of Jesus should behave in relationship to

¹³³ A number of scholars have studied the servant parables within Luke. See, for example: John Dominic Crossan, “Servant Parables of Jesus,” *Semeia* 1 (1974): 17–62; John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992); Mary Ann Beavis, “Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-8),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111, no. 1 (1992): 37–54; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 102–129; Dowling, *Taking Away the Pound*; Elizabeth Dowling, “Slave Parables in the Gospel of Luke: Gospel ‘Texts of Terror’?,” *Australian Biblical Review* 56 (2008): 61–68; Fabian E Udoh, “The Tale of an Unrighteous Slave (Luke 16:1-18[13]),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 2 (2009): 311–35; J. Albert Harrill, “The Psychology of Slaves in the Gospel Parables: A Case Study in Social History,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 55, no. 1 (2011): 63–74.

¹³⁴ Interesting, this parable is the only other place in Luke-Acts (besides the three female slaves that are the focus of this dissertation) where the word παιδίσκη is used. Most interpreters translate this as female slaves in order to show that the Overseer beat slaves of both sexes while the owner was away.

¹³⁵ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 111.

their master (God). That is to say a “good” disciple will submit to God just as a “good” slave obeys his/her owner. This interpretation suggests that Luke utilizes the master/slave metaphor as an example of proper discipleship, especially in contrast to Mark or Matthew, who tend to prefer the teacher/pupil motif as an example of discipleship.¹³⁶ As Kyong-Jin Kim writes, “Luke is preoccupied with the master-slave motif.”¹³⁷

Interestingly, the first reference to a slave (δούλη) in Luke falls in this category of the master/slave metaphor. It is included in the Magnificat, given by Mary the mother of Jesus who refers to herself as a slave of the lord (1:38). Mary is clearly not enslaved, yet the metaphor of slavery describes Mary as a willing “slave” to her “master,” that is, God. Here, the word slave is used as a positive metaphor for a vital character in the gospel, connecting her to the servant traditions from the Hebrew Bible, important figures who are also described as “slaves of the Lord” such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, and Hannah. In fact, Luke develops the idea of servanthood through his depiction of Jesus as “slave,” as the model of servanthood for disciples and readers. Yet, as Mary Foskett argues, “But as the exemplar of servanthood in the Gospel’s opening chapter, it is Mary, not Jesus, who introduces Luke’s interpretation of the servant tradition.”¹³⁸

Jane Schaberg, however, offers a distinctive reading of the identification of Mary as slave. Noting that slave status was the lowest position in Greco-Roman society,

¹³⁶ Kyong-Jin Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke’s Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 128.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 118.

¹³⁸ Mary F Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived: Mary and Classical Representations of Virginity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 13.

Schaberg reminds us, “The term *doule* (feminine) always and everywhere carries associations that *doulos* (masculine) does not; associations of sexual use and abuse.”¹³⁹

While Schaberg recognizes that Luke’s use of the word δούλη was meant to connect Mary to Israelite history, as mentioned above, she suggests that this is a tactic in Luke’s attempt to obscure Mary’s illegitimate pregnancy. She writes, “Awkwardly, Luke makes Mary a victim of forces unknown to her. Having her call herself the slave of the Lord expresses the powerlessness and suffering of the victim, but also her inner freedom from human ‘masters.’”¹⁴⁰ Schaberg’s reading of Mary as slave stands in sharp contrast to the view that the slavery metaphor is always a positive one, another example of the opposing interpretations the text of Luke often incites.

Another example of the ambivalent representation of slavery in Luke is seen through the sayings of Jesus, which often appear to overturn typical hierarchies of domination. One example is found in Luke 12:37-38 when Jesus says, “Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I say to you, he will dress and then have them recline and he will come and serve them. And if he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.” In this verse the master serves his obedient slaves. Additionally, Jesus embodies the metaphor of slavery through his actions during the Last Supper (22:26-27). Finally, as I argue in this dissertation, Peter’s interaction with the slave girl at the arrest and questioning similarly overturns hierarchies as the slave girl speaks the truth yet Peter lies (22:56).

¹³⁹ Jane Schaberg, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus: A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives*, Biblical Seminar (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 123.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 125.

As mentioned above, the Pentecost narrative in Acts seems to pave the way for the inclusion of slaves in the activity of the religious community through Peter's quotation of Joel. Yet, similar to the inclusion of women in Luke-Acts and the representation of slaves/slavery in Luke just discussed, Acts incorporates a variety of diverse views on slavery. While slavery is also used as a metaphor in Acts, most of the instances of slaves who are mentioned are minor characters in the story.¹⁴¹ For instance, Acts includes the following slaves or groups of slaves: a synagogue community comprised of freed slaves (6:9);¹⁴² the Ethiopian eunuch (8:27-39);¹⁴³ two slaves owned by Cornelius, the centurion (10:7); Rhoda, the slave in Mary's house (12:2-14); and the divining slave girl in Philippi (16:16-24). In addition to these instances, there are four places in Acts where someone believes in the message of Jesus and decides to convert and the text notes that their entire household is baptized (10:44-48, 16:14-15, 16:27-34, and 18:8). Glancy argues that these household baptisms would have most likely included slaves as well.¹⁴⁴ These instances of slavery in Acts provoke various readings and interpretations. On the one hand, the forced conversion of slaves functions in Acts to

¹⁴¹ Slavery is used as a metaphor in 4:29-30 and 16:16-24, in the words of the divining slave-girl, to be addressed in chapter five.

¹⁴² Harrill includes this group in his discussion of slaves who have been manumitted. See: J. Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 61.

¹⁴³ Sean Burke argues persuasively that the representation of his body as castrated indicates that the Ethiopian eunuch is a slave, or was enslaved at some point and is now free. Sean D. Burke, *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 129.

¹⁴⁴ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 47.

perpetuate the ideology of slaves as property. On the other hand the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, if viewed as that of a slave, provides an instance of a slave choosing to convert on his own accord.

My reading of Acts as a novelistic text necessitates the discussion of one final aspect of slavery in Luke-Acts. When reading a text as narrative and not primarily historical, one often assumes that the characters discussed are fictional portrayals—literary figures—and not actual historical people. While this is true of my reading of Acts, in that I do not read Acts as a text narrating actual events as they happened historically, I also argue that representations of literary figures provide insights into the lives of real people in antiquity, such as women and slaves. In this way, feminist readings of ancient narratives, such as that of Acts, are attentive to representations by noting the reality of the impact of oppression and domination on the lives of people living in antiquity.¹⁴⁵ Two scholars, Harrill and Glancy, provide insight into both sides of this debate especially concerning biblical literature.

In *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions*, Harrill argues that early Christians thought about slaves through the “literary artifice of conventional figures and stereotypes familiar from ancient literature, handbooks, and the

¹⁴⁵ Matthews provides helpful descriptions and examples of this reading strategy, see: Shelly Matthews, “Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 17, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 39–55. Shelly Matthews, “Feminist Biblical Historiography,” in *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 233–48.

theater.”¹⁴⁶ For instance, Harrill identifies “stock” characters in Luke and Acts that the author is mimicking when depicting the slave. In Luke, he argues that the parable of the Dishonest Manager (16:1-8) fits the motif of the “parasite” combined with the “trickster” slave (*servus callidus*), from ancient theater.¹⁴⁷ Harrill shows that Luke intentionally utilizes these stereotypical portraits of slaves in crafting this parable, which ultimately functions to condemn wealth.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Rhoda in Acts 12 is portrayed as the entertaining “running slave,” (*servus currens*) a stock character from Roman comedy who runs in and out of the narrative and forgets tasks. Rhoda’s character provides humor to a particularly tense place in the narrative and ultimately reinforces the ideology of slavery as the readers laugh at her ridiculous behavior.¹⁴⁹ Ultimately, Harrill argues that “most slaves in the New Testament and early Christian literature are *literary* products” in order to suggest that Christians today not use the Bible in their creation of moral values.¹⁵⁰

On the other hand, Glancy argues that Christian sources provide “key evidence” of the lives of slaves in antiquity, especially when read alongside other literature from the

¹⁴⁶ J. Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 1.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁴⁸ Harrill utilizes the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism by suggesting that the parable of the dishonest manager is juxtaposed with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31). The two parables appear to oppose one another, yet function simultaneously in the polyphonic narrative of Luke. *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

Greco-Roman world.¹⁵¹ When addressing novelistic literature, which she includes in her analysis, Glancy notes that these texts provide detailed descriptions of slavery and a slave's life, although she warns that readers not overly idealize these portraits. Since no texts survive written by a slave in antiquity, those that remain provide us with glimpses of real slaves, when read through a critical lens. Reading the parable of the overseer from Luke, Glancy is attentive to the "sober assessment of the prospects of slaves for corporal punishment."¹⁵² Concerning Rhoda's role in Acts, Glancy observes that Luke portrays the early Christians as slaveholders, and also that Rhoda was probably responsible for several tasks within the household, since she was not at the gate when Peter knocked.¹⁵³ Overall, Glancy carefully considers the way slaves were identified as bodies and argues that slavery impacted the "structures and beliefs of early Christianity."¹⁵⁴

The differences in interpretation between the two scholars become even more evident in Glancy's review of Harrill's book in the journal *Biblical Interpretation*. Glancy is critical of the book's conclusion that all representations of slaves in early Christianity are based on literary constructions. She writes, "the reader looks in vain for early Christian slaves and slaveholders, finding instead literary creations."¹⁵⁵ Glancy

¹⁵¹ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 8.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 39–40.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁵⁵ Jennifer A. Glancy, "Slavery, Historiography, and Theology," *Biblical Interpretation* 15, no. 2 (January 2007): 200.

argues that such a reading leaves no room for actual slaves and dubs Harrill's work the "Case of the Disappearing Slave."¹⁵⁶ Harrill responds by contending that slaves have not disappeared from the text of the New Testament, but are present still through the reflection of the "literary imagination about slaves and the ideology of mastery widely diffuse in the ancient Mediterranean."¹⁵⁷ Moreover, he implies Glancy's reading is "openly liberationist," a view with which he sympathizes but a project that is ultimately not his.¹⁵⁸ This lively scholarly debate between Harrill and Glancy is an example of the broader conversation among scholars concerning the exploration of ancient slavery, especially involving texts from the New Testament and early Christianity.

Moreover, as Harrill and Glancy show, Luke and Acts provide ample textual material for the discussion of slaves.¹⁵⁹ References to slavery saturate both narratives and provide material that adds to our understanding not only of ancient slavery but also of the formation of early Christianity? The dialogic nature of Luke's text is also seen through the various ways that slavery is presented; there is not merely one unified way of viewing slavery in Luke-Acts but instead multiple representations abound.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 201.

¹⁵⁷ J. Albert Harrill, "The Slave Still Appears: A Historiographical Response to Jennifer Glancy," *Biblical Interpretation* 15 (2007): 215.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 214.

¹⁵⁹ The two above essays mentioned center upon the character of Rhoda, as Harrill and Glancy disagree upon the interpretation of her characterization. Their views, along with others, will be discussed in the following chapter.

Luke's Three Slave-Girls

As is clear from the previous three sections, much has been written on the characters and roles of women and slaves in Luke-Acts. Out of the three παιδίσκαι mentioned in Luke-Acts, Rhoda has by far received the most scholarly attention.¹⁶⁰ In contrast, the παιδίσκη who questions Peter in Luke 22 is typically glossed over by scholars in order to focus on the characterization of Peter¹⁶¹. The divining slave-girl in Acts 16 is most typically negatively contrasted with the good and faithful Lydia.¹⁶² Additionally, most scholars do not connect the three literarily.¹⁶³ However, I argue that the use of the label παιδίσκη for all three characters indicates that they are to be connected. As mentioned above, Luke has a large array of terms for “slave” at his

¹⁶⁰ The following chapter includes a section that covers the many interpretations of Rhoda and the ways in which these are in dialogue with my own reading of Acts 12.

¹⁶¹ John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 35C (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 1093–1097; Walter L. Liefeld, *Luke*, The Expositor's Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 1035; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, vol. 28b, Anchor Bible (New York: Anchor Bible, 2000), 1460 Fitzmyer even notes that the slaves “have played the role of Satan.”; Fred B. Craddock, *Luke* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2009), 265.

¹⁶² For example, see: Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 238.

¹⁶³ Richard Pervo, however, briefly addresses the connections between the three. In particular, he notes the irony and humor of the narratives of the slave-girls in Acts 12 and 16. He connects the divining slave-girl to the παιδίσκη in Luke 22, but determines that both slaves were “the involuntary cause of much evil.” Pervo, *Acts*, 404.

disposal and uses them throughout, in various ways.¹⁶⁴ Yet, the word παιδίσκη is only used four times in Luke-Acts, once in the Parable of the Overseer to refer to “female slaves,” and the other three times to reference these three minor female characters that interact with major male characters (Peter and Paul).¹⁶⁵ As this dissertation will show, the three female slaves function similarly within the narrative—as focalizers, truth-tellers, and, in two out of the three cases, as mouthpieces for Lukan theology.

F. Scott Spencer is one of the few to have noted the significance of these three female slaves in Luke-Acts. Referencing Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 2 and the quotation of Joel’s prophecy from Acts 2, Spencer suggests these two narratives proclaim that women have the right and authority to speak in Luke-Acts. Nevertheless, following both speeches, male characters and the Christian community chose to silence women.¹⁶⁶ Spencer uses the three female slaves as an example and concludes that Luke’s slave-girls tell the truth but that their words are challenged and their voices silenced. He writes:

On three occasions—one in the Lukan passion narrative (22:56), the other two in the middle chapter of Acts (12:14-15; 16:17) – a *paidiske* makes an announcement: *her voice is heard*. And what each slave-girl says is absolutely reliable: *she speaks the truth*. But, like the women witnesses to the empty tomb, each slave-girl proclaimer runs into resistance to her message: *her word is*

¹⁶⁴ Terms Luke uses for slaves/slavery include: δοῦλος, παῖς, οἰκέτης, οἰκονόμος, and διάκονος. Kim provides a chart of these inclusions, which is helpful. However, references to παιδίσκη are not included in Kim’s analysis (even in the section on Luke’s use of παῖς). See Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke’s Theology*, 111–115.

¹⁶⁵ The only other times this word is used in the New Testament is in the other three canonical gospels story of Peter’s denial (all three gospels name the slave as a παιδίσκη) and in Galatians 4 in reference to Hagar.

¹⁶⁶ F. Scott Spencer, “Out of Mind, Out of Voice: Slave-Girls and Prophetic Daughters in Luke-Acts,” *Biblical Interpretation* 7, no. 2 (April 1999): 145.

*squelched or challenged in some way. Shadows of doubt are even cast on the character and competence of each slave-girl as a witness: she is stigmatized in some fashion as a suspicious, if not dangerous, deviant.*¹⁶⁷

Spencer is surely right to emphasize that Luke's slave-girls are heard and they speak the truth. However, I shall try to show that the words of these three slaves are not simply "squelched," but rather that they are all three proven true and stand as true due to the dialogic nature of the narrative.

Outline for the Dissertation

This introductory chapter provides a broad overview of the methodological framework for this dissertation, as well as the basic assumptions concerning the date, authorship, setting and genre for the bodies of literature addressed (Luke-Acts, the Apocryphal Acts, and the Greek novels). Furthermore, the scholarly conversations concerning the roles of women and slaves are outlined as part of the ongoing scholarly dialogism. In this way, Schaberg's view of Luke as dangerous for women can stand alongside Richter Reimer who views Acts as potentially liberating for women. Similarly, Harrill's references to slaves as literary caricatures holds true as does Glancy's crucial search for the bodies of real slaves within textual representations. My hope is that the current dissertation recognizes the "truth" in these interpretations, through dialogic discourse in order to present Luke's three female slaves as slave bodies, oppressed in the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 136–137, author's emphasis; This article is also included in Spencer's book: F. Scott Spencer, *Dancing Girls, Loose Ladies, and Women of the Cloth: The Women in Jesus' Life* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 147.

slave system of the Greco-Roman world, yet also as truth-tellers, actively resisting the confines the text and society places upon them as women and as slaves.

Because this dissertation readily uses concepts found in Bakhtinian theory as well as narratology, the second chapter provides an overview of the theoretical lens employed in this dissertation. After exploring the Bakhtinian idea of truth, I provide explanations and examples of the theoretical concepts of *menippea*, the novel, the role of the author, outsiderness, polyphony, dialogism, and carnivalesque. Alongside these terms, when appropriate, I incorporate ideas formulated through the field of narratology, in particular focalization and focalizer, which I connect to Bakhtin's concept of outsiderness. I then approach the theory of intertextuality outlined by Julia Kristeva, as I utilize intertextuality readily throughout this dissertation in my reading of other ancient narratives alongside Luke-Acts. Finally, I outline the ways that feminist scholars have utilized Bakhtin in their methodology and reading strategies, in particular the concepts of dialogism and carnivalesque.

The third chapter focuses upon the female slave found in Luke 22, the scene of Peter's denial. Ultimately, I argue that this παιδίσκη is a truth-teller and a focalizer within the narrative whose presence overturns the superiority of Peter as the ideal disciple. Set in contrast to Peter's lie, the slave-girl's "truth" itself is in focus as Bakhtin's dialogism becomes a useful heuristic connecting two opposing forces, truth and deception. Moreover, the words of the slave offer an insight into Lukan theology by providing a definition of a true disciple, that is, one who is "with" Jesus. I read Luke 22 intertextually alongside Mark and Matthew as well as two other ancient narratives: the

Greek novel *Callirhoe* by Chariton and the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas. Returning to the female slave in Luke 22, my analysis focuses upon the gaze of the παιδίσκη as she sees and recognizes Peter in the firelight. The slave-girl, unnamed, speaks up to declare her truth: That man (Peter) is a disciple of Jesus. In this sentence, the female slave becomes the focalizer in this brief part of the narrative. Additionally, she makes a statement about the understanding of discipleship in the Gospel of Luke. For the author of Luke, discipleship is presence (who is “with” Jesus). In this moment, hierarchies are overturned as the free, male, apostle speaks a lie while the enslaved female outsider speaks the truth.

The fourth chapter explores the female slave, Rhoda, whose story is told in Acts 12. Rhoda is a slave in Mary’s house, a παιδίσκη who also functions as a doorkeeper while the early Christian community meets in this domestic space in Jerusalem. The reading I undertake in this chapter is an in-depth exegetical analysis of this narrative segment read intertextually with contemporaneous narrative texts, specifically the female slaves Euclia from the *Acts of Andrew*, who I argue is also a truth-teller in the midst of extreme persecution. My reading of these narratives shows the humorous aspects, motifs of masquerade, and hierarchal reversals that occur, which leads me to argue that these passages have carnivalesque tendencies within them. Ultimately, then, in Acts 12, Rhoda emerges as a truth-teller in her moment of hierarchal reversal. In the end, even through comedy, her words are proven true. While there is a return to hierarchal structures after the carnivalesque moment concludes, the moment in which Rhoda emerges as a truth-teller is a pivotal moment in the plot of Acts, rendering her role a necessary part of the narrative of Acts.

The fifth chapter examines the third portrait of a παιδίσκη found in Luke-Acts, the slave with the spirit of a python from Acts 16. This prophesying slave-girl follows Paul and Silas declaring them to be “slaves of the most high god.” This slave is often juxtaposed with Lydia, as the two are seen as a Lukan pair with the slave-girl representative of the negative example and Lydia the positive. My reading interrupts this view as I argue the slave-girl is an outsider while Lydia is an insider; the slave’s outsiderness enables her to see unobtrusively. Her prophecy is proven to be full of truth when Paul and Silas are arrested after this altercation and are physically beaten; they are treated as slaves. I read Acts 16 intertextually along with the play *Wasps* by Aristophanes and Heliodorus’ *An Ethiopian Story*, as both texts portray female divining spirits, pythias from antiquity. Ultimately, I argue that this pythia in Acts is a focalizer within the narrative, rising from her role in the narrative as the loud female slave who annoys Paul to an all-seeing truth-telling prophet and a mouthpiece for Lucan theology. In this way, hierarchies are reversed as the lowly female slave speaks prophetic words while Paul and Silas are treated as slaves.

This final portrait of a female slave in Luke-Acts shows the way in which truth is hidden in the body of a woman, a slave woman. As duBois writes, ““The slave’s body is thus construed as one of these sites of truth, like the *adyton*, the underworld, the interiority of the woman’s body, the elsewhere toward which truth is always slipping, a utopian space allowing a less mediated, more direct access to truth, where the truth is no longer forgotten, slipping away.”¹⁶⁸ Indeed, all three Lukan παιδίσκαι function as sites of

¹⁶⁸ duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 105.

truth for Luke-Acts, in various ways. Ultimately, the dialogic truth that Luke seeks to portray within his two texts can be found in the words of these three marginalized female characters—slave-girls speaking truth.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Foundations: Bakhtin and Narratology

Truth is not born nor is it to be found in the head of an individual person; it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction.

-Mikhail Bakhtin

As the above quote exemplifies, the concept of truth encompasses the foundation of Bakhtinian theory. Truth, for Mikhail Bakhtin, is inherently dialogic. It cannot exist solely within one person, one thought, or one narrative. Instead, truth emerges from dialogue, from many voices. The struggle for dialogic truth is integral to Bakhtin's writing, as he incorporates themes that allow truth to emerge only through multiple voices speaking. He illustrates: "It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of consciousnesses, one that cannot in principle be fitted into the bounds of a single consciousness, one that is, so to speak, by its very nature *full of event potential* and is born at a point of contact among various consciousnesses."¹ Ideas of truth infiltrate each and every aspect of Bakhtinian theory.

Carol Newsom describes the way in which dialogic truth engages both biblical criticism and biblical theology, especially as it "give[s] theology something to work with."² Newsom discusses Bakhtin's notions of monologic and dialogic truth.

¹ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 81 (Emphasis in the original).

² Carol A. Newsom, "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth," *Journal of Religion* 76, no. 2 (April 1996): 291.

Monologically, truth is a unified and single view of truth, one single representation of Truth. In biblical and theological studies, this “Truth” is sought by some and resisted by others, but ultimately, as Newsom argues, the biblical text itself resists one single definition of truth.³ As Bakhtinian analysis reveals, the idea of truth is open, unfinalized, always being negotiated through dialogue. In this way, the Bible becomes a navigable space for theological and ethical dialogue—a space in which scholars and readers can come together and dialogue in the search for truth.

This project is interested in dialogic truth, the Bakhtinian notion of truth, found in the mouths of female slaves speaking within the polyphonic dialogue of Luke-Acts. Luke himself introduces this as he invites multiple sources into his own narrative in an attempt to provide Theophilus with ἀσφάλεια “certainty” or the “full truth,” as the NSRV translates it (1:1-4). While Luke’s authorial perspective is undeniably present within the narrative, other voices certainly speak, often through speeches. Virginia Burrus points to this narrative dialogue and names it heteroglossia: “Such direct speech is ‘other-tongued’ (heteroglossal) not only because it is not delivered in Luke’s own narrative voice, not only because it issues from many different voices, but also because it is marked as coming from elsewhere, uttered from the mouths of angels, borne on the breath of inspiration, cited from the text of the Scriptures.”⁴ Indeed, Bakhtin’s theory illuminates

³ Newsom correctly states: “The Bible certainly is not a monologic text. There is no single ‘author’ who coordinates and controls meaning across the whole. One can easily identify a plurality of unmerged voices in the Bible.” *Ibid.*, 296.

⁴ Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles,” 148.

Luke-Acts as a dialogic, polyphonic narrative providing ample fruit for biblical studies as well as theology, ethics, and feminist criticism.⁵

This chapter explores the ways in which Bakhtin's theory is useful to biblical studies, the reading of Luke-Acts, and predominantly, in formulating an interpretation of the three Lukan passages including female slaves. I begin with an overview of Bakhtinian theory with emphasis on his concepts of menippea, the novel, authorship outsidedness, polyphony, dialogism, and carnivalesque. Several aspects of narratology intersect with Bakhtinian thought, which will also be integrated into my explanations of Bakhtin. In particular, after covering Bakhtin's idea of outsidedness, I focus on narratology's terms "focalization" and "focalizer" as this idea is related to Bakhtinian positionality. Then, I explore the concept of intertextuality, coined by Julia Kristeva, who was influential in bringing the work of Bakhtin to the United States. Kristeva incorporates dialogism and carnival along with semiotics to produce the theory of intertextuality, which has gained widespread usage in numerous scholarly circles. Finally, I will discuss the ways that feminists have adapted Bakhtin's theory. As many feminist scholars have noted, Bakhtin's theoretical ideas can be incorporated into feminist methodology, particularly his thoughts on dialogue, polyphony, heteroglossia, and carnival. Moreover, feminist criticism, notably the hermeneutic of suspicion and reading against the grain, complements Bakhtinian theory, making it even more inclusive. Subsequently, a

⁵ As shown in the introduction, Nadella argues for the gospel of Luke as a dialogic narrative, which is formative to this project. Raj Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma: Many Voices in the Gospel of Luke*, Library of New Testament Studies 431 (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2011).

Bakhtinian feminist hermeneutic is possible, as scholars such as Dale Bauer have shown.⁶ Thus, this chapter will cover three important theoretical and methodological facets of this dissertation: Bakhtinian theory, Intertextuality, and Feminist Hermeneutics.

Bakhtin and Biblical Narrative

In the 1980s, many biblical scholars began to turn their attention to narratives from the Bible. Robert Alter's monumental work, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, is perhaps the most referenced book from this period. Within New Testament Studies in the 1980s, scholars such as David Rhoads, Donald Michie, Alan Culpepper, and Robert Tannehill also focused on the role of narrative, primarily in the gospels but also in Acts.⁷ Using theories of narratology, these biblical scholars critically analyzed numerous biblical narratives, focusing on aspects of the story such as plot, characters, setting, and point of view.⁸ Stephen Moore aptly notes, "Narrative criticism is a story-preoccupied

⁶ Bauer, *Feminist Dialogics*.

⁷ David M. Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, Foundations and Facets : New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

⁸ For more on the ways that narratology and new criticism (the dominant mode of Anglo-American literary criticism from the 1940s through the 1960s) evolved into narrative criticism within biblical studies, see Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Stephen D. Moore, "Biblical Narrative Analysis from the New Criticism to the New Narratology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). Moore explains, "Narratology is about theory, while

gospel criticism. Being preoccupied with story means, most of all, being preoccupied with *plot* and *character*.”⁹

From within this flourishing body of scholarship emerged a group of scholars who not only focused on narratives within the Bible but also used the literary theory of Mikhail Bakhtin as the basis of their interpretive work. Scholars such as Robert Polzin, Danna Nolan Fewell, David McCracken, Ilana Pardes, Walter Reed, and Carol Newsom introduced Bakhtin to the world of biblical studies in the late 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰ Within the study of biblical narrative, Bakhtin’s theory offers a number of possibilities for fruitful interpretations. Barbara Green outlines four ways Bakhtinian theory impacts biblical studies: 1) literary dialogism; 2) chronotope; 3) the de-centering of the role the

narrative criticism is about interpretation. Narratologists engage individual narratives to develop general narrative theories, while narrative critics appropriate those theories to explicate individual narratives” Ibid.

⁹ Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels*, 14.

¹⁰ Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges*, A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History (New York: Seabury Press, 1980); Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989); Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: 2 Samuel*, A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Danna Nolan Fewell and D. M. Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible’s First Story* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993); David McCracken, “Character in the Boundary : Bakhtin’s Interdividuality in Biblical Narratives.,” *Semeia*, no. 63 (1993): 29–42; David McCracken, *The Scandal of the Gospels: Jesus, Story, and Offense* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); David McCracken, “Narration and Comedy in the Book of Tobit,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 401–18; Ilana Pardes, *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Walter L. Reed, *Dialogues of the Word: The Bible as Literature according to Bakhtin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Newsom, “Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth”; Carol A. Newsom, “The Book of Job as Polyphonic Text,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, no. 97 (Mr 2002): 87–108; For a bibliography on other important scholars who use Bakhtin, see Barbara Green, “Bakhtin and the Bible: A Select Bibliography,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 339–45.

author plays in the text, as a reader, character, and narrator; and 4) genre.¹¹ Alongside these four, Bakhtin's theory of carnival can be added to this list, which has become quite influential within biblical interpretation.¹² In addition to particular theories, perhaps the most useful appropriation of Bakhtin's work has been through feminist analysis. Bakhtinian Feminist scholars incorporate the interpretations generated by these theories into pressing ethical and theological concerns.

Mikhail Bakhtin himself wrote very little about the Bible, instead primarily looking to literature by the early modern author Rabelais and the works of the Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky. Yet, there are a handful of times that Bakhtin mentions the Bible, and those provide a jumping off point for Bakhtinian biblical interpretation. For instance, Bakhtin notes the way that Christianity utilizes the biblical text: "The primary instance of appropriating another's discourse and language was the use made of the authoritative and sanctified word of the Bible, the Gospel, the Apostles, the fathers and

¹¹ Barbara Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction* (Scholars Press, 2000), 27–65.

¹² For some examples of biblical scholars using carnival within their interpretations, see Kenneth M Craig, *Reading Esther: A Case for the Literary Carnavalesque*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Ruth Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Bettina Fischer, "Bakhtin's Carnival and the Gospel of Luke," *Neotestamentica* 40, no. 1 (2006): 35–60; Roland Boer, *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Nathan Eubank, "Bakhtin and Lukan Politics: A Carnavalesque Reading of the Last Supper in the Third Gospel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 4 (2007): 32–54; Baek-Yong Sung, "'Revealed to Infants, Not to the Wise and Intelligent': Reader, Character, and Dialogic Interaction -- A Bakhtinian Reading of the Gospel of Matthew" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University, 2008); Melissa Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible: A Subversive Collaboration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Suzanne Horn, "Laughing Matters: A Bakhtinian Reading of the Book of Esther" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University, 2015).

doctors of the church.”¹³ While Bakhtin recognized the appropriation and use of the biblical text in literature, he did not closely examine biblical authors’ own appropriation of other texts, a form of literary dialogism that occurs quite frequently.

Bakhtin developed his theoretical concepts throughout his career and life in sporadic and sometimes obscure ways.¹⁴ This is mainly due to his tumultuous life story, which often made publication of his innovative ideas difficult.¹⁵ Therefore, attempting to

¹³ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 69.

¹⁴ While numerous studies of Bakhtin’s life have been written, two major biographical descriptions are the most often cited and both integrate the development of his theory along with the events of his life. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

¹⁵ Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin was born in Orel, Russia in 1895. He studied classics and philology at the University of Petrograd from 1913 to 1918. Working as a teacher and lecturer in the 1920s, Bakhtin first focused on philosophical issues. Shifting his focus slightly to encompass matters of language, Bakhtin’s first major monograph was *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, first published in 1929 and later revised and reprinted in 1963. In this book, Bakhtin develops a number of concepts that become central to his thought, including dialogism, authorship, utterance, genre, carnival, and unfinalizability. In 1929 Bakhtin was arrested during a raid on intellectuals during the reign of Stalin, allegedly because of his association with an underground Russian Orthodox Church. Bakhtin received a five-to-six year term of exile in Kazakhstan, due to the influence of a few notable friends and his unstable health. It was here, in exile, where he wrote the essays ultimately published in *The Dialogic Imagination*, which outlines his well-known theory of the novel. These four essays together argue for the prioritization of the novelistic genre, in particular because of their heteroglossia, chronotope, and unfinalizability. After his time in exile was complete in 1936, Bakhtin accepted a professorship at the Mordovia State Teachers College for a short time until the political climate became too unstable. He then resigned and moved to a remote town until the end of World War II, when he returned to the Teachers College. Also in the 1930s, Bakhtin began working on a project on the writings of Rabelais, which he submitted in 1941 to the Gorky Institute of World Literature as his doctoral dissertation. This book, entitled *Rabelais and His World*, further developed his novelistic theory and further expanded the notable concepts, carnivalesque and grotesque. Because of the risqué nature of the topics covered in Bakhtin’s work on Rabelais, Bakhtin experienced a great deal of criticism and

summarize Bakhtin's ideas is a difficult task. As Morson and Emerson write, "the development of Bakhtin's lifework, not only the content of his philosophy, was genuinely dialogic and unfinalized – that is, it had clusters of ideas, some very productive and others less so; it had unexpected encounters, watersheds, both creative and fallow periods, and some contradictory dead ends."¹⁶ This section will attempt to delineate several of Bakhtin's well-known theories, all the while being aware that these theoretical ideas interact and dialogue with one another—changing according to author, use, and context.¹⁷ This malleability is part of the reason many scholars are able to utilize Bakhtinian theory, as numerous concepts can be revised, appropriated, and adapted along with other theories.¹⁸

The following sections outline the theories that are most beneficial for the current project beginning with Bakhtin's description of menippea, a genre that evolved in the

was not granted a doctorate until 1952; the book was finally published in 1965. During the last twenty-five years of his life, Bakhtin was rediscovered by a group of graduate students who were studying in Moscow. During these years Bakhtin continued to think and write on ideas central to his work such as utterance, the novel, genres, and dialogue. This led to the publication of a number of unpublished manuscripts and a revision of his 1929 work on Dostoevsky (republished in 1963). Yet, he also returned to the philosophical ideas that enticed him in his youth. Therefore in the early 1970s, Bakhtin wrote a number of essays including these philosophical musings that were published posthumously in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. He died in Moscow in 1975.

¹⁶ Morson and Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 63.

¹⁷ Bakhtin notes this tendency himself in part of his unfinished notes from 1970-1971 when he jots down these words: "my love for variations and for a diversity of terms for a single phenomenon." Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (University of Texas Press, 1986), 155.

¹⁸ The most famous example of this revision/adapting of a Bakhtinian idea is, of course, Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality. Kristeva connected Bakhtin's theory of dialogism with the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure.

first century CE in the Greco-Roman world and led to the development of the ancient novel. In order to exemplify the ways in which Luke-Acts incorporates elements of the menippean genre, I provide specific examples of menippean characteristics found in Luke-Acts. Next, I turn to the role of the author as understood by Bakhtin as well as theorists of narratology to explore how Luke functions as the author of Luke-Acts. Characterization within a narrative is explored through the Bakhtinian concepts of outsidedness and insideness and the narratological concept of focalization. Following this, The Bakhtinian concepts of polyphony and dialogism are defined, as well as the literary aspects of carnival—each of these three concepts have been appropriated by feminist scholars in influential ways.

Bakhtinian Genre: Menippea and Novels

A genre is always the same and yet not the same, always old and new simultaneously. Genre is reborn and renewed at every new stage in the development of literature and in every individual work of a given genre. This constitutes the life of the genre. Therefore even the archaic elements preserved in a genre are not dead but eternally alive; that is, archaic elements are capable of renewing themselves. A genre lives in the present, but always remembers its past, its beginning.

~ Mikhail Bakhtin

Menippea

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin argues that a new literary genre developed during the rise of early Christianity; he coins this new genre of literature

“menippea.”¹⁹ Based on the 3rd Century BCE Cynic writer of Satire, Menippus of Gadara, menippea is a genre that incorporates a variety of other genres within it. Menippean satire developed out of a larger field of serio-comical literature (σπουδογέλοιοιον), which was often juxtaposed in antiquity with more serious genres such as epic and tragedy.²⁰ According to Bakhtin, a number of literary genres were being formed in the epoch of late antiquity, and many were serio-comical. For Bakhtin, “the differences between this realm and the rest of the literature of classical antiquity are very substantial.”²¹ Examples of menippea can be found in the literature of Lucian, and Apuleius’ work, *The Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass)*, for Bakhtin, is a “full blown Menippean satire.”²² Bakhtin believes the influence of menippea upon later literature is extraordinary and widespread: “This carnivalized genre, extraordinarily flexible and as changeable as Proteus, capable of penetrating other genres, has had an enormous and as yet insufficiently appreciated importance for the development of European literatures.”²³ As will be shown in the following section, Bakhtin argues that menippea leads directly to the creation of the “novel,” a literary genre which Bakhtin charts as beginning with the ancient novels and finding perfection, so to speak, in the novels of Dostoevsky.

¹⁹ Unlike many of his other terms, Bakhtin outlines the characteristics of the genre of menippea with great care. This systematic description can be found in Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 114–119.

²⁰ Ibid., 106.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 113.

²³ Ibid.

In Bakhtin's exploration of the *menippea*, he outlines fourteen basic characteristics of the genre found in ancient literature. These characteristics in an abbreviated form are: (1) comedic elements; (2) freedom from plots typically characterized by history; (3) elements of fantasy and adventure that function solely to focus the narrative toward a philosophical or universal truth; (4) settings in crude places such as brothels, prisons, and marketplaces; (5) ultimate philosophical questions addressed; (6) three-planed construction: action occurs on the earth, Olympus, and the nether-region; (7) experimental fantasticality—observations are often made from interesting and different points of view; (8) moral psychological behavior exhibited in characters resulting in the dialogic nature of the individual; (9) scandals prevalent, including inappropriate behavior; (10) sharp and oxymoronic contrasts; (11) social utopian elements; (12) use of other genres integrated cohesively within the narrative; (13) multi-styled and multi-toned nature; and (14) emphasis upon current issues.²⁴

These characteristics of *menippea* are “seemingly heterogeneous,” yet are unified within the text.²⁵ This genre was in its formative stages around the tumultuous time of the first century CE when political institutions were being questioned, philosophical contemplation was pervasive, popular worldviews were being reconstructed, public debates were occurring frequently, and Christianity was just beginning to develop.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid., 113–118.

²⁵ Ibid., 119.

²⁶ At this point in the history of Christianity, one cannot accurately say that a clear difference existed between what is now called “Judaism” and “Christianity.” Although this is not a part of the current argument, it is an important clarification to make when discussing the early stages of this movement. For more discussion on the much later

Menippea is the literary expression of the political and social atmosphere of this Greco-Roman world, a world in flux.²⁷ This literary genre is an expression of the Greco-Roman Zeitgeist. As Bakhtin puts it, “Here, the content of life was poured into a stable form that possessed an *inner logic*, insuring the indissoluble linking up of all its elements.”²⁸

The genre of menippea is notably versatile, able to be absorbed into other genres. This can be observed most clearly through its use in ancient novels. Bakhtin notes that pericopae within novels such as Xenophon’s *Ephesian Tale*, written in the second century CE, incorporate numerous elements of the menippean genre. For instance, Xenophon’s novel opens with the actions of the god Eros, who is angry with the main character, Habrocomes, for his pride. Eros decides to attack Habrocomes with the force of Love, and he falls desperately in love with Anthia, the female protagonist. From the beginning of the novel, then, the action is not only on earth but also in the realm of the gods. After the two are married, they are torn apart by circumstances. Habrocomes is arrested and thrown into prison; Anthia is sold at a slave market and eventually ends up in a brothel. As Bakhtin describes, these settings are notoriously “crude” places, which appear even more dramatic when the elite protagonists are placed into them. Above all, Xenophon’s novel is comedic, as are most of the ancient novels. Comedy is woven into the narrative as Anthia and Habrocomes are separated so tragically, and nearly miss each other in several scenes.

division between Judaism and Christianity, see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

²⁷ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 119.

²⁸ Ibid.

As can be seen in this brief description of Xenophon's novel, menippea is able to infiltrate other genres. In this way, menippean tropes can be found in a number of other forms of literature, including those of early Christianity. Bakhtin notes:

The menippea and kindred genres developing within its orbit exercised a defining influence on emerging ancient Christian literature—Greek, Roman, and Byzantine. The basic narrative genres of ancient Christian literature—‘Gospels,’ ‘Acts of the Apostles,’ ‘Apocalypse,’ and ‘Lives of Saints and Martyrs’—are linked with an ancient aretology, which in the first centuries AD developed within the orbit of the menippea.²⁹

I agree that aspects of menippean genre can be found in the Gospels,³⁰ and I consider the canonical and apocryphal acts to fit squarely within the description of the menippean genre. Reading Acts as menippea, I argue, provides a possible solution to the debate on the genre of Acts, as it incorporates both the novelistic and historical aspects of the narrative and preserves the aretological and pedagogical value of the text. Indeed, when comparing the text of Acts to Bakhtin's description of menippea, evidence of each of the fourteen characteristics can be found. For this project, I concentrate on four menippean characteristics that I observe functioning in potent ways in Acts: comedic elements; settings in crude places such as brothels, prisons, and marketplaces; social utopian elements; and the blending of other generic forms within a cohesive narrative.

Turning to the text at hand, Acts 14:8-20 is a scene that is comedic in nature. Here we find Paul and Barnabas preaching the gospel in Lystra. During their time there,

²⁹ Ibid., 135.

³⁰ Nils Neumann argues that the Gospel of Luke can be read as menippea, and uses the first two chapters of Luke to illustrate the influence of the genre on the gospel. Nils Neumann, *Lukas Und Menippos: Hoheit Und Niedrigkeit in Lk 1,1-2,40 Und in Der Menippeischen Literatur*, Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus, Studien Zur Umwelt Des Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

Paul heals a man who had not been able to walk since birth. When the people of Lystra realize what the apostle is capable of, they believe Paul and Barnabas to be the Greek gods Hermes and Zeus, respectively.³¹ The priests of Zeus hear about this, apparently immediately, and run over in order to worship the two divinities and offer sacrifices to them. This misunderstanding severely upsets Paul and Barnabas who “tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting” (14:14). Defending their humanity through a speech, Paul and Barnabas “restrained with difficulty the crowds from offering sacrifice to them” (14:18). This scene has many obvious elements of comedy within it. Chaos ensues after Paul heals the disabled man. The reader pictures the madness of the atmosphere as a man walks for the first time, the crowd misidentifies the two apostles as Greek gods, the priests rush in to offer sacrifices, and Paul and Barnabas react dramatically—running around, tearing their clothes, and yelling.

Geographical settings in Acts vary greatly, especially in the second half of the narrative. However, one particular setting frequently occurs, prison. This is one of the “crude” settings mentioned by Bakhtin, and as was shown in the Xenophon novel, when one of the valued protagonists is pictured in this type of crude setting, it enhances the brutality of the scene. In the ancient Mediterranean context, it would be a place of ultimate dishonor—more even than a brothel, arguably, for an honorable male. Throughout Acts, there are a total of eight scenes that occur in prisons or involve some sort of imprisonment of an apostle or main character. In Jerusalem, both Peter and John

³¹ There are commonalities between this story and another, older story found in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* where Zeus and Hermes are entertained by two humans, Philemon and Baucis. James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Narrative Commentaries (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 190. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible, Vol. 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 530–531.

are imprisoned (4:3) and later other apostles are imprisoned as well—this time with a miraculous prison break (5:17-19). Saul sends both men and women from the church in Jerusalem to prison (8:3). King Herod sends Peter to prison in Jerusalem (12:3), which leads to the second extraordinary prison break of the narrative. Both Paul and Silas are imprisoned while in Philippi, during which God sends an earthquake and the third prison break occurs (16:23-34).³² Finally, Paul is detained in the barracks in Jerusalem (22:30; 23) then taken to Caesarea, where he remains in prison for over two years (24-26). At the end of Acts, Paul finally makes it to Rome where he is held in guarded custody for several days (28:16). The numerous scenes occurring in a prison and including a main character clearly reveals another menippean element in Acts.

As mentioned, menippea often includes scenes of “social utopia” integrated within the narrative. Sometimes this theme even develops into a utopian novel, but often these communal aspects blend with other literary elements. The community described within the book of Acts has often been noted for its utopian aspects. In particular, Acts 2:44-47 describes what appears to be a perfect community:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

In this verse, the phrase *παντα κοινά*, which is translated “all things in common,” is an “unmistakable allusion to the Hellenistic *topos* concerning friendship,” which in the

³² For a brief overview of this theme in Acts, see Richard I. Pervo, “Prison Escapes in Acts,” in *Acts: A Commentary*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 409–11.

Greco-Roman world was a widely recognized quality of idealized utopian communities.³³ Indeed, as C. K. Barrett notes, the idea that friends share their belongings is “one of the most widely quoted maxims in ancient literature.”³⁴

Acts 4:32-34 provides a similar portrayal of the utopian nature of the community in Acts: “Now the number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common...there was not a needy person among them.” In this section the recognized phrase *παντα κοινά*, which we found in Acts chapter two, is used again.³⁵ The descriptions of this new community in Acts 2 and 4 clearly allude to a utopian society, and sit nicely alongside similar accounts of other ancient utopian communities found throughout Greco-Roman literature.³⁶ As Richard Pervo notes, in these two pericopes the author is combining Jewish values along with Greek ones in order to communicate the universal nature of this community.³⁷ Other examples of utopian communities are found within the literature of the Greco-Roman world; the most well known is Plato’s *Republic*. Additionally, like the community described in Acts, utopian groups were also present

³³ Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 58.

³⁴ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. I, *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament* 34 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 168.

³⁵ Robert Wall interprets this phrase as a chiasmus, with the emphasis of this rhetorical device on the sharing of goods and the power of the Spirit. Robert W. Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: Acts - First Corinthians*, vol. X (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 96.

³⁶ Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 69–70.

³⁷ Pervo, *Acts*, 127.

within larger religious groups, such as the Therapeutae, as described by Philo, and the Essenes, described by both Philo and Josephus. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus describes the Essenes in words that sound remarkably similar to the imminent description of the Acts community: “This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs, which will not suffer any thing to hinder them from having all things in common (παντα κοινά); so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who hath nothing at all” (*Ant.* 18.1.5).

The final menippean characteristic that I will describe here is the integration of other genres within Acts. Bakhtin notes that letters and speeches are often incorporated into a menippean text as a fluid part of the narrative. Additionally, menippea merges prose and poetry together into one cohesive narrative revealing the genre’s multi-toned and multi-styled nature. In this way, the dialogic personality of the text can also be seen, as literary elements appear incongruous but are actually in dialogue with one another. Many different literary styles permeate these texts, which results in a “new relationship to the word as the material of literature.”³⁸

Acts provides an excellent example of early Christian writing that integrates various types of literature into one cohesive text. In fact, the scholarly debate surrounding the genre of Acts validates the multivalent aspect of this narrative. As has been noted, the bulk of the content of Acts is found in the form of narrative prose.³⁹ But, the genre of the narrative has been read and understood by scholars in a variety of ways: historical,

³⁸ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 118.

³⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 96.

biography, epic, and novel.⁴⁰ These various scholarly arguments concerning genre reveal the diverse ways that readers have understood Acts. Furthermore besides narrative prose, there are other types of literature found within the text of Acts. For instance, the author includes major and minor summaries describing previous events, updated information about the church community, and even numerical summaries in order to mark the growth of the church.⁴¹ Numerous passages from the Hebrew Bible are also literally inserted into the narrative by the author, including Hebrew poetry alongside prose.⁴² Another interesting literary element within Acts is the shift from the third person to the first person plural narration; these pericopes are dubbed the “we” passages.⁴³ Letters also function importantly within the narrative world of Acts as seen in chapter 15 and 23, for

⁴⁰ Ben Witherington reads Acts as a two-volume history. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2008, 21. Charles Talbert believes Acts to be a biographical text, a continuation of the biography of Jesus that was begun in Luke and continues in Acts to provide biographical information concerning the followers of Jesus. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Reading the New Testament Series (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 13. Dennis MacDonald argues that Acts was heavily influenced by the genre of the epic, and also suggests that Acts be read along with classical Greek literature and mythology. MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer?* Richard Pervo is well known for arguing that Acts falls within the same genre as the Greco-Roman novels. Pervo, *Profit with Delight*.

⁴¹ Major summaries (2:42-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16); minor summaries (1:14; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31); Numerical summaries (2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21; 11:24; 12:24; 14:1; 19:20).

⁴² By Fitzmyer’s count, there are 37 places in Acts where the Hebrew Bible is reduplicated. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 90.

⁴³ These “we” passages are found in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; and 27:1-28:16.

example. Finally, rhetorical speeches recorded within Acts are a clear example of the use of a Greco-Roman genre.⁴⁴

In addition to these four characteristics, menippea is characterized broadly by its unadulterated freedom from the constraints of plot and its extraordinary use of fantasy and adventure, all of which is focused toward a “philosophical end: the creation of *extraordinary situations* for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea, a discourse, a *truth*, embodied in the image of a wise man, the seeker of this truth.”⁴⁵ Reading Luke-Acts in light of menippea leads to an exploration of this truth, the Bakhtinian dialogic truth found through numerous voices in dialogue, not through a single voice. While the image of a “wise man” is certainly one way to read both Luke and Acts, using other Bakhtinian theories such as polyphony, dialogism, outsidedness, and carnival, I find the truth within Luke-Acts tested and embodied in the statements of three slave-girls.

The Novel

According to Bakhtin, menippea directly influenced the developing genre of the novel and, along with Socratic dialogue, formed the root of the novel as we know it.⁴⁶ Two unique aspects of the novel, carnival and the search for truth, evolved within these

⁴⁴ For a reading of Acts that integrates the importance of these speeches, and the apologetic nature of these speeches, see: Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context*, 183–206.

⁴⁵ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 114–115.

⁴⁶ Or, as Bakhtin knew it during the era in which he was writing.

two types of literature: carnivalesque elements were formulated within menippea, and the search for truth through dialogue is found in the influence of Socrates.⁴⁷ As noted above, menippea is malleable, able to adapt and grow into different genres—this is seen in its transference to the novel. Bakhtin even directly connects this to the novelistic literature analyzed in this dissertation:

We have seen that on ancient soil, including the earliest Christian period, the menippea already manifested an extraordinary ‘protean’ capacity for changing its external form (while preserving its inner generic essence), a capacity to grow into whole novels, to combine with kindred genres, to infiltrate other large genres (for example, the Greek and ancient Christian novel).⁴⁸

Thus, reading Luke-Acts as menippean opens the door for the novelistic elements within the text already noted by many scholars. At the same time, it also retains the search for truth that Luke seems interested in throughout the narrative, as well as the carnivalesque moments that infiltrate Luke-Acts, disrupting the hierarchies present within it.

For these reasons, Bakhtin’s theory of the development of the novel is beneficial to this project, a theory outlined in two essays included in *Dialogic Imagination*: “Epic and Novel” and “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse.” As the opening lines of the first essay indicate, Bakhtin views the novel as alive, an always-changing “genre-in-

⁴⁷ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 110. Interestingly, Daniel Boyarin chimes on this part of Bakhtin’s description of the development of novels: “My reading throughout this book suggests one important modification of Bakhtin’s claim. For me, it is not ultimately the Socratic dialogue (about which we, after all, know almost nothing) that marks the beginnings of the seriocomically genres, but rather Plato in his double-voiced presentation of his hero, Socrates, in which a complicated kind of dialogue ensues.... It is in this manner that the Platonic dialogue can be read into the prehistory of the novel, not in the monological pseudo dialogues between Socrates and his fall guys.” Daniel Boyarin, *Socrates and the Fat Rabbis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 343.

⁴⁸ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 136.

the-making.”⁴⁹ Bakhtin traces the history of the European novel back to Greco-Roman novels, which he addresses at length. In doing so, he shows the flexibility of novelistic literature in that it is able to take an existing genre and modify it into something new, a genre that addresses the current needs of society. Furthermore, theories that are integral to an understanding of Bakhtinian thought are addressed within his novelistic theory, particularly that of polyglossia and chronotope. In these essays, Bakhtin suggests that the novel includes the following aspects: incorporation of other genres, contemporary issues, ambivalent laughter, and dialogism. I will now unpack each of these in succession.

The novel is multi-layered in that it incorporates other genres within it. In antiquity, this included an incorporation of rhetoric, poetry, drama, and epic, as well as the serio-comic. The novel is a hybrid, pliable text, able to fluidly vacillate between various writing styles. Bakhtin also observes that novels incorporate letters, diaries, confessions, and other developing genres.⁵⁰ Yet, this incorporation does not mean that other genres are subordinate to the novel. As Bakhtin indicates, “novelization implies their liberation from all that serves as a brake on their unique development, from all that would change them along with the novel into some sort of stylization of forms that have outlived themselves.”⁵¹ In this statement, Bakhtin reveals his preference for novels, as they are flexible, integrating aspects of other genres, and in this way are able to incorporate relevant aspects of contemporary life in any historical period.

⁴⁹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 11.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

One example of the flexibility of novels, and the ways in which novels can include various genres, can be seen in David Mitchell's novel, *Cloud Atlas*, published in 2004.⁵² *Cloud Atlas*, often called a postmodern novel, includes six stories told from the point of view of different characters, all of which are in different generic styles and written in very different ways. The settings and historical eras vary drastically between stories, and are not presented in chronological order. Yet, the characters interact with one another across space and time, evidence of the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope.⁵³ Additionally, polyphonic dialogism is inherently present in *Cloud Atlas*, as these individual characters communicate even in the midst of their separation in history; future characters discover letters written in the past and films are made from manuscripts from the past that future characters watch. Characters separated by hundreds of years and living half a world apart dialogue with one another. This beautifully written text fulfills Bakhtin's description of the novel as liberated from the confines of typical convention.

Bakhtin also emphasizes the importance of laughter in the developing genre of the novel. Bakhtin looks to the ancient Greek serio-comical genre as an antecedent of the novel, specifically noting that the Greek romance novels mimicked this genre.⁵⁴ Because

⁵² David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas: A Novel* (New York: Random House, 2004).

⁵³ Chronotope is not fully described in this chapter, as it is not a theory utilized in my analysis of Luke. However, it is a part of Bakhtin's theory of the novel, and also is incorporated into his understanding of dialogism. Chronotope, literally from the words time and space, refers to the connection between temporal and spatial relationships as they are conveyed in literature, especially within novels. Bakhtin writes, "In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history." Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," 84.

⁵⁴ Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," 22.

novels addressed contemporary realities, often difficult ones, the authors incited laughter through humor, in an attempt to address situations in an indirect way. The theoretical value of ambivalence and humor will be developed more thoroughly by later postcolonial theorists, yet Bakhtin outlines the beginning stages of this literary strategy in ground breaking ways.⁵⁵ Bakhtin unveils the power of laughter within literature:

Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it. Laughter is a vital factor in laying down that prerequisite for fearlessness without which it would be impossible to approach the world realistically.⁵⁶

Bakhtin's musings on the importance of laughter highlight the ambivalent nature of laughter itself. The use of laughter in novels opens up space within the text for serious topics to be broached and for hierarchies to be exposed. Laughter connects novels to everyday life—readers are able to laugh at a serious, or even tragic, circumstance and in this way find release for a moment from their everyday life. By emphasizing the way that the novel is constantly changing and developing, Bakhtin shows how the novel is able to replicate reality with authenticity. In fact, he accurately predicted the future of the novel: “In many respects the novel has anticipated, and continues to anticipate, the future development of literature as a whole.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See *Ibid.*, 21–23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

Novels incorporate a variety of voices and languages, an aspect that Bakhtin dubs “polyglossia.” He writes, “Only polyglossia fully frees consciousness from the tyranny of its own language and its own myth of language.”⁵⁸ Tracing polyglossia back to Hellenism and Eastern Asia, Bakhtin points to the ways in which these spaces were a meeting place for multiple languages and cultures.⁵⁹ While Bakhtin notes that this aspect of the novel is not fully developed until much later, he shows the ways that the Greek novels were polyglossic in form. In particular, the ancient novels utilized many other previous genres (such as epic, poetry, and drama) and incorporated the language and style from each of them. In this way, novels function as a space for the meeting of multiple languages and cultures.

In addition to the menippean elements mentioned above, Luke-Acts follows the trajectory of the novel in that it includes many of the novelistic aspects described by Bakhtin. For instance, Luke-Acts integrates various literary genres while addressing contemporary issues, such as the role of the Roman Empire within the burgeoning Christian community. Burrus notes this: “Luke plays with the barely congealing conventions of the gospel ‘genre’ precisely by producing the supplemental book of Acts.”⁶⁰ Comedic elements can also be found within Luke and particularly Acts as mentioned above, and they are often included at moments of serious transition, which suggests they are used in an ambivalent way. Finally, Luke-Acts spans a great deal of space and time, engaging multiple languages and geographic regions, seen clearly in the

⁵⁸ Bakhtin, “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse,” 61.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁶⁰ Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles,” 145.

Pentecost narrative addressed below. In this way, Luke-Acts incorporates the characteristics of menippea as well as those characteristics which led to the novel.

Bakhtinian Perspectives within a Novel:

The Role of the Author, Outsidedness/Insidedness, and Focalization

The Role of the Author

Luke's gospel differs from the other canonized gospels (and many apocryphal gospels) in one very precise way—he identifies himself as the author of the text. While not naming himself directly, Luke 1:1-4 is in the first person and states the author's intent for this text: "to write an orderly account." Additionally, Luke acknowledges his use of other sources in his composition. Similarly, the prologue of Acts is directly connected to Luke: "In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about everything that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, having given orders to the apostles whom he chose through the holy spirit" (Acts 1:1-2). Thus, Luke and Acts share a specific author who is included in the narrative, yet disappears for the most part after both prologues. Consequently, Luke-Acts is a polyphonic narrative with a named author who participates in the dialogue of the text. According to Bakhtin, in a monologic work, the author's voice is distinguishable and usually found in the speech of the narrator or protagonist. In a polyphonic work, however, the author's voice is one of many and is often hidden or concealed; the author's view is less decipherable. This section outlines Bakhtin's view of the author, as it developed chronologically within his writings. In doing so, I argue that

while Luke's role as author of the text is present, Luke allows his characters the independent freedom to voice their own thoughts outside of his own, making Luke-Acts a dialogic polyphonic narrative.

An early, unfinished essay entitled "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" presents some of Bakhtin's early musings about the author. The essay explores the relationship between the author and the hero of a text, including the way the author might feel about his/her book's protagonist: "The author not only sees and knows everything seen and known by each hero individually and by all the heroes collectively, but he also sees and knows *more* than they do; moreover, he sees and knows something that is in principle inaccessible to them."⁶¹ This view of the author/hero relationship differs slightly from the way Bakhtin describes it in his later, finished work, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Here he identifies Dostoevsky as the "I" and his hero as the "thou" or the "Other," The "I" here is fully separate⁶² The author and the hero are in a dialogic relationship throughout Dostoevsky's novels (which is the ideal for the polyphonic novel), and the hero functions in a way that displays "independence, internal freedom, unfinalizability, and indeterminacy."⁶³ Furthermore, Dostoevsky treats all characters in a novel in a similar dialogic way as the hero. Dostoevsky's literary character "is a carrier of a fully valid word and not the mute, voiceless object of the author's words. The author's

⁶¹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov and Kenneth Brostrom (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 12.

⁶² Bakhtin's interpretation of the Kantian view of the "I" / "Thou" relationship will be described in more detail below in the section on "outsidedness."

⁶³ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 63.

design for a character is a *design for discourse*.”⁶⁴ Placing the Dostoevsky novel as the ideal polyphonic dialogic novel lays the foundation for the novelistic theory developed by Bakhtin in *Dialogic Imagination*.⁶⁵

Indeed, Bakhtin broadens his description of the relationship between the author, his/her narrative and the characters within it. In *Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin makes the following observations about the author: “We find the author *outside* the work as a human being living his own biographical life. But we also met him as the creator of the work itself, although he is located outside the chronotopes represented in his work, he is as it were tangential to them.”⁶⁶ Similar to his earlier description of the role of the author, Bakhtin maintains the position of the author to the work in his later texts. Yet, as his idea of dialogism took form, this infiltrated his view of the relationship between the author and his/her text. Thus, the author’s relationship to his/her text is dialogic in nature, and also is affected by chronotope; the author resides outside of the space and time of the

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin juxtaposes Dostoevsky with Tolstoy in several ways. One of these is the author/hero and author/character relationship. Bakhtin argues that Tolstoy’s novels are monologic and thus the author knows all things about his characters and the authorial perspective is obvious. In this way, one can see the notes of this monologic perspective of the author/hero relationship in that first unfinished essay mentioned above (which could be describing the authorial technique of Tolstoy). In contrast, Bakhtin writes, “The author of a polyphonic novel is not required to renounce himself or his own consciousness, but he must to an extraordinary extent broaden, deepen and rearrange this consciousness (to be sure, in a specific direction) in order to accommodate the autonomous consciousnesses of others.” Ibid., 68.

⁶⁶ Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel,” 254.

text.⁶⁷ The author's voice is *always* in the text, according to Bakhtin; although, the reader might not be able to recognize or to decipher which utterances belong to the author, which makes this polyphonic as well.⁶⁸ Indeed, the author's voice is present within the text; yet other characters engage in the dialogue—even if they disagree with the author, their voice is present and vocal.

As Bakhtin's novelistic theory developed, the ideal role of the author in the novel (at least the polyphonic novel) was less important in relation to the life of the characters and action within the narrative itself. In Bakhtin's ideal novels, polyphonic dialogic works, the author's voice disappears within the text as the dialogic nature resists the pull of the author. The diminishing of the author's role also occurred with the transition from more traditional modes of literary criticism to narratology. For instance, Robert Alter consistently notes the intent of the author within his foundational work, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*.⁶⁹ Yet, Mieke Bal argues for the authority of the text as a text itself when she writes, "This is not to deny the importance of the author or artist as the historical subject who made the text. My concern to make this distinction is not to deny authorship but to emancipate both author and reader from the stronghold of a misconceived interpretive authority."⁷⁰ Bakhtin and narratology both participate in a

⁶⁷ To further solidify this point, Bakhtin writes, "Even had he created an autobiography or a confession of the most astonishing truthfulness, all the same he, as its creator, remains outside the world he has represented in his work." Ibid., 256.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 303.

⁶⁹ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

⁷⁰ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Third Edition (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 16.

broad tradition, extending from formalism to poststructuralism, that tends to find meaning within the text itself, instead of in the hands of the author. Scott Elliott describes the differences well: “Newer narratological developments of various sorts have concerned themselves with analyzing what texts do despite themselves (and despite their authors and readers) as a consequence of narrative discourse and the plethora of other determinative factors intersecting with it in the processes of reading.”⁷¹

In Luke-Acts, the intent of the author to include multiple voices through various sources is present from the prologue of the gospel: “Since many have attempted to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed over to us by those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and servants of the word” (Luke 1:1-2). In this way, Luke openly defines his novel as polyphonic and his role as dialogic. This incites the search for dialogic truth as well, “because no single voice can represent the complete truth, the dialogic sense of truth can be conceived and communicated only when an author relinquishes control over his characters.”⁷² Through this authorial dialogic act, the search for the truth is found within multiple characters, multiple voices within the narrative, and, notably for this project, within the words of three slave-girls.

Outsidedness versus Insideness

⁷¹ Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus*, 5.

⁷² Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 16.

One way that the author is able to accomplish this dialogic task within the narrative is through his/her role as an “outsider” in relation to the text. Indeed, Bakhtin emphasizes the view of the “other” or an “outsider” within society, life, and literature.⁷³ Interpreting this theoretical observation, scholars developed the idea of “outsidedness” and “insideness,” particularly in relation to the creation of art, which includes literature. Bakhtin discusses these ideas within his philosophical works, which he wrote early in his career and then returned to at the end of his life. In the early works, Bakhtin muses on the relationship between the “I” and the “Other” (or the “Thou”), based on his reading of Immanuel Kant and Martin Buber. For Bakhtin, the “I” is intimately related to the “Other;” they co-exist in a dialogical, yet somewhat opposing, relationship. As Boguslaw Zylko describes, “A complex play of opposite tendencies characterizes this relationship: the striving to empathize (“Einfühlung”) with the Other and, at the same time the preservation of distance. These moments (“Einfühlung” and “outsidedness”) are required for a fully meaningful dialogical relationship between “I” and “the Other.”⁷⁴

This “I/Thou” philosophical discussion functions as the foundation for Bakhtin’s literary theory, especially the concept of dialogism. The location of “outsidedness,” for Bakhtin, is the ideal position. In some cases, the author is an “outsider” and the hero of

⁷³ The term “outsidedness” or “outsideness” has been described and defined by scholars of Bakhtin, who connect it with Bakhtin’s view of the “other.” In this way, readers of Bakhtin’s whole corpus find this concept consistently represented within his theory, but not adequately described in one place.

⁷⁴ Boguslaw Zylko, “The Author-Hero Relation in Bakhtin’s Dialogic Poetics,” in *Mikhail Bakhtin and the Epistemology of Discourse*, ed. Clive Thomson, vol. 2, Critical Studies (Amsterdam; Atlanta: Rodopi, 1990), 68–69.

the book is the “insider.”⁷⁵ In other cases, the author is an “insider” within the literature that he/she wrote. Either way, both positions are in opposition but dialogic in relationship. The insider and the outsider then remain separate yet communicate with one another; the insider strives to achieve true empathy for the outsider, through dialogue. Overall, though, the outside view holds the most truth, as the completely objective viewer. He writes, “Ethical and aesthetic objectification requires a powerful *point d’appui* outside itself; it requires some genuine source of real strength out of which I would be capable of seeing myself as another.”⁷⁶ Because of this requirement, Bakhtin admits that humans are limited, and this is what makes the “other” needed.

In 1970, Bakhtin was asked to evaluate the current state of literary scholarship. In his written response, he calls for literary scholarship to be in more direct conversation with historians of culture, as literature is best understood within the “total context of the entire culture of a given epoch.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, Bakhtin argues that the best position in which to understand or interpret is that of the outsider. “In order to understand,” Bakhtin writes, “it is immensely important for the person who understands to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture.”⁷⁸ As is typical for Bakhtin, he relates this to the individual (who cannot fully understand his own

⁷⁵ Bakhtin fleshes out the relationship between the author and hero in this early essay: Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov and Kenneth Brostrom (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 4–256.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷⁷ Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

self, even through a mirror or photograph), to culture, and to art/literature. In literature, then, the character who exists outside of the object of interpretation has a prioritized viewpoint in relation to other characters. The reader, as well, being an outsider, is able to objectively understand and interpret the narrative through literary dialogism.

The Gospel of Mark is a narrative where there is distension between outsiders and insiders. As many scholars note, the disciples in Mark continuously fail to understand and identify Jesus' message, even though it is presented quite clearly and repetitively to them. Yet, some characters within the text, outsiders (cf. 4:10-12), see the identity of Jesus, as the Son of God, and vocalize it. For instance, the centurion, certainly not an insider within the gospel narrative, sees Jesus dying on the cross and declares, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39). Moore observes the slipperiness between the outsiders and insiders in Mark when he declares: "Mark: the story of a story ('the Son of Man must suffer') that was never understood and therefore never told. No real insiders but one, and he is an outsider."⁷⁹ Moore is referring, of course, to the gentile centurion at the foot of the cross.

Additionally, Nadella's analysis of Luke shows the ways in which outsiders often have the prioritized viewpoint in the gospel narrative. Beginning with an analysis of Luke 4, Jesus' return to Nazareth, Nadella shows that the Nazarene's rejection of Jesus allows the reader to obtain the view of the outsider, as the reader knows the truth about Jesus. In various other parts of Luke (as in Mark and Matthew), demons identify Jesus as the Son of God. Yet, solely in the Lukan account, Peter himself (in addition to demons) vocalizes

⁷⁹ Stephen D. Moore, *Mark and Luke in Poststructuralist Perspectives: Jesus Begins to Write* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 24.

his belief in the identity of Jesus (Luke 5:1-10). In this way, Luke “highlight[s] the divergent perceptions of Jesus’ identity articulated by various characters.”⁸⁰ Bakhtin’s theory of outsidedness and insideness, then, illuminates the dialogic nature of Luke-Acts, especially as it relates to the search for dialogic truth.

Point of View or Focalization

Above it was noted that Bakhtin describes the perspectives of characters in the narrative, besides that of the “hero,” in terms of outsidedness and insideness. Within narratology, this aspect of narrative, that is, the way a narrative is presented through a variant perspective, is given a great deal of attention.⁸¹ One of the ways in which narratologists describe the view or perspective of the narrative is through the concept of focalization. Bal defines focalization as the “slanted” or “subjective nature of story-telling.”⁸² Indeed, many narratives are told from a particular point of view that leads the reader in one direction or another. Yet, the idea of focalization is not exactly the same as point of view; focalization encapsulates ideas of vision, position, and even identity.⁸³ As Bal describes, “Focalization is the relationship between the ‘vision,’ the agent that sees,

⁸⁰ Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 57.

⁸¹ Mark Currie writes, “It is not too gross an exaggeration to say that narratology spent the first 50 years of the twentieth century obsessed by the analysis of point of view in narrative.” Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 26.

⁸² Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 145.

⁸³ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 188–189.

and that which is seen.”⁸⁴ Within this definition focalization is a complex ideology within a narrative that functions in a variety of ways, and which scholars often interpret differently.

Genette categorizes the possible types of focalization in narratives as zero focalization, internal focalization, and external focalization.⁸⁵ When a narrative has no identifiable focalizer, or an omniscient narrator, the text has “zero focalization.”⁸⁶ In contrast, when a character (or a group of characters) within the narrative seems to have an all-knowing perspective, this is called internal focalization. The author can use this type of focalization in a number of ways: 1) fixed: the all-knowing focalizer remains the same throughout the narrative; 2) variable: the perceived focalizer changes throughout the novel, and 3) multiple: the same event is depicted from various points of view from different characters.⁸⁷ External focalization occurs when the characters within the narrative are not aware of their situation or the narrative’s plot, but an outside force is aware and thus functions as focalizer. In this way, “external focalization is characterized not so much by the perspective adopted as by the information provided.”⁸⁸ In a particular narrative, there does not have to be only one form of these focalizations, as Genette notes,

⁸⁴ Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 149.

⁸⁵ For an analysis and explanation of Genette’s theory and its misinterpretation, see: William Nelles, “Getting Focalization into Focus,” *Poetics Today* 11, no. 2 (July 1, 1990): 365–82, doi:10.2307/1772622.

⁸⁶ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 189.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 189–190.

⁸⁸ Gerald Prince, “Focalization,” in *A Dictionary of Narratology*, Revised edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 32.

“Any single formula of focalization does not, therefore, always bear on an entire work: but rather on a definite narrative section, which can be very short.”⁸⁹ In fact, an author may limit the focalization in a variety of ways—one character can function as an internal focalizer and then in the next scene be used as an external focalizer. These changes in focalization can take place rapidly, in only a moment, within the text.⁹⁰

A recent example of varied focalization is found in the recent popular novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn.⁹¹ In this novel, the chosen focalizer alternates between two different (and opposing) points of view, one of a male (the husband) and one of the female (the wife). At the beginning of the novel the reader discovers that the wife is missing, and is led, at first, to mistrust the husband. As the novel continues, though, this perspective becomes complicated and eventually the reader mistrusts one (or both) focalizers. In this way, focalization begins with two particular characters and then moves to exist outside of the two main characters.⁹² While the reader certainly has a prioritized view over both of the characters in the novel, the reader’s view is not that of focalizer either, as the reader does not have all of the information in order to solve the mystery of

⁸⁹ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 191.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁹¹ Gillian Flynn, *Gone Girl* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012).

⁹² Bal writes, “Character-bound focalization (CF) can vary, can shift from one character to another, even if the narrator remains constant. In such cases, we may be given a good picture of the origins of a conflict. We are shown how differently the various characters view the same facts.” Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 151–152.

the novel. In this story, varied internal focalization is also used to manipulate the reader and create suspense throughout the novel.⁹³

Bal, analyzing an image, provides another helpful example of various types of focalization and the potential to change those perspectives in her analysis of a relief from southern India called *Arjuna's penance*.⁹⁴ In this relief from the seventh century, Arjuna is portrayed in a yoga posture which looks something like the position "tree." A cat stands below Arjuna to his right, mimicking him in the yoga pose. Surrounding the cat are several mice who are laughing. Bal describes the picture: Arjuna is meditating to win the god Siva's approval; the cat imitates Arjuna; the mice recognize they are safe, so they laugh; the viewer laughs as she acknowledges that the mice are correct.⁹⁵ In this description, Bal notes, "every verb of perception (to see) in this report indicates an activity of focalization."⁹⁶ In Bal's interpretation, the focalizer is "the point from which the elements are viewed."⁹⁷ This outlook is often found within a certain character, but it is not always. When a certain character is also a focalizer, that character has an "advantage over the other characters."⁹⁸ Yet, when a particular character does not

⁹³ Bal observes, "Consequently, the focalization has a strongly manipulative effect." Ibid., 157.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 148–149; The full context and scholarly critique of Bal's analysis can be found in this brief article: Mieke Bal, "The Laughing Mice: Or: On Focalization," *Poetics Today* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 1981): 202–10.

⁹⁵ Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 49.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

function as focalizer, the reader is able to obtain more information concerning the object of focalization, since this view is often broader through external focalization.

Notably, Genette and Bal disagree on this aspect of focalization, concerning the ability of characters to function as focalizers.⁹⁹ According to Genette, a character within the narrative cannot serve as a focalizer, which is an act of viewing that occurs within the narrative.¹⁰⁰ In this understanding, the only character who can function as focalizer is the narrator. On the other hand, Bal specifically outlines the ways in which characters function as focalizers, which she names “character-bound focalization.”¹⁰¹ For Bal, both the object of the focalization and the subject of the focalization (the focalizer) are vital, providing more information through the various positions. Both Genette and Bal agree that focalization can change and vary within the narrative. Bal, though, points to the way in which the role of focalizer can transition quickly between characters, back to the narrator, and even outside of the characters themselves. Here, both internal focalization and external focalization can occur within one narrative segment.¹⁰² Moreover, external focalization can occur while a character is functioning as focalizer, which is described by Bal in this way: “The external EF [external focalizer] can also watch along with a person, without leaving focalization entirely to a CF [character-bound focalization]. This happens

⁹⁹ For Bal’s critique of Genette’s description of focalization, see chapter one in: Mieke Bal, *A Mieke Bal Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 3–39. Nelles also addresses the two theories, but addresses Genette’s description in greater detail: Nelles, “Getting Focalization into Focus.”

¹⁰⁰ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, n.d.), 73.

¹⁰¹ Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 151.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 160–162.

when an object (which a character can perceive) is focalized, but nothing clearly indicates whether it is actually perceived.”¹⁰³ Thus, the narrative segment as whole is focalized by an external focalizer, yet within the text a moment of internal focalization also occurs, often through one character.¹⁰⁴

My own view of focalization follows that of Bal—I view characters as potential focalizers, and see some characters functioning as internal focalizers even when the narrative, as a whole, is portrayed by an external focalizer. Mark Currie provides a helpful metaphor for the way I see focalization functioning within a narrative: “Like the camera in a film, the perspective of a narrative is always located somewhere, up above events, in among them or behind the eyes of one or more of the characters involved. Like the film camera, the narrative voice can move around from one point of view to another, often shifting undetectably from outside to inside views.”¹⁰⁵ In *Luke-Acts*, as noted, the text begins with a clear declaration of the author’s role in the text, which is zero focalization, as the author seems to be omniscient and omnipresent. Yet, as the narrative continues, the lens of the camera focuses in on certain characters, providing specific perspectives from both major and minor characters within the story. In this way, Luke allows focalization to drift from his own perspective to that of an external focalizer, and even to particular characters within the story. As I will argue in the following chapters, two female slaves, one in Luke and one in Acts, function as focalizers for certain

¹⁰³ Ibid., 162.

¹⁰⁴ For more on focalization, see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (Florence, Kentucky: Routledge, 2002), 73–88.

¹⁰⁵ Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 26.

moments in the narrative, moments that allows the reader to see the objects of their focalization (Peter and Paul) from the view of these slave-girls.

Multivoicedness of the Novel: Polyphony and Dialogism

Polyphony

Bakhtin introduces polyphony in the opening pages of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky—whom he calls an artist (in lieu of a philosopher or novelist)—is “one of the greatest innovators in the realm of artistic form.”¹⁰⁶ The reason for this high compliment is a technique that Dostoevsky uses in his novels which Bakhtin names “polyphony,” which, according to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky invented as a completely new mode of artistic thinking. Polyphony, for Bakhtin, is “a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses.”¹⁰⁷ Within Dostoevsky’s novelistic world, numerous consciousnesses interact, each one within its own sphere and playing an equal role in the novel. These multiple voices/consciousnesses include characters, narrators, and the author’s own consciousness as well as the reader’s. Polyphony, then, exists within a narrative, but it can also occur within a particular character or event. For instance, Nadella finds polyphony within the character of Jesus in the gospel of Luke, arguing that Jesus’ identity is multiple; no single identity of Jesus emerges. This multiplicity of identity, according to Nadella, pulls readers into the dialogue, “and their

¹⁰⁶ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 6.

own perceptions of Jesus' identity affirm, challenge, and redefine the divergent perceptions of Jesus expressed in the Lukan narrative."¹⁰⁸ In this way, the Jesus found in Luke has multiple representations, created by the author, engaging with characters, and appealing to readers.

The core of the polyphonic novel, though, is located in the organic unity that envelops the cacophony of voices within it. This unity within the polyphonic novel is a result of the dialogic relationship between the multitudes of voices, "as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses."¹⁰⁹ According to Bakhtin, previous scholars of Dostoevsky were incorrect: "Everyone interprets in his own way Dostoevsky's ultimate word, but all equally interpret it as a *single* word, a *single* voice, a *single* accent, and therein lies their fundamental mistake. The unity of the polyphonic novel - a unity standing above the word, above the voice, above the accent - has yet to be discovered."¹¹⁰ The many voices speaking in a polyphonic novel are all allowed their own voice, even when they seem to contradict one another, or even when they seem to oppose the author or narrator's view. Moreover, the polyphonic novel must be unified; even as multiple voices dialogue they do so in a way that one viewpoint is unified.

Within a polyphonic novel, the author's voice is one of the many, which, according to Bakhtin, is a vital part of the dialogism that occurs. For instance, Bakhtin analyzes Chernyshevsky's novel *The Pearl of Creation* according to his definition of polyphony, because the author claims to have no voice in order to create what he thought

¹⁰⁸ Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 64.

¹⁰⁹ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 18.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

of as a "purely objective novel."¹¹¹ Bakhtin decides that Chernyshevsky's work was *almost* polyphonic, but because of the absence of the voice of the author, Dostoevsky's novels are the original polyphonic novels. For a polyphonic novel, the author's consciousness must be in dialogue with the consciousness of the hero (and the characters within the novel). In other words, the author "is active in it to the highest degree."¹¹² Yet, the dialogic nature of the novel itself insists that the author's consciousness remain but not inhibit the consciousness of the characters within the novel. In this way the novel exhibits unfinalizability, as it recreates the world of the characters and of the author, but does so in an open-ended fashion. This Bakhtinian theory resonates with postmodern theory and narratology as it allows the text to deconstruct itself while retaining the possibility of multiple worlds and multiple understandings of a particular text.¹¹³

Dialogism

"To be means to communicate dialogically," Bakhtin famously declares.¹¹⁴ These words provide the all-encompassing ideology of the term dialogism. For Bakhtin, dialogism is not simply a concept found in literature, but it is found in society, culture,

¹¹¹ Ibid., 66.

¹¹² Ibid., 68.

¹¹³ Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 7–13.

¹¹⁴ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 252.

and individuals.¹¹⁵ Thus, I locate the foundation for dialogism in Bakhtin's early philosophical essay, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, which is unfinished. This text focuses on the unique experience of the individual (what Bakhtin calls the "I"), through the concrete, lived experiences of a human being, not through theoretical or abstract ideas concerning a person. Bakhtin writes, "I participate in Being as its sole actor. Nothing in Being, apart from myself, is an *I* for me. In all of Being I experience only myself - my unique self - as an *I*. All other *Is* (theoretical ones) are not *I* for me, whereas my own unique (non-theoretical) *I participates* in once-occurrent Being: *I exist (ego sum)* in it."¹¹⁶ In this way, every individual participates in "being," and the experience of "being" requires dialogism, even within oneself. Furthermore, the "I" must exist in relationship to an "Other." The I/Other relationship for Bakhtin functions as a foundation for the world and for society: "Life knows two value-centers that are fundamentally and essentially different, yet are correlated with each other: myself and the other; and it is around these centers that all of the concrete moments of Being are distributed and arranged."¹¹⁷ Although Bakhtin does not name it as such in this essay, the "I" is in dialogue through Being, and the "I" is also in dialogue with encountered "Others." Bakhtin's theory was

¹¹⁵ Pointing to the ideological roots of dialogism, Clark and Holquist write, "Dialogism is not intended to be merely another theory of literature or even another philosophy of language, but is an account of relations between people and between persons and things that cuts across religious, political, and aesthetic boundaries." Clark and Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 348.

¹¹⁶ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov (University of Texas Press, 1993), 41.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

ahead of its time, as it seems to evoke a postmodern understanding of subjectivity, especially as evident in literature.

Bakhtin coins the concept of dialogism in his first published monograph, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. He first indirectly refers to dialogism in his description of polyphony, because of the way that multiple voices/consciousnesses interact within the unified polyphonic novel. By the end of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin has developed a clear definition and description of dialogue:

Dialogue here is not the threshold to action, it is the action itself. It is not a means for revealing, for bringing to the surface the already ready-made character of a person; no, in dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time that which he is—and, we repeat, not only for others but for himself as well. To be means to communicate dialogically. When dialogue ends, everything ends. Thus dialogue, by its very essence, cannot and must not come to an end. At the level of his religious—utopian world—view Dostoevsky carries dialogue into eternity, conceiving of it as eternal co-rejoicing, co-admiration, con-cord. At the level of the novel, it is presented as the unfinalizability of dialogue, although originally as dialogue's vicious circle. Everything in Dostoevsky's novels tends toward dialogue, toward a dialogic opposition, as if tending toward its center. All else is the means; dialogue is the end. A single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing. Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence.¹¹⁸

This passage shows the philosophical and ideological nature of dialogism while also indicating the way in which literature incorporates dialogism. For the purposes of this project, I now focus on the aspect of dialogism found within novels, which is presented most clearly in Bakhtin's essay "Discourse in the Novel," published in *Dialogic Imagination*.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 252.

¹¹⁹ Clark and Holquist note, "'Discourse in the Novel' marks a change in Bakhtin's writing. There is a new vehemence, a new terminology, and a new frame of reference." Clark and Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 269.

As described in the section on novels above, one characteristic that is essential to the novel is its ability to incorporate multiple voices into one cohesive narrative. Bakhtin includes this in his definition of a novel: “The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized.”¹²⁰ Specifically describing the types of speech that are often included in a novel (i.e. other languages, authorial notes, inserted genres, character speeches, quotations, etc.), Bakhtin argues that “dialogization” is the “basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel.”¹²¹ When these various speeches/voices enter into dialogue within the novel, they do so on equal ground. Even as the author’s voice is present in a dialogic novel, the speech of a character (who is an “Other” to the author) is integrated into the novel without note and without judgment.¹²² Thus, each character speaks within the novel; each character even “possesses its own belief system.”¹²³ All entities that are engaged in the dialogue, then, remain equal in a novel that is truly dialogic.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 262.

¹²¹ Ibid., 263.

¹²² Ibid., 303.

¹²³ Ibid., 315.

¹²⁴ Dmitri Nikulin’s philosophical musings on dialogue illuminate this equality: “Dialogical partners in dialogue are not merged, yet they also cannot be separated. Since dialogue is about human beings and human interaction, it always involves a *plurality* of interlocutors, for a dialogue in the absence of the other is a self-contradictory notion. From what has been said about the personal other, it is evident that dialogue implies *equality* among interlocutors and their voices. Everyone is equal with everyone in dialogue qua dialogical partner. Therefore, a proper dialogical discussion suspends

Heteroglossia, or double-voiced discourse, is another way in which dialogism can be revealed within the novel. Bakhtin defines this term: “Heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel (whatever the forms for its incorporation), is *another’s speech in another’s language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse*.”¹²⁵

Heteroglossia, as Bakhtin notes, is frequently found in rhetorical texts as well as poetry, but when it is found in novels it is specifically dialogic, and often ambivalent as well. In novels, double-voicedness is usually found within a personified characters speech, a speech which is able to hold opposing ideas within one utterance.¹²⁶ Bakhtin writes, “double-voiced discourse is internally dialogized, fraught with dialogue, and may in fact give birth to dialogues comprised of truly separate voices.”¹²⁷ Heteroglossia is the “spring of dialogism that never runs dry.”¹²⁸

and cancels social and other inequalities.” Dmitri Nikulin, *Dialectic and Dialogue* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 81.

¹²⁵ Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 324, Author’s emphasis.

¹²⁶ In addition to dialogism being contained in one utterance, dialogue can also occurs in just one word, as this word refers to an object and also to answer, according to Bakhtin. In this way, Bakhtin engages aspects of structuralism, in particular the way that a sign is composed by a signified and a signifier. For example, Bakhtin writes: “Dialogue is studied merely as a compositional form in the structuring of speech, but the internal dialogism of the word (which occurs in a monologic utterance as well as in a rejoinder), the dialogism that penetrates its entire structure, all its semantic and expressive layers, is almost entirely ignored. But it is precisely this internal dialogism of the word, which does not assume any external compositional forms of dialogue, that cannot be isolated as an independent act, separate from the word’s ability to form a concept [*koncipirovanie*] of its object—it is precisely this internal dialogism that has such enormous power to shape style.” Ibid., 279.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 330.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

A clear instance of heteroglossia, as described by Bakhtin, can be found in the Pentecost narrative of the opening chapters of the book of Acts, an instance that dramatically highlights the dialogic nature of this text. In this episode, Luke not only includes double-voicedness within the narrative, but does so by using other languages. The speech given by Peter then in Acts 2 is a provocative instance of heteroglossia in the narrative. While other characters who are present for this heteroglossic miracle do not believe it to be true, and suggest the believers are drunk, the reader is given the prioritized position and understands the action of the spirit through this use of multiple languages. Burrus observes, “If they are drunk, however, they are drunk on the exhilarating spirit of heteroglossia itself, charged by the energy of an excess of fiery tongues.”¹²⁹ This instance of heteroglossia is not only multi-voiced but also multi-layered; voices speak in numerous ways in this brief episode. First, the holy spirit enables all present to speak and understand various languages. Second, the “outsiders” hear an even different language, that of drunkards. Third, Peter speaks in a tongue that everyone present is able to comprehend. Fourth his first words quote the prophet Joel, adding another voice to this multiplicity of voices. Finally, through this heteroglossia, the author’s voice is also present through the message of Peter to the crowd as he proclaims Joel’s prophecy and presents the message of Jesus (2:38); however, this authorial voice does not overpower the other voices in the narrative. Burrus notes the Bakhtinian quality of the narrative: “Luke is present (and also, paradoxically, absent) as ‘author’ equally in his mobilization of a heteroglossia that cannot finally be contained. Nor, therefore, can

¹²⁹ Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles,” 148.

Lukan heteroglossia be reduced—or inflated—to a single, inclusive ‘Spirit’ of truth. Speech in Luke-Acts remains textured by contingency, split or doubled by the awareness of other ‘tongues’, spaces and temporalities.”¹³⁰ This instance of heteroglossia exemplifies the dialogic nature of the narrative, as all voices (including that of the author) are present, and the “truth” is not found in one voice, but in multiple voices—the essence of dialogic truth.

A Topsy-Turvy World: Bakhtin’s Concept of Carnival

Carnavalesque discourse breaks through the laws of a language censored by grammar and semantics and, at the same time, is a social and political protest.

~Julia Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel”

According to Bakhtin, carnival is one of the “most complex and most interesting problems in the history of culture.”¹³¹ Bakhtin devotes much of his writing to theories of carnival and the carnivalesque, as a literary phenomenon. While the medieval carnival looms large in his theory, Bakhtin notes the presence of the carnivalesque in antiquity, notably in forms of Christian narrative, observing that, “carnivalization is even more powerfully present in apocryphal Christian literature.”¹³² While Bakhtin does not provide a specific example of this powerful presence, it can be seen within the texts of the

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 122.

¹³² Ibid., 135.

martyrs, such as *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, as numerous hierarchies are disrupted through the deaths of the martyrs (male/female; free/slave; gladiator/martyr). Additionally, the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew* includes numerous carnivalesque moments, as will be exemplified in chapter four.

The theory of carnivalesque, like other concepts in Bakhtin, is multifaceted.

However, a particularly powerful definition is found in Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*:

Carnival is a pageant without footlights and without a division into performers and spectators. In carnival everyone is an active participant...Carnivalistic life is life drawn out of its usual rut, it is to some extent "life turned inside out," "the reverse side of the world." The laws, prohibitions, and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary, that is non-carnival, life are suspended during carnival: what is suspended first of all is the hierarchical structure and all the forms of terror, reverence, piety, and etiquette connected with it – that is, everything resulting from socio-hierarchical inequality or any other form of inequality among people.¹³³

Bakhtin's concept of carnival thus emphasizes the suspension of hierarchical structures.

Where inequality persists in society, carnival intervenes and manifests itself in literary representations. Thus, carnival suspends traditional hierarchies and blurs the boundaries usually placed between people, reversing typical roles.¹³⁴ Carnival provides a new portrait of life, where, if only for a moment, social inversions occur. While the juxtaposition of contrasts is a crucial part of Bakhtin's carnivalesque, carnival cannot be simply understood as the reversal of hierarchical structures. A historical carnival is a short event, and thus hierarchical structures return to their original formation following the festivities. Within literature, the moment is similarly brief and the disrupted hierarchal

¹³³ Ibid., 122–123.

¹³⁴ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 77.

structures are reinstated. Yet, in this suspended moment unbound contact between people occurs, which is remembered after the moment concludes. Even as societal hierarchies are inverted, the space of carnival “celebrates the shift itself, the very process of replaceability, and not the precise item that is replaced.”¹³⁵

There is also a universal nature to carnival, in that all people participate in it. Of the medieval carnival, Bakhtin notes, “Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age.”¹³⁶ In the historical carnival, people experience carnival via living it; this gave the carnival intrinsic power. The hierarchal suspension and communication between these opposing groups that occurs during carnival is a circumstance that is impossible to imagine in every day life. Yet, the literary imaginings of moments of carnival remind people of the possibility of this topsy-turvy world.¹³⁷

Laughter plays a particularly ambivalent role within carnival and carnivalesque literature, as laughter within these moments is both elated and disdainful. Bakhtin describes carnival laughter as directly connected with ritual laughter in the ancient world. In ritual laughter, Bakhtin’s term for laughter in religious atmospheres, the ridicule is usually focused on a higher being. For instance, in ancient Greece laughter was viewed as

¹³⁵ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 125.

¹³⁶ Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 10.

¹³⁷ The description of Bakhtin’s carnival as a “topsy-turvy world” is first found in a quote from *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, who describe carnival as a world of “topsy-turvy, of heterogot exuberance, of ceaseless overrunning and excess where all is mixed, hybrid, ritually degraded and defiled.” Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1986), 8.

a channel for religious expression and was a ritual in cultic activity.¹³⁸ One literature in which this can be illustrated is through Greek theater. For instance, in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Dionysus is portrayed as human and is relentlessly teased because of his stupidity. While Dionysus was often ridiculed in antiquity, other gods were also engaged through laughter. Bakhtin interprets this through a human reaction to calamity: "Ritual laughter was a reaction to *crises* in the life of the sun (solstices), crises in the life of a deity, in the life of the world and of man (funeral laughter). In it, ridicule was fused with rejoicing."¹³⁹ This incorporation of ridicule along with rejoicing reveals the ambivalent nature of both laughter and carnival.

One way in which carnival is ambivalent is through the role of the participants. While the participants in the carnival are actors and contributors to the carnival, they are also spectators. Thus, when the carnival participants laugh, the laugh is ambivalent according to Bakhtin in that it is "simultaneously joyous and derisive."¹⁴⁰ The ambivalence inherent in carnival is seen most clearly through the crowning and immanent decrowning that occurs in carnivalistic rituals. This cyclical practice includes dualistic forces pulling against one another. As Bakhtin describes, these rituals are "ambivalent from the very start."¹⁴¹ In this way, laughter is not able to be used as a tool of oppression, but instead is an object of resistance. This resistant laughter roused by carnival is also

¹³⁸ Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, *Laughing Gods, Weeping Virgins: Laughter in the History of Religion* (Routledge, 2013), 30.

¹³⁹ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 127, author's emphasis.

¹⁴⁰ Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 91.

¹⁴¹ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 124.

related to Bakhtin's idea of truth: "Laughter is essentially not an external but an interior form of truth; it cannot be transformed into seriousness without destroying and distorting the very contents of the truth which it unveils."¹⁴²

Carnival is perhaps the most widely used of Bakhtin's theory.¹⁴³ It is found in texts of all kinds, and is particularly noticeable when the author/text addresses a system of power. For this reason many scholars have utilized carnival in their examinations of all kinds of literature, including biblical texts. David McCracken, for instance, suggests that carnivalesque discourse can be found in the Gospels. McCracken, who also identifies the gospels as *menippea*, sees the setting of all the gospels as scandalous, because of the way the "kingdom of God is offered as a disruption of worldly fixity and stability and where the crucial issue about character is its relation to this disruptive kingdom."¹⁴⁴ The entire gospel message is scandalous, according to McCracken. Furthermore, the protagonist of the gospel, Jesus, is crowned as king, yet is arrested and crucified. Subsequently, the gospels are carnivalesque. McCracken, however, inserts a clarification, "But this is a

¹⁴² Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 94.

¹⁴³ Biblical scholars often use Bakhtin's carnival in their interpretations of various narratives. In addition to the examples given below, see: Craig, *Reading Esther*; L Juliana M Claassens, "Laughter and Tears: Carnivalistic Overtones in the Stories of Sarah and Hagar," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 3 (September 2005): 295–308; Fischer, "Bakhtin's Carnival and the Gospel of Luke"; Eubank, "Bakhtin and Lukan Politics"; Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible*; Peter I. Barta et al., *Carnivalizing Difference: Bakhtin and the Other* (Routledge, 2013); Jonathan Ingleby, "The Justice of Equality: A Biblical and Postcolonial Perspective," in *Carnival Kingdom*, ed. Marijke Hoek, Jonathan Ingleby, and Andy Kingston-Smith (Gloucester: Wide Margin, 2013).

¹⁴⁴ McCracken, "Character in the Boundary," 39.

carnival of violence, in contrast to the unspecified kingdom of God, a different kind of carnival.”¹⁴⁵

Raj Nadella provides an example of carnival from the Gospel of Luke via the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (16:19-31).¹⁴⁶ Nadella’s reading incorporates four particular aspects of carnival: “contrasts, feasts, the motif of death, and reversals.”¹⁴⁷ This parable, which is only found in Luke, contrasts the earthly poverty of Lazarus, who lies at the gate of a rich man who is feasting while the poor man starves. When both men die, the reversal occurs as the rich man finds only torment in the afterlife and Lazarus is comforted. Nadella observes that the scene in the afterlife is a “direct inversion of the previous scene” on earth.¹⁴⁸ The carnival reversal in the Lukan parable, though, is not temporary, but rather is eternal. This type of complete reversal differs from the Bakhtinian description of carnival. Because of this unique portrayal, the parable does not sanction the constructions that are targeted during a carnival reversal, in this case poverty/wealth. Nadella concludes, “In this manner the Lukan carnival appears to be more carnivalesque and liberating, in at least two respects, than anything one can find in the works of Bakhtin, Dostoevsky or Rabelais.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 95–99.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 95.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 97.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 99.

Intertextuality and Feminist Dialogics:

Feminist Use of the Bakhtinian Concepts of Dialogism and Carnival

The Bakhtinian concepts described above are used frequently within literary, cultural, historical and biblical criticism. Additionally, these concepts have also proved useful for feminist criticism, especially the ideas of dialogism and carnival. Barbara Green confirms, “The most helpful ‘takeover’ of his thought . . . has been feminist analysis.”¹⁵⁰ One of the main reasons for this “takeover” is the way in which Bakhtinian theories include multiple voices, which are not only heard but are necessary for true dialogue to occur. As outlined above, theories such as polyphony, dialogism, heteroglossia, and carnival challenge the idea of one meaning, one truth, and one voice. Bakhtinian theory encompasses numerous identities, ideologically, from varying places within society. Moreover, these theories do not conflate marginalized or minority voices into one; it is integral to Bakhtinian theory that each voice/identity remain intact, in its own world and with its own system of beliefs. In this way, Bakhtinian theory coincides with theories of intersectionality that have been recently used by feminist theorists.¹⁵¹

While Bakhtin’s ideas often align with aspects of feminist theory, it should be noted that Bakhtin himself does not include or reference women as speakers, authors, or thinkers, nor does Bakhtin specifically address issues of gender in his writing. This

¹⁵⁰ Green, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship*, 58.

¹⁵¹ See, for example: Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Intersectionality and Identity Politics: Learning from Violence Against Women of Color,” in *Reconstructing Political Theory: Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Mary Lyndon Shanley and Uma Narayan (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 178–93.

omission is striking, especially considering the time period in which he was writing, when a number of female writers were present and known. In *Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin covers the history of the novel from antiquity to the end of the Victorian period but he never names female writers such as Jane Austen or the Bronte sisters, or even George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans). He does, however, use a novel by Charles Dickens in a lengthy example and mentions other Victorian male novelists such as William Thackeray. Additionally, Bakhtin does not specifically include women in his discussions of dialogue, nor does he include the point of view of women in his writings. While his theoretical concepts often incorporate marginalized voices, as the concept of carnival exemplifies, it often appears as if women and women's voices were not a part of this conversation, nor a part of his ideological world, or at the very least, in a subordinated part of his ideological world.¹⁵²

Even with this striking omission, in the 1980s and 90s feminists in the field of literary studies began to use Bakhtinian theory and develop methodologies combining feminist theory with Bakhtin's ideas. One of the most important feminist voices to engage Bakhtinian theory is Julia Kristeva, who is also credited with introducing Bakhtin to the west.¹⁵³ Kristeva found Bakhtin to be very useful for her own theoretical questions

¹⁵² Wayne Booth's observation on this omission are appropriate: "The omission may not seem strange if we view Bakhtin in the light of Western literary criticism, which has seldom acknowledged separate female voices. And it is not strange, in the light of the almost exclusively male criticism in the Soviet Union during Bakhtin's lifetime. But surely it is strange discovered in a Bakhtin." Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism," *Critical Inquiry* 9, no. 1 (September 1, 1982): 54.

¹⁵³ Kristeva first referenced Bakhtin during a presentation on the theory of the novel in a Roland Barthes's seminar in 1966. Andrea Lesic-Thomas, "Behind Bakhtin: Russian Formalism and Kristeva's Intertextuality," *Paragraph* 28, no. 3 (2005): 2.

and ultimately developed his ideas as the foundation for her theory of “intertextuality.” Kristeva calls herself a feminist, yet is acutely aware of the limitations of the feminist movement especially as it relates to academic scholarship. She writes, “I am quite dedicated to the feminist movement but I think feminism, or any other movement, need not expect unconditional backing on the part of an intellectual woman.”¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Kristeva’s theory considers gender in ways that Bakhtin does not, one reason why many feminists today find her theoretical engagement with Bakhtin valuable.

I find Bakhtin’s theory to align with facets of feminist concerns, theory, and hermeneutics. The following sections provide the scholarly groundwork and conversation for this appropriation, most of which is through literary criticism. I begin with Kristeva’s intertextuality, as it is used throughout this project. Then, I move to Dale Bauer’s idea of a feminist dialogic, which provides a feminist political interpretation for Bakhtinian dialogism. Finally the work of several other feminists who use Bakhtin is outlined, along with an example of an interpretation using these theoretical strategies.

Intertextuality

Using Bakhtin’s dialogism hand-in-hand with semiotics, Kristeva developed the idea of intertextuality. The basics of this theory can be found in two main essays: “The

¹⁵⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 10.

Bounded Text” and “Word, Dialogue and Novel.”¹⁵⁵ In these essays, Kristeva returns to the definition of a “text” revealing the way all utterances rely on other utterances within a text, a concept that she dubs intertextuality. She elucidates:

The text is therefore a *productivity*, and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive), and hence can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones; and second, that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another.¹⁵⁶

Within a novel Kristeva demonstrates that utterances¹⁵⁷ rely upon speech as well as written texts, making the narrative as a whole appear complete and finalized. Yet, the utterances also have value and significance outside of the text; the significance of these utterances change according to reader and setting. For this reason utterances have multiple and numerous meanings—within the text, within the historical context in which the text was written, in the future context within which the text will be read, etc. In this way, utterances within a text are in constant dialogue with one another.

According to Kristeva, as an utterance acts within a novel, it is directed to two different places. First, the utterance is towards a referent—the speech of the author or actor of the utterance. Second, the utterance points to a text, or citation—the words of

¹⁵⁵ Julia Kristeva, “Bounded Text,” in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 36–63; Julia Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 64–91.

¹⁵⁶ Kristeva, “Bounded Text,” 36, author’s emphasis.

¹⁵⁷ Kristeva defines the utterance within a novel as an “*operation*, a motion that links, and even more so, *constitutes* what might be called the *arguments* of the operation, which, in the study of a written text, are either words or word sequences (sentences, paragraphs) as sememes.” Ibid., 37, author’s emphasis.

another whom the author or actor acknowledges.¹⁵⁸ This occurs simultaneously within the utterance; thus, the words have multiple meanings and referents. Kristeva uses the example of the medieval carnival to describe this function: “The scene of the carnival introduces the split speech act: the *actor* and the *crowd* are each in turn simultaneously subject and addressee of discourse. The carnival is also the bridge between the two split occurrences as well as the place where each of the terms is acknowledged: the author (actor + spectator).”¹⁵⁹ In the midst of the action of the utterance, there exists a space where speech and text intersect; it is this space that bounds the text.

Kristeva draws heavily on two of Bakhtin’s concepts: dialogue and ambivalence. In her analysis of these two terms, she positions them spatially as functioning horizontally and vertically. The horizontal axis (dialogue) describes the way in which the word in a text connects the subject (author) and addressee (reader); the vertical axis (ambivalence) connects the text to other texts that have been written and are a reference for the current text.¹⁶⁰ This variation of Bakhtin’s concepts provides the foundation for intertextuality: all texts are constantly interconnected to other texts. The concepts of dialogism and ambivalence are directly related, in Kristeva’s reading of Bakhtin: “Bakhtinian dialogism identifies writing as both subjectivity and communication, or better, as intertextuality. Confronted with this dialogism, the notion of a ‘person-subject of writing’ becomes blurred, yielding to that of ‘ambivalence of writing.’”¹⁶¹ Kristeva’s

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶⁰ Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” 66.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 68.

interpretation of Bakhtinian ambivalence explains the way a word functions within a text. When a writer chooses a word that has been previously used by another writer, the word preserves the previous meaning while incorporating a new meaning within it as well. In this way, the word is ambivalent in that it is the incorporation of two meanings within one word, or utterance. She notes: “the novel is the only genre in which ambivalent words appear; that is the specific characteristic of its structure.”¹⁶²

Following Kristeva’s coining of this concept, intertextuality sparked quite a deal of debate among scholars.¹⁶³ Mary Orr describes this circumstance: “Kristeva’s complex and careful redefinitions of Bakhtin’s work on ‘dialogism,’ ‘carnival,’ and ‘polyphony,’ as ‘intertextuality’ were thus rapidly re-spun in a plethora of theoretical and applied work on language, cultural practices, and power structures now understood as the ‘linguistic turn.’”¹⁶⁴ Indeed, the versatility of this theory allows it to be appropriated by scholars in a variety of ways; it has found much traction within postmodern, feminist, and postcolonial

¹⁶² Ibid., 73.

¹⁶³ Take these two articles for example. The first, by Lesic-Thomas, argues that Kristeva’s intertextuality is based more on Russian formalism than Bakhtinian theory. The second, by Duff, argues that Kristeva’s original concept relies heavily on Bakhtin. These debates abound in the conversation on intertextuality, a concept which seems to be continually revised and reused in various ways. Lesic-Thomas, “Behind Bakhtin: Russian Formalism and Kristeva’s Intertextuality”; David Duff, “Intertextuality versus Genre Theory: Bakhtin, Kristeva and the Question of Genre,” *Paragraph* 25, no. 1 (March 2002): 54–73.

¹⁶⁴ Mary Orr, “Intertextuality,” ed. Michael Ryan et al., *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory*, Credo Reference Online (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

circles, for instance.¹⁶⁵ For example, Judith Perkins shows how Greek novels, as an emerging genre, connected intertextually with other ancient narratives. Through this intertextuality, the idea of the “self” was constructed within the Greek novel and subsequently challenged by the narratives of the Apocryphal Acts. In this way, Perkins argues: “social change is negotiated through literary interactions.”¹⁶⁶

Like most of Bakhtin’s theoretical concepts, Kristeva’s intertextuality can be used alongside feminist theory and analysis. Kristeva herself brings gender into her theoretical conversation; although, she does not specifically claim feminism for herself. As Birgit Schippers observes, Kristeva’s theories align with feminist theory and philosophy, yet are not easily appropriated into specific feminist political or ethical movements.¹⁶⁷ In the current project, Kristeva’s intertextuality is used as a reading strategy, especially between ancient narratives as the example given above from Perkins illustrates. Yet, the Bakhtinian aspects within intertextuality are applicable to feminist concerns, and thus incorporated into feminist reading strategies. Examples of feminist appropriation of Bakhtinian theory will be given below.

Feminist Dialogics

¹⁶⁵ See chapters four and five in Graham Allen’s overview: Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, Second edition, The New Critical Idiom (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁶⁶ Judith Perkins, “This World or Another? The Intertextuality of the Greek Romances, the Apocryphal Acts and Apuleius’ Metamorphoses,” *SEMEIA*, no. 80 (1997): 248.

¹⁶⁷ Birgit Schippers, *Julia Kristeva and Feminist Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 2.

Written in 1988, Bauer's *Feminist Dialogics* proposes a specific method for feminists who want to use Bakhtinian theory. Bauer begins by noting the absence of discussions about sexual difference within modern/postmodern theory as well as the absence of female theorists engaging postmodern theory. She writes, "My project is to determine a viable intersection between feminism - my own feminist voice - and modern/postmodern criticism, particularly through Bakhtin."¹⁶⁸ For Bauer, Bakhtinian dialogism becomes a space open to the constant engagement of all people, regardless of class or gender. Admitting that Bakhtin does not himself actively include women in the dialogic community, Bauer uses feminist theory to read the female voice into Bakhtin's dialogic community.

Bauer's method begins a known practice of feminist analysis—reading the woman's voice back into the text. The inclusion of the female voice, and the feminist critic, aids in Bakhtin's desire to dismantle hierarchal and patriarchal structures.¹⁶⁹ In Bakhtinian dialogism, various voices are needed and they interact through dialogue on equal ground, a facet which Bauer calls "empowering."¹⁷⁰ Using Bakhtin's theory of carnival as well, Bauer reads four American novels from the nineteenth and twentieth

¹⁶⁸ Bauer, *Feminist Dialogics*, 2.

¹⁶⁹ Bauer writes: "My effort, then, is to read the woman's voice - excluded or silenced by dominant linguistic or narrative strategies - back *into* the dialogue in order to reconstruct the process by which she was read out in the first place." Ibid., 4. This strategy has been used and repeated by numerous feminist scholars, especially within biblical studies. See Johnson-DeBaufre, "Texts and Readers, Rhetorics and Ethics."

¹⁷⁰ Bauer, *Feminist Dialogics*, 5.

century using the strategy of feminist dialogics.¹⁷¹ Bauer utilizes Bakhtin's figure of the "fool" in her reading, especially the elements of incomprehension found in the characterization of fools. The women then in the novels that Bauer evaluates are "fools" in that they do not understand (or misunderstand) social conventions. This allows women to enter into dialogue with other voices in the novels. Subsequently, the fools, who are also female protagonists, engage in dialogue with those who are in a static discourse. She writes, "Bakhtin's carnival hero seeks to resist the essentializing framework "of *other people's* words about [them] that might finalize and deaden [them]."¹⁷² In Bauer's reading, the female protagonists in the novel become carnivalized fools who resist social convention through subversive means. As Bakhtin admits, though, carnival is temporary. In the return to the non-carnival moment, Bauer reads the silence in the novels as instigating dialogue, even when these women are silenced through death (suicide, in three out of four of Bauer's examples).

Through her analysis of these four novels, Bauer concludes, "A feminist dialogics makes intelligible forms of women's oppression and silence. I would suggest that these marginal voices in some ways challenge and, in other ways, support the ideology of community."¹⁷³ Ultimately, Bauer's feminist appropriation of Bakhtin adds an important facet to this conversation: politics. Feminist dialogics points to the potential cultural

¹⁷¹ The novels she analyzes are: *The Blithedale Romance*, *The Golden Bowl*, *The House of Mirth*, and *The Awakening*.

¹⁷² Bauer, *Feminist Dialogics*, 14.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 165.

resistance within these dialogic novels by the incorporation of women into the dialogue.

As Bauer and McKistry describe:

A feminist dialogics is, above all, an example of the cultural resistance that Teresa de Lauretis argues is a necessary strategy for feminist political practice. For the object is not, ultimately to produce a feminist monologic voice, a dominant voice that is a reversal of the patriarchal voice (even if such a project were conceivable), but to create a feminist dialogics that recognizes power and discourse as indivisible, monologism as a model of ideological dominance, and narrative as inherently multifocal, as a form of cultural resistance that celebrates the dialogic voice that speaks with many tongues, which incorporates multiple voices of the cultural web.¹⁷⁴

For this reason, a number of feminist scholars have used Bauer's feminist dialogics to produce readings that resist oppressive structures.¹⁷⁵

Other Feminist Uses of Bakhtinian Theory

Incorporating deconstruction and psychoanalysis into her use of Bakhtinian dialogism, Anne Hermann compares the writings of Virginia Woolf and Christa Wolf. Admitting Bakhtin's lack of attention to gender and sexual difference, Hermann suggests that dialogism blurs the boundaries of these structures. Yet, she does not ignore Bakhtin's

¹⁷⁴ Dale M. Bauer and Susan Jaret McKinstry, eds., *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 4.

¹⁷⁵ See, for example: Diane Price Herndl, "The Dilemmas of a Feminine Dialogic," in *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic*, ed. Dale M. Bauer and Susan Jaret McKinstry (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 7–24; Kay Halasek, "Feminism and Bakhtin: Dialogic Reading in the Academy," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (1992): 63–73; Carolina Núñez Puente, *Feminism and Dialogics: Charlotte Perkins, Meridel Le Sueur, Mikhail M. Bakhtin* (Universitat de València, 2011); Peter Hitchcock, *Dialogics of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Kisthardt, "Flirting with Patriarchy: Feminist Dialogics," in *The Stowe Debate: Rhetorical Strategies in Uncle Tom's Cabin*, ed. Mason I. Lowance and Ellen E. Westbrook (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 37–56.

erasure of the female within his work, naming Bakhtin's theory "gender-blind" because of Bakhtin's tendency to posit the self and the other as masculine subjects.¹⁷⁶ As Herrmann sees it, Bakhtin is "blind" to the female sex altogether, which Herrmann names repressive. Therefore, Herrmann turns to Kristeva's theory of intertextuality and Irigaray's notion of specularity, which she interprets as a theory that "insists on the construction of 'an/other woman' as essential to the representability of the female subject."¹⁷⁷ In the end, through her reading of these two authors, Herrmann determines that the dialogical struggle between the female author and a female character leads to the ultimate silencing of either one or the other, an adjustment on the unfinalizability of dialogism, as seen in Bakhtinian thought.¹⁷⁸

Nancy Glazener provides an alternative view when she argues that feminists should not use Bakhtinian theory unless the theories are adequately re-conceptualized. Focusing on the use of the "other" in Bakhtin's work, she argues that this subverts feminist analysis.¹⁷⁹ Glazener argues that feminist usage of carnival, and in particular, its reliance upon the importance and effectiveness of subversion, is ultimately an

¹⁷⁶ Anne Herrmann, *The Dialogic and Difference: An/other Woman in Virginia Woolf and Christa Wolf* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 28.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷⁸ The silencing occurs through Woolf's silencing of herself, through suicide, and Wolf's silencing of her main character. According to Herrmann's reading, the dialogue ends in both cases. This is in sharp contrast to Bauer's reading, where the women are silenced in the novel but the dialogue continues nonetheless, a more Bakhtinian approach.

¹⁷⁹ Nancy Glazener, "Dialogic Subversion: Bakhtin, the Novel, and Gertrude Stein," in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, ed. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd, Revised & Expanded 2nd edition (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; Distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave, 2001), 157.

oversimplification of Bakhtinian theory and will not ultimately result in political benefit for women. Yet, she does find two major places where feminists can draw from Bakhtinian thought, if properly conceptualized. First, Bakhtin's proposition that "literature represents a struggle among socio-ideological languages unsettles the patriarchal myth that there could be a language of truth transcending relations of power and desire."¹⁸⁰ Second, Bakhtin's defining of words and utterances as shaped by society. This aspect leads Glazener to suggest that gender relations can be incorporated into the understandings of language. Ultimately, Glazener finds Gloria Stein to be a helpful feminist voice in which to reconceptualize Bakhtin theories.¹⁸¹

Providing an example of how the above practices can be used to read and interpret biblical narrative, Ellen van Wolde's reading of the characters of Ruth and Tamar utilizes Bakhtinian theory and intertextuality with a feminist hermeneutic. Van Wolde reads Tamar's story from Genesis as an intertextual referent for the story of Ruth. Using Bakhtin's ideas on outsidedness, she argues that the two women are outsiders as, non-Judahite women; thus, "as foreigners they are able to confront the insiders and to hold a mirror up to their faces."¹⁸² But it is not only their foreignness that places them as outsiders, but also their gender. In the end, though, both Ruth and Tamar return to being invisible, as they are assimilated into Israelite history as insiders.¹⁸³ Here, van Wolde

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 155.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 172.

¹⁸² Ellen van Wolde, "Intertextuality: Ruth in Dialogue with Tamar," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 451.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

succeeds in producing a new intertextual reading of a biblical narrative through a Bakhtinian feminist hermeneutic.

Ultimately, while Bakhtin himself was simply not aware of feminist concerns or even female writers, his theory seems to be ready, open to feminist concerns. As seen above, this openness to feminist analysis is especially found in the concepts of dialogism, polyphony, and carnival.¹⁸⁴ Like the feminists mentioned above, I find Bakhtinian theory to provide a fruitful place in which to apply feminist hermeneutics. In this dissertation, I rely upon these early examples of feminist appropriations of Bakhtin for my own interpretation, yet I also find Bakhtinian theory itself accessible to the incorporation of other voices, including those of women and slaves. I concur with Kay Halesek, who writes: "In the end, I - like Kristeva and Bauer - am not so concerned with Bakhtin's omitting the feminist voice in his work. We, you and I, can add that. It need not be present, for feminist voices will enter the dialogue despite (or perhaps because) of this absence. We make [Bakhtin's] monologue dialogic."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ However, some feminist scholars have found usefulness in other Bakhtinian concepts such as chronotope and the grotesque. See Marianne Cave, "Bakhtin and Feminism: The Chronotopic Female Imagination," *Women's Studies* 18, no. 2-3 (1990): 117-27; Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁸⁵ Halasek, "Feminism and Bakhtin," 73.

CHAPTER 3

The Girl Who Sees: Luke 22:47-62

Truth is on the side of the oppressed today, it's against the oppressor.

You don't need anything else.

~Malcolm X

The story of Peter's denial is familiar to most readers. Found in all four gospels and featuring one of Jesus' closest disciples, it includes, unlike many in the gospels, slaves at particularly vital points. This story is further evidence of Luke as a menippean dialogic text, as various voices speak simultaneously. These voices are also indicative of the social polyphony occurring in Luke; voices of speakers from various statuses are given equal weight. Traditionally, scholars focus on Peter's characterization in this narrative, including his denial and suggesting possible ways that the denial functions theologically.¹ However, I argue that focusing on the παιδίσκη produces a reading that is attentive to the polyphonic voices in Luke which leads to a dialogic truth found through the words of the most marginalized character, a female slave.

Focused on the παιδίσκη, this chapter provides an exegetical, literary, and theoretical analysis of this story,. Using Bakhtin's theory of "outsidedness," I show that the slave's perspective as an outsider to the group allows her to see and vocalize narrative truths. Her positionality, then, enables her to function within the narrative as a focalizer

¹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 787–790; Carroll, *Luke*, 448–450; González, *Luke*, 253; Culpepper, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 9:437–441.

as her gaze directs the reader during this narrative segment. The statement of the παιδίσκη encompasses a truth, not only about Peter's character, but also about Luke's idea of discipleship. Juxtaposed with Peter's lie, the nature and source of "truth" itself is in focus. In this way, Bakhtin's dialogism becomes a useful heuristic, as these two opposing forces—truth and deception—engage in dialogue with one another. The female slave from Luke 22 is the first of three female slaves (all three designated as παιδίσκη) found in Luke-Acts that function crucially in the narrative—the slave from Luke 22 provides the first and clearest example of a female slave in Luke-Acts who speaks truth. Through an examination of her statement and also the narrative context of this story, I argue that the truth stated by this slave-girl encompasses Luke's idea of discipleship—that is, a disciple is "one who is with Jesus." This definition opens the window for others, beyond the twelve, to function as disciples in the gospel. It also questions the true discipleship of the twelve male disciples, who disappear during the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. Ironically, Peter throws his own discipleship into question through his denial of the slave's statement.

I examine Luke 22 not only exegetically but also intertextually, in this case, reading Luke alongside Mark, as well as occasionally Matthew and John. Following the scholarly consensus, I assume Markan priority, and include Mark as one of Luke's sources. This intertextual reading illuminates Luke's particular view of the relationship between slavery and truth, especially when his redactions of Mark are considered. Additionally, I turn to contemporaneous literary narratives, Chariton's *Callirhoe* and the *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, for intertextual dialogue concerning representations of similar female slaves. As Whitmarsh notes, "Greek and Roman drama gives a crucial (if

ancillary) role to slaves, primarily as plot movers; indeed, slaves, as features of everyday life, make regular appearances throughout ancient literature. It is arguably in the novel, however, that we meet the widest range of social types.”² Thus, reading Chariton intertextually, in dialogue with Luke’s novel, fills out the narrative and broadens one’s understanding of both texts. Additionally, a later text, the *Acts of Thomas*, includes a female slave who functions in a similar way to Luke’s female slave; she gazes at an apostles, voices a truth, and is a focalizer in the narrative. Ultimately, this chapter carefully examines Luke 22:47-62 with a focus on the role and words of the female slave and reads it intertextually with several other narratives in order to explore the role of truth in the gospel as well as within her statement. Through this Bakhtinian dialogic reading, the παιδίσκη becomes a focalizer, a truth-teller, and part of the polyphonic dialogue occurring within Luke-Acts.

Before investigating the text itself, I define my view of discipleship as seen in Luke specifically. This overview strengthens the interpretation that the words of the slave-girl provide a definition for discipleship. I then move to an in depth exegetical exploration of the passage, including a comparative reading of the other canonical gospels in order to show the ways that Luke presents this story differently than the other gospels. I also turn to a Greek novel, Chariton’s *Callirhoe*, which provides a representation of a faux female slave, as well as an example of the role of slavery and truth as seen in literature of this same period. I finally return to Luke and break up the discussion of the female slave into the following sections: the gaze of the slave-girl; the

² Whitmarsh, “Class,” 84.

statement of the slave; the role of light and dark in Luke-Acts; and the statements made in support of the slave-girl's statement.

Discipleship in Luke

Within New Testament studies, discipleship is often defined as the relationship between a teacher and disciple.³ When looking to the gospels, Jesus is noted as the model for discipleship. As Fernando Segovia notes, "Such a conception appears very prominently in the studies on Mark and Luke-Acts, and less so in those on Matthew and John."⁴ Yet, each gospel focuses on different aspects of discipleship. For instance, Mark portrays Jesus' disciples negatively. Even when including the female followers, as Elizabeth Struthers Malbon has shown, everyone is fallible when it comes to discipleship in Mark.⁵ Comparatively, Luke portrays Jesus' disciples more positively. In fact, redaction criticism shows that when Luke utilizes portraits of disciples from Mark, they are changed and revised to include more positive portrayals.⁶ In addition to this, Luke's view of discipleship is not limited to the twelve. For example, while the twelve are listed

³ Fernando F. Segovia, "Introduction: Call and Discipleship - Toward a Re-Examination of the Shape and Character of Christian Existence in the New Testament," in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵ Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 29–48.

⁶ Kim shows that Luke takes the passion predictions from Mark (Mark 9:32/Luke 9:45; Mark 10:32/Luke 18:34) and omits the other verses from Mark. Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, 90.

in 6:14-16, the following verse, 6:17, notes a “great crowd of his disciples” (ὄχλος πολὺς μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ). Additionally, in Luke 8:1-3 a list of several women from Galilee are named.⁷ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues that this list, along with one found in Mark 16:1, incorporates “pre-Gospel traditions [that] transmit names of Galilean women disciples.”⁸ Similar instances of opening up discipleship to those beyond the twelve are found in 19:37, 24:9, and 24:33. Further, this openness is seen most clearly through the replacement of Judas by Matthias in Acts 1:26.⁹

Using Jesus as the model for discipleship in Luke, Charles Talbert suggests that the description of discipleship “involves a detachment from all other allegiances and a total allegiance to Jesus.”¹⁰ One particular passage that addresses this aspect of Lukan discipleship is Luke 14:25-33.¹¹ Ultimately, in Luke, a disciple of Jesus should renounce all, πάντα. This includes a person’s family, life, and, as Luke adds, wealth.¹² In this way, Jesus becomes the model for discipleship in Luke; disciples should follow the example of Jesus, who gives up everything. Christopher Hays writes, “From a narrative-critical

⁷ See also Robert J. Karris, “Women and Discipleship in Luke,” in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 3 (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 23–43.

⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 139.

⁹ Of course, this view is also countered through the limitation of the roles of women found in Luke, as first argued by Jane Schaberg. Schaberg, “Luke.”

¹⁰ Charles H. Talbert, “Discipleship in Luke-Acts,” in *Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 62.

¹¹ A shorter version of this passage is also found in Matthew 10:37.

¹² Christopher M. Hays, *Luke’s Wealth Ethics: A Study in Their Coherence and Character* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 140.

perspective, Luke uses this would-be disciple to establish Jesus' poverty as something to be imitated, a constituent part of discipleship after Jesus. By extension, the disciples who follow Jesus without hesitation in 5:11, 27-28, leaving their jobs and becoming vulnerable to the same homelessness, are, at least in that capacity of leaving/following, also to be imitated."¹³ A similar idea is found in the saying of Jesus found in Luke 6:4: "A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher." This idea of following Jesus through imitation can also be seen in Acts, especially through the characterizations of Peter and Paul. As Talbert notes, "A remarkable series of correspondences between what Jesus does and says in Luke's Gospel and what the disciples [i.e., mainly Peter and Paul] do and say in "Acts."¹⁴

Yet, as is typical of the multi-voiced nature of Luke's gospel, "Luke hardly propounds a single, monolithic form of discipleship."¹⁵ In addition to the view of following and imitation, the strict requirements for discipleship, such as those listed in 14:25-33, could limit those who desire to be a disciple. Furthermore, when looking to the scenes of the crucifixion, it seems that many of the noted male disciples did not follow him to the cross, as is exemplified by the scene of Peter's betrayal. In contrast to these examples, when Jesus is on his way to the cross, a crowd including several women followed (23:27, 49). Additionally, as Jesus' body is taken to the tomb, another reference to the female followers from Galilee is included as they observed where his body was taken in order to prepare it for burial (24:55). Yet, unlike Mark, Luke's gospel includes

¹³ Ibid., 87.

¹⁴ Talbert, "Discipleship in Luke-Acts," 63.

¹⁵ Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 186.

specifically Peter (24:12) and other male disciples along with the female disciples in the resurrection narrative (ch. 24).

In this way, throughout Luke, the understanding of discipleship can be simplified to incorporate those who were “with” Jesus. Even through Peter’s denial, Peter remains a disciple in the end of Luke. Peter’s role as disciple/apostle continues into Acts, where he is a prominent leader in the movement to spread the message of Jesus. While Jesus does set high standards of discipleship in several of his sayings and parables in Luke, it seems that in the end those who remain “with” him are still able to be disciples. The statement made by the *παλιδίσκεν* solidifies this dialogic understanding of discipleship in Luke-Acts.

Setting the Scene: Luke 22:47-62

Peter’s denial, as found in Luke 22, is part of a longer narrative that occurs in Jerusalem and includes the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The structure of both Luke and Acts is often designated through geographical movement; in Luke, the destination is Jerusalem, while Acts begins in Jerusalem and ends in Rome.¹⁶ Luke’s first four chapters provide early information concerning Jesus’ life and preparation for ministry before Jesus goes to Galilee in 4:14. His ministry in Galilee includes teaching, healing, and exorcisms as described in 4:14-9:50. Then Jesus “sets his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51), and the journey is narrated in 9:51-19:27. The narrative climax of the

¹⁶ Michael Bachmann, “Jerusalem and Rome in Luke-Acts: Observations on the Structure and the Intended Message,” in *Luke-Acts and Empire: Essays in Honor of Robert L. Brawley*, ed. Robert L. Brawley et al. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 60–83.

gospel occurs in Jerusalem with his arrest, death, and crucifixion (19:28-24:53).¹⁷ The text also foreshadows the arrest of Jesus, as well as Peter's denial (22:34, 37). In this way, readers are expecting this narrative climax and tension is heightened in anticipation of these events.

Luke sets the scene for Peter's encounter with his questioners in the courtyard of the house (οἶκος) of the high priest in Jerusalem. Many scholars believe this high priest to be Caiaphas.¹⁸ The beginning of Luke even names Caiaphas along with Annas, Caiaphas's father in law, as high priests during this period (Luke 3:2).¹⁹ Yet, in the narrative containing Peter's denial, Luke does not give a name for this high priest. Mark does not provide a name for this high priest either, while both Matthew and John name Caiaphas as the high priest and owner of the house where Jesus is taken for questioning (Matthew 26:3, 57; John 11:49, 18:13, 24, and 28). In addition to these details provided by the gospel writers, other historical texts, such as Josephus, cite Caiaphas as the high priest in this period, confirming this detail of the narrative.²⁰

¹⁷ It should also be noted that Acts begins in Jerusalem and ends in Rome. Bachmann notes that Luke-Acts includes more references to both Jerusalem and Rome as compared to other writings in the New Testament. *Ibid.*, 61–62.

¹⁸ See Adele Reinhartz, *Caiaphas the High Priest* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2011).

¹⁹ The multiple listing of men in the family of the high priest is also found in Acts 4:6, in a list that also includes both Annas and Caiaphas. While this connection to both men is perhaps confusing to modern readers, Helen Bond suggests that Luke could have named both men here because of their role in the death of Jesus. She writes, "these traditions may well have referred to each man as 'high priest' –Annas out of respect for his previous position and prestige within the community, Caiaphas because he was the acting high priest at the time." Helen K. Bond, *Caiaphas: Friend of Rome and Judge of Jesus?* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 112.

²⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 20.224-51 and *Against Apion* 1.36.

By identifying this house as that of the high priest, and locating the story there, the gospel writers place Jesus and Peter in the domestic space of a large, elite house where powerful people meet and make decisions, and which has a courtyard large enough for groups to gather.²¹ The presence of slaves in such a place is no surprise.²² The reader has already met a high priest's slave (δοῦλος) in the scene of the arrest of Jesus (22:50), and both Mark and Matthew confirm the presence of slaves owned by the high priest (Mark 14:68; Matthew 26:71). Josephus notes that the house of the high priest was on the western hill of the city in Jerusalem; although this information cannot be historically confirmed it does provide a possibility for the imaginative setting of this scene.²³ Helen Bond explores this possibility as one of the locations for Caiaphas's house:

Archaeological excavations in the Upper City have provided a vivid glimpse into the homes of the Jerusalem elite, several of which were nothing short of mansions. Many were built in the style of Hellenistic or Roman villas with spacious reception halls, peristyle courtrooms, and even subfloor heating. The walls of the rooms were splendidly decorated with imitation marble, high-quality plastered frescoes, cornice work, and fine painting, while the floors were covered with beautifully colored mosaic pavements.²⁴

²¹ The courtyard of the house, noted in Luke 22:55, connects the setting of this story to Acts 12, to be explored in the next chapter.

²² See Jonathan Edmondson, "Slavery and the Roman Family," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: The Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 337–61.

²³ Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 2.426; François Bovon, *Luke 3: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28-24:53*, Hermeneia--a Critical and Historical Commentary (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 229.

²⁴ Bond, *Caiaphas*, 38–39. Bond also notes that the excavated houses in this area were clearly in observance with the Jewish law. In particular, the decorations were mostly geometric, and many of these elite houses included a *miqveh*, a ritual bath, as well.

Through these sources, in addition to the knowledge that the high priest was a high-ranking official in Jerusalem, one can assume that the setting where this took place was elite.

In Luke's version, after Jesus is taken to the house of the high priest, Peter appears "following from a distance," (ἡκολούθει μακρόθεν, 22:54). The word, ἀκολουθέω, meaning "to follow," is used within Luke, as well as the Synoptics, to indicate the action of the followers, often disciples, of Jesus.²⁵ In Luke it is used 13 times and is directly connected with the idea of discipleship.²⁶ For instance, the first time it is used in Luke's gospel is in the narrative of the calling of the disciples at the Lake of Gennesaret (5:11). In this scene, Peter along with James and John, the sons of Zebedee, are fishing on the lake when Jesus approaches them. Later, Peter uses it himself in a statement indicating his own commitment to leaving everything in order to follow Jesus (18:22). Comparatively, in Luke 22, Peter follows *from a distance* (μακρόθεν), which is notable,

²⁵ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon, Ninth Edition with a Revised Supplement*, ed. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, 9th Edition (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1996) s.v. ἀκολουθέω. See also Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1979) s.v. ἀκολουθέω.

²⁶ Luke 5:11, 27; 7:9; 9:11, 23, 49; 18:22, 28, 43; 22:10, 39, 54; and 23:49.

especially considering Peter's prominence in the gospel.²⁷ At this place in the gospel, the spatial framing of Peter's following foreshadows Peter's denial of Jesus.²⁸

Arriving, the group lights a fire in the middle of the courtyard and they all sit down, Peter in the middle of the group (μέσος αὐτῶν, 22:55).²⁹ While Luke does not indicate the statuses of the people who were in this group by the fire, John includes the observation that the slaves and servants (οἱ δοῦλοι καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται) made a fire, which Peter used to warm himself (18:18). In Luke's version, Peter, the ideal disciple, is in the middle of the group of people in the courtyard—easy to be seen. The first person in the group to recognize him is a slave-girl, a παιδίσκη, in fact, a “certain” (τις) slave-girl, who was “sitting by the light” (καθήμενον πρὸς τὸ φῶς, v. 56), a phrase which immediately signals her importance in the story, as will be shown.³⁰ While Luke does not indicate the owner of this slave-girl, Mark connects her to the high priest (παιδισκῶν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, 14:66), which is plausible as she is sitting in the courtyard of the high priest at night. The

²⁷ Simon Peter is first mentioned in Luke when Jesus heals his mother-in-law in Capernaum (4:38-39). Then, he is the first disciple approached when Jesus calls the disciples who were fishing on the lake (5:3-11). Peter is highlighted, along with John and James, in 8:51, for a healing, and also 9:28, in the scene of the transfiguration. Peter affirms that Jesus is the Messiah in 9:20.

²⁸ François Bovon suggests that Peter's “following” is a positive portrayal of Peter while the inclusion of “at a distance” creates tension in both the narrative and his character. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon, Ninth Edition with a Revised Supplement*, ed. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, 9th Edition (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1996). It is also worth noting that during the crucifixion scene a number of people, including “women who had been following him from Galilee,” watched the crucifixion “from a distance” (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν, 23:49).

²⁹ Luke Timothy Johnson suggests that “Peter was sitting toward the light, to explain [the slave-girl's] ability to study his features.” Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 357.

³⁰ I ascribe importance to Luke's addition that the slave-girl is sitting “by the light,” especially considering the way that Luke attaches significance to light and dark in both Luke and Acts. A section outlining this argument is included below.

girl fixes her gaze (ἀτενίσασα) upon Peter and speaks her words of truth: “This one was also with him” (καὶ οὕτως σὺν αὐτῷ ἦν, v. 56). Focusing on her effect on Peter, François Bovon narrates the moment this way: “The maidservant interrupts Peter’s rest. She does not speak directly to him, but does speak loudly enough so that he can hear.”³¹ While Bovon could be correct that she is not speaking directly to Peter, it is also worth acknowledging that this female slave may have not been in a position to speak directly to Peter, who is a free male.³²

Because of the importance verse 56 to my dissertation as a whole, I will explore it more closely later in this chapter. However, a few preliminary observations are in order. First, Luke calls her παιδίσκη. This word is a diminutive of the word παῖς, for girl. While this could technically be translated as “little girl,” it is commonly used in early Christian literature, and in ancient Greek literature in general, to mean a female slave, usually a domestic slave.³³ Therefore, it is also best understood as having this meaning in all its occurrences in the New Testament writings. There are numerous Greek words for a female slave in antiquity;³⁴ yet, as I argue in this project, Luke uses παιδίσκη at three crucial places in his narrative (Luke 22, Acts, 12, and Acts 16) where the female slave

³¹ Bovon, *Luke 3*, 225.

³² Page duBois highlights the boundaries placed between both women and slaves and free men. She writes, “Women, like slaves and dogs, stand both inside and outside of human space, human community.” duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 147.

³³ Golden, “Pais, ‘Child’ and ‘Slave.’”

³⁴ Other Greek words particularly used to denote female slaves include: δούλη (female slave), θεράπεινα (domestic slave / maid), σῶμα (body, which is sometimes used to indicate a slave), τροφεύς (domestic slave who raises children, οἰκέτης (household slaves), and τίτθη (wet nurse – not always a slave but often a slave).

encounters a prominent male disciple/apostle (either Peter or Paul). The choice of a female slave and title of παιδίσκη functions to connect these characters to one another.³⁵

When narrating the story of Peter's denial, all four gospels identify the first person to recognize and question Peter as a παιδίσκη. Mark uses παιδίσκη in two places, because he designates both the first and the second questioner as the same female slave (14:66 and 69). The gospel of Matthew, following Mark, uses παιδίσκη once to designate the first speaker (Matt. 26:69). The Gospel of John (18:16-17) presents the first speaker in this narrative as παιδίσκη, except that in John the slave's role is as the doorkeeper (παιδίσκη ἢ θυρωρός).³⁶ In each of these gospel presentations, the words of the slave vary slightly, which will be outlined subsequently. Ultimately, though, that Peter's first questioner is a slave girl in all four gospel accounts is certainly of interest. That a female slave interrogates Peter, a free elite male, in his moment of shame, certainly functions to highlight a weakness in Peter's commitment; especially when juxtaposed against the resoluteness of Jesus against his questioner.³⁷

These preliminary details help to set the scene for the questioning of Peter. The focus of my examination will be upon Luke's version of the story, although the other

³⁵ This is not the first time that Luke has used the word παιδίσκη. In fact, in Luke 12:45, Jesus tells a parable about a master and a slave and the plural form of παιδίσκη is used in this parable, which includes the beating of the male and female slaves by the slave owner. Including this reference, the only other three times Luke uses this title for a female slave are Luke 22, Acts 12, and Acts 16, which are the three primary narratives explored in this dissertation.

³⁶ This is another interesting intertextual connection as the female slave discussed in chapter 4 also functions as a doorkeeper.

³⁷ Bovon, *Luke 3*, 230.

gospel accounts will be compared when possible.³⁸ It is enough for now to note that this occurs in an elite domestic space in Jerusalem, the house of the high priest and that slaves as well as free people were present. Most likely, this παιδίσκη was one of many slaves that worked for the high priest in this large house. While not much more can be known about the background of this character, Kristeva's attention to Bakhtinian dialogism is beneficial to the focus of this chapter. For instance, Kristeva writes, "The writer can use another's word, giving it new meaning while retaining the meaning it already had. The result is a word with two significations: it becomes *ambivalent*."³⁹ This we see at work in Luke's redactions of Mark, in particular. Additionally, Kristeva alludes to the dialogue that occurs within texts, especially between the "*subject* of narration and the *addressee*—the other."⁴⁰ As argued in the introduction, I read Luke-Acts as menippean in genre, which includes passages that incorporate aspects of carnivalesque literature. While Luke 22 is not fully carnivalesque in nature, there are aspects of reversal that surface in the encounter between Peter and the παιδίσκη. Subsequently, Luke 22 fruitfully opens itself up to an intertextual reading, as Kristeva describes, "*Dialogical discourse* includes carnivalesque and Menippean discourses as well as the polyphonic novel. In its

³⁸ Luke's version is the only one to tell the story of Peter's denial all at once; the other gospels weave this story with Jesus' interrogation by the high priest. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 357.

³⁹ Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," 73, author's emphasis.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 74. She also writes, "It is the addressee, the other, exteriority (whose object is the subject of narration and who is at the same time represented and representing) who transforms the subject into an *author*. That is, who has the S pass through this zero-stage of negation, of exclusion, constituted by the author. In this coming-and-going movement between subject and other, between writer (W) and reader, the author is structured as a signifier and the text as a dialogue of two discourses." Ibid., 75, author's emphasis.

structures, writing reads another writing, reads itself and constructs itself through a process of destructive genesis.”⁴¹

Following Kristeva, I now read “another writing” alongside Luke 22, that of Chariton’s novel, *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, the earliest of the Greek novels. Most of the female slaves included in *Callirhoe* are domestic slaves and work in elite settings. Moreover, a particular scene highlights the life of a faux slave, to use Jennifer Glancy’s terminology, where an elite woman is mistakenly sold into slavery.⁴² While readings such as these do not provide a complete portrait of the life of female slaves in antiquity, as Glancy notes, “Acquaintance with a wide assortment of ancient writings is necessary for piecing together a picture of slavery in the Roman Empire.”⁴³ Glancy is particularly correct concerning this necessity when it comes to Luke and Acts, as both of these narratives assume the reader’s knowledge of slavery and thus do not describe slaves or the life of slaves in great detail.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” 77, author’s emphasis.

⁴² Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 7.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ For instance, Harrill examines two passages including slaves in Luke and Acts and determines that “Neither pericope depicts a real-life story from Mediterranean peasant society.” Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 59.

“Now I am what I have come to be”:

Callirhoe-as-Slave in Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe*

Most likely written in the first century CE, *Callirhoe*, by Chariton, is the earliest of the extant Greco-Roman novels.⁴⁵ As in most of the novels, slaves are vital characters in Chariton’s novel, and the ideology of slave society is presupposed throughout. Additionally, in *Callirhoe*, the description of the process of buying/selling a slave, specifically a female slave, is given prominent narrative attention and detail within the plot, especially in the opening scenes of the novel. Because Callirhoe, the novel’s female elite protagonist, is sold into slavery, the novel narrates an unusually prominent glimpse of the presuppositions about female slaves. Moreover, Chariton’s novel, along with the other Greek novels, includes representations of multiple voices within the narrative, including the voices of slaves. While the novels return at the end to support societal hierarchal structures, the narrative includes alternative ways of viewing society. Bakhtin notes this in his reading of Greek novels:

At the end of the novel that initial equilibrium that had been destroyed by chance is restored once again. Everything returns to its source, everything returns to its own place.... And yet people and things have gone *through* something, something that did not, indeed, change them but that did (in a matter of speaking) affirm what they, and precisely they, were as individuals, something that did verify and establish their identity, their durability and continuity.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe,” in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, trans. B. P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), The Introduction, 17; In this section, all Greek references are from the Loeb edition of this novel. Chariton, *Callirhoe*, trans. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); All English translations, unless otherwise noted, are from: Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe.”

⁴⁶ Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel,” 106–107.

Adding to Bakhtin's thoughts, Tim Whitmarsh and Shadi Bartsch point to the "residual memories of alternative narrative positions" that occur within *Callirhoe*.⁴⁷

The novel begins as Callirhoe, a beautiful young free woman from a very important family, leaves her house for the first time in order to worship the goddess Aphrodite. On her way there she sees Chaereas, walking home from the gymnasium, and the two bump into each other and immediately are "smitten with love."⁴⁸ As both lovers become terribly sick with love, the people in the town want the two to marry, even though Callirhoe's father is not immediately convinced. Ultimately, Callirhoe's father acquiesces and allows his daughter to marry Chaereas. The two are married in front of the whole city of Syracuse. However, many other suitors and potential husbands had also been fighting for Callirhoe's hand, and they become angry at the swift turn of events. These men, the narrator tells the reader, had "curried favor with her nurses (τίτθη) and maids (θεράπεινα);" they "sent presents to the servants (τροφεύς) who brought her up."⁴⁹ This narrative detail provides insight into the way that some domestic slaves were treated in wealthy families, such as the one from which the female slave in Luke 22 came. In particular, slaves in these environments probably had particular jobs and often held a small amount of autonomy within the slave community of the household. To be clear, slaves were still not seen as full persons and were treated as such, yet as Sandra Joshel notes, "Most historians agree that in many ways the opportunities for a better life [for

⁴⁷ Tim Whitmarsh and Shadi Bartsch, "Narrative," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 238.

⁴⁸ Chariton, "Chaereas and Callirhoe," 22.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 24.

slaves] were greater in the city.”⁵⁰ In *Callirhoe*, for example, we find a list of several domestic jobs often given to female slaves—that of nurse, personal maid, and nanny—again, this provides more options for the type of role that Luke’s παιδίσκη might have played in the household of the high priest.

Because the suitors are jealous, they plot together to ruin the marriage. They come up with several plans, one of which involves a young man pursuing “Callirhoe’s personal maid (θεράπαινα), the most prized of her servants” to gain the slave’s love.⁵¹ After this, another friend conspires to tell Chaereas that Callirhoe is being unfaithful and suggest that he pretend to go away on a trip in order to watch the house, so that he can see the lover sneak into his home. When they enact the plan, Chaereas, distraught with this knowledge, does just as the man suggested and hides. He then sees “the man who had seduced Callirhoe’s maid dart into the lane.” As the man approaches the door, “the maid, who was very frightened herself, quietly opened the door a few inches, took his hand, and drew him in.”⁵² Full of anger, Chaereas bursts into the room and Callirhoe, who is sitting quietly missing her lover, runs out to meet him. As she runs towards him, Chaereas kicks her and hits her diaphragm, causing Callirhoe to stop breathing. When she fell, her slaves (θεράπαινα) pick her up and lay her on the bed; they all presume Callirhoe to be dead. Following the incident, Chaereas is terribly distraught and also confused by the events that took place. In his grief, he wants to discover the truth and decides to question the domestic slaves with torture (βάσάνιζω), especially Callirhoe’s favored personal slave

⁵⁰ Sandra R. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 195.

⁵¹ Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe,” 26.

⁵² Ibid., 27.

(θεράπειν). The narrator reports: “It was while they were undergoing fire and torture that he learned the truth.”⁵³

In many ways, the presence of female slaves in a narrative about a wealthy free woman is unremarkable. Domestic slaves in the Greco-Roman world, to be sure, were a major part of the ancient household, especially wealthy households. While many female slaves worked on farms or in the rural household, wealthy households often required a large number of domestic slaves in order to run efficiently. Female slaves were typically given domestic jobs as cooks, cleaners, nurses, and personal attendants. Some of these jobs required specific skills or training, but many of them did not.⁵⁴ The terrace houses from the ancient city of Ephesus provide an unusually well preserved illustration of elite, wealthy households in late antiquity. In a prime location within the ancient city, the seven terrace houses were probably used as housing during the first, second, and third centuries CE.⁵⁵ These houses were filled with ornate mosaics, sculptures, and paintings on the walls. Most of them included private baths – some with hot and cold water – and even a private toilet area. These extravagant living spaces would have required a large number of domestic slaves to be run efficiently.⁵⁶ Several spaces within the houses suggest that the owners hosted a number of dinner parties and gatherings, events that would have necessitated the help of slaves. The small detail that Callirhoe went out of the house for

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Saller, “Women, Slaves, and the Economy of the Roman Household,” 197.

⁵⁵ Katherine Ann Shaner, “The Religious Practices of the Enslaved: A Case Study of Roman Ephesos” (Dissertation, Harvard Divinity School, 2012), 67.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 69.

the *first* time as a young woman suggests that she had slaves surrounding her, serving as gatekeepers, caretakers, stand-ins, and conduits.

Charitan's *Callirhoe* makes use of the practice of physically torturing slaves to advance the plot. This practice, as well as the assumption that slaves did not tell the truth unless tortured, was pervasive in antiquity, as described by the work of Page duBois that was outlined in the introductory chapter.⁵⁷ Only through "fire and torture" did Callirhoe's personal slave tell the truth. In this way, the narrative conveys the considerable ambivalence surrounding slaves in antiquity. Slaves were a ubiquitous and necessary part of domestic life and were, in many cases, very close—in proximity and confidence—to their masters.⁵⁸ And yet slaves were also always under the threat of physical brutality and could be tortured at any time. Their word was generally not believed as true without the extracting mechanism of torture. Thus truth is indeed present within the bodies of slaves; however, physical torture is required to reveal it. As duBois writes: "The truth is generated by torture from the speech of the slave; the sounds of the slave on the rack must by definition contain truth, which the torture produces."⁵⁹ When this truth is extracted from the body of the slave, it is not questioned but believed without doubt. Thus Chaereas does not question the slave's version of the story after torturing her, but believes her "truth" concerning the deception and plot of the male suitors. Yet, duBois

⁵⁷ duBois, *Torture and Truth*.

⁵⁸ duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 109.

⁵⁹ duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 36.

also points out that truth is present within the slave, regardless of whether torture occurs in order to extricate it.⁶⁰

In contrast, Luke's παιδίσκη tells the truth freely. In fact, she offers her statement of truth to the group, including Peter, without provocation. In Luke's narrative context, similar to *Callirhoe*, the reader knows the truth before the statement is made. Peter has been "with" Jesus since Luke 5, when Jesus called him and along with James and John, "left everything and followed him" (5:11). In the courtyard of the high priest, however, it seems some within the group do not know Peter's true identity. In this way, the statement of the παιδίσκη remains uncontested, but also not substantiated. It appears when Peter denies her truth, his word is believed over hers. This aspect of not trusting the word of a slave over the word of a free man falls in line with the ideology of slavery pervasive in antiquity. As duBois' work on torture and slavery shows, the requirement that slaves are tortured before giving testimony "assumes that the slave, because of his or her servile status, will not spontaneously produce a pure statement, cannot be trusted to do so."⁶¹

Returning to Charitan's novel, *Callirhoe* is given an elaborate funeral and her body enclosed in a large tomb, along with gold and other valuable items. As she lay in the tomb, still alive yet unconscious, a criminal who had attended the funeral and seen the gold in the tomb decides to rob it. Meanwhile, *Callirhoe* wakes just as the robbers come inside. They take the gold and silver, and also knowing the worth of a beautiful woman, kidnap the now-awake *Callirhoe* and put her on a ship. The pirates then deliberate about what to do with the young girl; they discuss selling her as a slave. One of them says,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 146–147.

⁶¹ Ibid., 35.

“Shall we say she’s a slave (δούλη)? Who’s going to believe that once he sees her?”⁶²

Here, the pirates seem to espouse Aristotle’s theory of “natural slavery,” prevalent in antiquity.⁶³ For instance, in *Politics*, Aristotle writes: “It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.”⁶⁴ Callirhoe could not really “pass” as a slave; because of her beauty, her status would be obvious to anyone looking at her. Even so, Callirhoe does “pass” as a slave as the story unfolds. Again, the ambivalence of the slave’s position emerges in regards to truth and falsehood. The truth of Callirhoe’s status is both obvious and imperceptible when she is in the guise of a slave, illustrating another aspect of Bakhtin’s double-voicedness within this novel.

Ancient texts and archaeological evidence suggest that the dress of slaves differed from that of free people. For instance, a slave was supposed to wear a tunic, which would be shorter than the tunics of free people and also made from a fabric of less quality than those worn by free people.⁶⁵ Portrayals of slaves are often found on funerary monuments from antiquity, which give some idea of the outward differences in dress between female slaves and their owners. For example, a monument on display in the Istanbul

⁶² Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe,” 32.

⁶³ Even though many other ancient philosophers mention slavery, none are as formative as Aristotle. As the work of Peter Garnsey illustrates, the only real debate on the subject is actually found *within* the text of *Politics* itself, when Aristotle outlines the views of those who oppose him. Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine*, W.B. Stanford memorial lectures (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 243.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.5.

⁶⁵ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 132.

Archaeological Museum entitled “Gravestone of Euphiletos’ Daughter, Gokousa” includes female slaves. This small marble monument dates to the 2nd century BCE and was found outside of Istanbul in an area called Beyazit.⁶⁶ The monument features a scene of four female figures. Clearly, the deceased Gokousa is the central figure, larger in size and seated, wearing a long, flowing tunic. Her head appears to be covered, although the face from the monument was scraped off. Gokousa is surrounded by three female slaves, all comparatively small in size, and behind her there is a shelf of objects on display. The female slaves are all three dressed in shorter tunics, typical of slaves in antiquity.⁶⁷ Additionally, the three female slaves have short hair and no head coverings, another marking of their low status.⁶⁸

Additionally, slaves on funerary monuments are not only often depicted as smaller than their free owners but also as props that held items for use by their owner. In the previous funerary monument, for example, on the left of Gokousa are two smaller female slaves, one larger than the other. The taller female slave appears to be placing her

⁶⁶ Inv. 5001 T, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, visited January 4th, 2015.

⁶⁷ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 132–133.

⁶⁸ Mireille M. Lee, *Body, Dress, and Identity in Ancient Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 49, 74, and 81.

left hand on her cheek, perhaps a symbol of her grief for her deceased owner.⁶⁹ The smaller female slave on the left looks ahead stoically, not at her master, and holds a two-sided mirror. Similarly, the smallest slave, who is on the right side of the relief, also looks straight ahead and holds a jar. The depiction of slave's holding certain items functioned typically to show the wealth and prominence of the slave owner. Noel Lenski argues that this presentation of slaves holding certain items supports the ideology that slaves were seen as "tools" in antiquity. He writes, "Just as slaves were tools, tools could be made to look like slaves; just as slaves were props (in both senses of the word), props could be made to look like slaves; and just as slaves were table waiters, dumb waiters could be made to look like slaves."⁷⁰

This piece of material culture alongside Callirhoe and Luke's παιδίσκη shows just how recognizable a female slave might have been in the ancient world, while simultaneously revealing the slipperiness between slave/free. Simply by using the word παιδίσκη, Luke incites a picture of a female slave in the reader's imagination. Perhaps the female slave at the high priest's house also had short hair, and most likely she wore the

⁶⁹ Linda Gigante writes of a relief called the "Grands Adieux" found in Kerameikos and dating to the fourth century BCE: "At the left a woman – probably the deceased – is seated on a stool (*diphros*) and leans forward to reach out her hand to the woman standing in front of her. The standing woman caresses the seated woman's cheek with her right hand and clasps her wrist with her left. In the far left corner, behind the seated figure, stands a slave girl; she raises her hand to her face and attentively watches the woman. The interlocking hands and gazes of the principal figures, along with the slave's pensive expression, enhance the pathos of this scene and illustrate the bonds of affection within the family." Linda Maria Gigante, "Funerary Art," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Gagarin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 246.

⁷⁰ Lenski, Noel, "Working Models: Functional Art and Roman Conceptions of Slavery," in *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture*, ed. Michele George (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 147.

typical clothing, a short tunic, of a female slave. Yet, the clothing and hair differences were needed in order to create distinctions, which function to protect free persons from being mistaken for slaves.

In Callirhoe's situation, the text also assumes a natural beauty that is assumed to be a part of her status as a free woman. For this reason, the pirates take Callirhoe to Miletus, in Asia Minor, and craft a cover story saying that Callirhoe is a very beautiful domestic slave of a rich woman and that her mistress became jealous of her and sold her.⁷¹ They meet a steward who works for the household of Dionysius and offer to sell Callirhoe to him, as a well-educated nurse for a child or as a concubine. The pirates do not tell Callirhoe what they are doing, but say that they are going to leave her with friends. Callirhoe, knowing the truth, laughs to herself because "in her desire to get away from the pirates she considered being sold a happier condition than her previous noble rank."⁷² Callirhoe's statement reveals another aspect of the ambivalence within slavery in antiquity—in some situations the life of a slave could, in fact, be thought to be a better life, even though it would never be chosen. As Dale Martin suggests, "The complexity and ambiguity of slavery in Greco-Roman society, especially in the early Roman Empire, means that, for some people—who, though a minority, were highly visible—slavery was

⁷¹ In this section of the novel, Chariton uses a variety of words when describing Callirhoe as a slave. She is designated often as simply slave (δούλη), as "body" a term also used to mean slave (σῶμα), and even sometimes as "woman," (γυνή), which nods to her free status.

⁷² Chariton, "Chaereas and Callirhoe," 36.

a means of upward social mobility and was recognized as such throughout the society.”⁷³

According to Martin, slavery did not mean social death for *all* slaves in antiquity, and in fact, for some slaves there was a potential of education, power, and informal status elevation.⁷⁴

In the context of this subplot, Chariton’s novel also provides information about the price and process of selling a slave in antiquity. For instance, the asking price for Callirhoe, obviously a very desirable slave, was a talent of silver, which equaled 6,000 drachmas, an extremely exorbitant price to pay for a female slave during this period.⁷⁵ The steward takes Callirhoe back to the house of Dionysius, telling him about the transaction and the terms of sale, indicating that the sale needed to be “legally registered here in town.”⁷⁶ Dionysius, who had just lost his wife, was pleased that the woman was beautiful but not happy that she was enslaved. The narrator notes, “For he was a true

⁷³ Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 48.

⁷⁴ Orlando Patterson, on the other hand, argues that all slaves experienced social death, or “at the very least, a secular excommunication.” Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 5.

⁷⁵ According to Richard Saller, the average cost of an adult female slave from this time period would have been around 1,000 drachmas. Indeed, the editors of the novel indicate that Callirhoe’s price “would be an enormous price to pay for a slave, perhaps twenty or thirty times the going rate at the novel’s dramatic date” (Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe,” 37, fn 32.). In this way, the editors overestimate the value of the slave, perhaps because Callirhoe is a free woman, not an actual slave. Additionally, Saller shows that the price for slave girls and boys, prior to puberty are equal. During the childbearing years, a female slave is 83% the price of a male slave. After the prime childbearing years the price of a female slave drops significantly to 80% the price of a male slave. After the age of 60 a female slave was only worth 67% of the price of her male counterpart. Because of this we know that Callirhoe, in addition to being a desirable slave because of her extreme beauty, would have probably been in the highest age bracket for the sale of a female slave. Saller, “Women, Slaves, and the Economy of the Roman Household,” 202.

⁷⁶ Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe,” 38.

aristocrat, preeminent in rank and in culture throughout Ionia, and would not contemplate taking a slave as a concubine.”⁷⁷ In this way, the novel distributes “truths” concerning society. Here, as in Luke, the idea of “truth” is being deliberated within the narrative itself. For instance, a “true” aristocrat would not use a slave as a concubine. This very admission within the text reveals that some elite persons did use slaves in this way, creating a distinction between those who have intimate relationships with slaves and those who do not. Koen De Temmerman describes this tendency of ancient novels: “Most of the novels foreground the evolving ability to control others as an essential part of their characters, and show that such ability comes with psychologically realistic qualities such as ability and readiness to distort the truth or to manipulate and/or control social environments.”⁷⁸

Further evidence of this construction of the truth can be seen in the novel’s narrative depiction of Aristotle’s “natural” order of humanity. When describing Callirhoe’s beauty, Dionysius says to his steward: “a person not freeborn cannot be beautiful. Don’t you know that the poets say beautiful people are the children of gods?”⁷⁹ This emphasizes the connection between beauty and status in the ancient world. Solidifying Dionysius’ thoughts on this, when the group of female domestic slaves (θεράπαινα) first sees Callirhoe they treat her as if she were their mistress. They wash her and dress her and then observe her beauty. She tries to refuse it, however, saying, “Give

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Koen De Temmerman, *Crafting Characters: Heroes and Heroines in the Ancient Greek Novel* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 321.

⁷⁹ Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe,” 38.

me a slave's (δοῦλη) tunic; why *you* are superior to me!"⁸⁰ This statement also suggests that Callirhoe herself realizes the juxtaposition between herself and the other slaves.

After meeting Callirhoe, Dionysius immediately falls in love with her and wants to find the truth about her past, because she does not appear to look like a typical slave. When he questions her, Callirhoe replies "'Sir...please do not make me talk about what has happened to me. What happened before is a dream, a fable. Now I am what I have come to be—a slave, and a foreigner.'"⁸¹ These words disclose Callirhoe's new identity as a slave, or at least Chariton's construction of Callirhoe's new identity. In this way, slavery appears fluid, and one's status is malleable. Once a beautiful, free-born, elite married woman, Callirhoe is now perceived as dead, has been kidnapped and sold into slavery, a foreigner in a new land. Is this also a statement of "truth" coming from the mouth of a faux slave? I suggest that Callirhoe's statement encompasses the slipperiness between truth and deception. Certainly, Callirhoe is not "truly" a slave, especially in the way the texts constructs her enslavement. At the same time, she is believed to be a slave by those around her, she dresses like a slave, and she is owned by Dionysius. Bakhtin's double-voicedness is evident within Callirhoe's statement; she *is* a slave within the narrative, yet her true identity is evident even in her refusal of it.

However, even though the text puts these words in the mouth of Callirhoe, she is not treated as a typical slave in the house of Dionysius, who was devastatingly in love with her. For example, he instructs the wife of his steward, Plangon, another female slave, to intervene on his behalf: "Consider her your mistress, serve her, treat her with

⁸⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁸¹ εἰμὶ δὲ νῦν ὃ γέγονα δοῦλη καὶ ξένη, Chariton, *Callirhoe*, 108.

respect, and make her well disposed to me. Praise me often to her; tell her about me as you know me – and be careful not to call me her ‘master.’”⁸² This statement made by Dionysius further exemplifies the juxtaposition of truth/deception seen in this novel. Here, Dionysius wants Plangon to be deceptive in her language when discussing him to Callirhoe. Moreover, Dionysius uses his influence as the owner of Plangon to deceive Callirhoe, asking Plangon to treat her as her own “mistress.” Again, we can challenge Callirhoe’s statement, “Now I am what I have come to be, a slave.” Callirhoe is enslaved, yet another female slave is instructed to treat her as if she is not.

Because Plangon followed the orders of her master and began to get closer to Callirhoe, she decides to ask her to intervene on behalf of her husband, who was receiving criticism for the way he was running Dionysius’ household. Callirhoe’s response to Plangon plays on the notion that a slave’s words were not free and did not have value in the ancient world: “I am a slave too, you know, and have no right to speak; but if you think *my* voice will carry any weight, I will add my appeal to yours—I hope we succeed!”⁸³ Callirhoe was, of course, successful and she and Plangon began to trust one another. This quote is interesting as Callirhoe’s statement indicates that her words will not have value, yet in this case, she succeeds in convincing Dionysius. In contrast, in Luke, the παιδίσκη speaks and identifies Peter as a disciple but her words are not believed by those in the group, and are easily denied by Peter. This is perhaps evidence of Luke’s slave true enslavement and Callirhoe’s false enslavement. In Luke, the words of the παιδίσκη do carry some weight with the reader because of Jesus’ previous prediction that

⁸² Chariton, “Chaereas and Callirhoe,” 44–45.

⁸³ Ibid., 45.

Peter will deny him three times. Yet, this weight is slightly compromised due to the need for the confirmation of two additional speakers, as will be further explored below.

After a few months, Plangon realizes that Callirhoe is pregnant because she noted the changes in Callirhoe's body. Apparently, she had arrived at the house of Dionysius already pregnant, thus the child is Chaereas'. This is confirmed as Callirhoe has so far resisted the sexual advances of Dionysius, providing other proof of her faux enslavement (as a true slave would not be able to say no to an owner's request for sex).⁸⁴ In turmoil about this new situation, and revealing her true feelings about being affiliated with a slave, Callirhoe mourns the fact that she would be a "mother of a slave" and considers forcing her body to miscarry.⁸⁵ Plangon, however, intervenes and suggests to Callirhoe that she give in to Dionysius' proposal to marry her, because then they could convince him that the child was his (since Callirhoe was only two months pregnant).⁸⁶ The other option, says Plangon, is an abortion, because Dionysius would not allow Callirhoe to live in the house with another man's child. Callirhoe heeded Plangon's advice and agreed to marry Dionysius, who admits that he never believed Callirhoe was truly a slave.⁸⁷

Here, the narrator reveals to the reader Plangon's motive in getting Callirhoe to be with Dionysius, which was a part of the scheme concocted by Dionysius. The narrator states, "Plangon's advice aroused no suspicion in Callirhoe; she was a young lady of

⁸⁴ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 52.

⁸⁵ Chariton, "Chaereas and Callirhoe," 46.

⁸⁶ Jean Alvares, "Love, Loss, and Learning in Chariton's 'Chaereas and Callirhoe,'" *The Classical World* 95, no. 2 (January 2002): 114.

⁸⁷ Chariton, "Chaereas and Callirhoe," 51.

quality and knew nothing of slaves' tricks."⁸⁸ Eventually, Callirhoe gives birth to Chaereas' child, and the whole city of Miletus celebrates, believing it to be Dionysius' child. After the birth, Callirhoe asks Dionysius for permission to free Plangon, as she is the only person who knows that the child is not Dionysius' own son. Jean Alvares points to the deception of Dionysius, which he suggests is a motif from New Comedy where the middle class husband is tricked by his slave.⁸⁹ In this particular section, Dionysius is not only deceived by Plangon, his slave, as well as his slave-turned-wife, Callirhoe, but he is also self-deceived, all of which imitates scenes found in New Comedy.⁹⁰ While this is not the end of Callirhoe's problems in the novel, it is the end to her enslavement, as she is now officially the legal wife of Dionysius. What is more, a golden statue of her is erected in Ionia after her marriage, and people looked to it as a symbol of a woman who received the blessing of Aphrodite. In fact, when Chaereas arrives in Ionia searching for his lost wife, one of the attendants at the shrine says, "This girl was once a slave, and Aphrodite has made her the mistress of us all."⁹¹ The erection of this statue turns the lie of Callirhoe's enslavement into a truth for all to observe.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 48.

⁸⁹ Alvares, "Love, Loss, and Learning in Chariton's 'Chaereas and Callirhoe,'" 111.

⁹⁰ Even though it appears in the novel that Callirhoe and Dionysius grant Plangon her freedom, she remains by Callirhoe's side through the rest of her time with Dionysius. It is not clear whether Dionysius did not free Plangon after all, or whether Plangon is staying on as an attendant who might have been paid instead of enslaved.

⁹¹ "αὕτη δούλη μὲν ἦν ἡ δὲ Ἀφροδίτῃ πάντων ἡμῶν κυρία πεποίηκεν αὐτήν" Chariton, *Callirhoe*, 169.

Chariton's novel presupposes many aspects of what is known about the life of a female slave more broadly: household duties, different dress, exposure to physical brutality, the possibility of sexual use, the process of being bought and sold, the devaluation of the slave's voice, and the possibility of being granted freedom (manumission).⁹² These assumptions contribute to the construction of Callirhoe as a free woman undergoing a tragic reversal of fortunes. As Koen De Temmerman writes:

Callirhoe's reversal of social status (rich to poor, free to enslaved) and the particularly contrastive way in which it is evoked also recall tragedy, where it is a well-known theme (*peripeteia*) often vocalized in lamentations similarly polarizing present and past (and often future). Her repeated and conscious rehearsal of her own noble descent when her social status has deteriorated casts her as a tragic heroine conceptualizing her own life as the object of a dynamic process of degenerative change and reversal.⁹³

While Luke's παιδίσκη is not able to move in and out of slavery like Callirhoe in this novel, the related experience of Callirhoe sheds light on ways that readers might have imagined Luke's female slave by the light of the fire. However, her character also reveals the ambivalence inherent in slavery, reaffirming the challenging proximity between those who are slaves and those who are free.

In Chariton's novel, the juxtaposition between truth and deception is quite slippery, as Callirhoe's status is navigated and the narrative attempts to construct "truth" in various ways. Again, Bakhtin's analysis of the Greek novel is helpful: "The novel as a whole is conceived precisely as a test of the heroes."⁹⁴ In this context, Callirhoe's test is to be thrown into enslavement and to persevere through these unfortunate circumstances.

⁹² Saller, "Women, Slaves, and the Economy of the Roman Household"; Joshel and Murnaghan, "Introduction: Differential Equations"; Briggs, "Slavery and Gender."

⁹³ Temmerman, *Crafting Characters*, 43–44.

⁹⁴ Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," 106.

At the end of the novel, of course, Callirhoe is reunited with Chaereas, and, in Bakhtin's words, "Everything returns to its source, everything returns to its own place."⁹⁵ Similarly, as we will see in Luke 22, hierarchies are unstable when a female slave questions Peter, and her statement is proven to be true, while Peter's is false. Also in Luke-Acts, after the moment by the fire, hierarchies are restored as Peter regains his prominence even after his betrayal. Yet, Whitmarsh and Bartsch again remind us that in Chariton there are "residual memories of alternate narrative positions," and this residue can be seen in Luke's narrative as well.⁹⁶

Examining the Scene:

The Role of the Slave-Girl in Luke 22:47-62

Keeping this reading of *Callirhoe* in mind, I return to the circle of people by the fire in the courtyard of the high priest as Luke's παιδίσκη sees Peter and makes her prophetic statement. My analysis investigates the gaze of the slave, the statement of the slave, the role of light and dark in the narrative, and finally, the statements of the other accusers. Through Bakhtin's idea of outsidedness as well as his description of the dialogic nature of truth, I show that the utterance of Luke's παιδίσκη is ultimately proven true, even though the statement of a free male included in the dialogue of this narrative is needed to show her truth. Ultimately, the words Luke uses to construct this narrative,

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Whitmarsh and Bartsch, "Narrative," 238.

alongside the placement of the slave-girl in the “light” of the fire, work to include her voice as a part of the polyphonic dialogue in Luke as she becomes a truth-teller and a mouthpiece for Lukan theology.

The Gaze of the Slave-Girl

As Peter sits down in the middle of the group in Luke 22:56, the παῖδίσκη sees him: “Having seen him, a certain slave-girl sitting near the light and having gazed intently at him said, ‘This one was also with him.’”⁹⁷ This verse is vital to my reading of this story, so for this reason I examine it closely. The first piece to be explored is the gaze of the slave-girl. The παῖδίσκη “sees” Peter and “gazes intently at him.” The word used here, ἀτενίζω, meaning to “look intently/gaze earnestly,” is particularly important in Luke-Acts; I argue that the use of it here, with the female slave, is indicative of the significance of her statement. In fact, the use of ἀτενίζω is a literary foreshadowing to the power and truth of the upcoming statement made by the slave-girl. Here, Luke uses the gaze of the slave-girl to enhance the tension of the narrative and draw the focus of the reader to Peter. This is also our first hint that the slave-girl functions as a focalizer; even the term indicates someone who sees. Additionally, her status as slave indicates that she is an “outsider,” and Bakhtinian theory indicates that this positionality provides her with an external view of the narrative, one to which other characters are not privy, least of all Peter.

⁹⁷ My translation.

As Clarice Martin shows, “The eyes are critical purveyors of meaning in the contested economy of body politics.”⁹⁸ For example, in texts by ancient physiognomists, eyes are “by far the most important marker” of a person’s true character.⁹⁹ Interestingly, textual and material evidence from antiquity shows that the eyes of slaves were particularly potent, especially, as Martin shows, “in performance relative to the slave master to serve the political and survivalist interests of deference, desire, and resistance.”¹⁰⁰ Moreover, light is connected to eyes and sight in ancient literature as well as in Luke-Acts. Stephen Moore indicates this influence in Luke’s gospel as he muses, “Caught in the act of looking: knowing glances are exchanged in Luke-Acts as the shutter slides back and the critic’s eye fills the aperture. What the critic has seen, everywhere, is characters in the act of observing. In Look-Acts, moreover, seeing is believing.”¹⁰¹

Luke uses two words to indicate that the slave-girl has *seen* Peter. The first word in this sentence is ἰδοῦσα from the frequently used verb ὁράω, meaning “to see/look.”¹⁰² Following this, the author uses the word ἀτενίσασα, from ἀτενίζω, meaning to gaze or look intently at something.¹⁰³ Luke favors this word; within the New Testament, it is

⁹⁸ Clarice J. Martin, “The Eyes Have It: Slaves in the Communities of Christ-Believers,” in *Christian Origins*, ed. Richard Horsley, vol. 1, A People’s History of Christianity (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 232.

⁹⁹ Chad Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization*, Biblical Interpretation Series, v. 94 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2008), 59.

¹⁰⁰ Martin, “The Eyes Have It: Slaves in the Communities of Christ-Believers,” 223.

¹⁰¹ Stephen D. Moore, *The Bible in Theory: Critical and Postcritical Essays* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 54–55.

¹⁰² *LSJ*, s.v. ὁράω.

¹⁰³ *LSJ*, s.v. ἀτενίζω. See also, *BAG*, s.v. ἀτενίζω.

found mostly in Luke-Acts.¹⁰⁴ The other time it is used in the gospel is when Jesus returns to Nazareth and speaks in the synagogue on the Sabbath (4:16). Reading a section from the prophet Isaiah, Luke notes that “all of the eyes in the synagogue were fixed intently on him” (πάντα οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ ἦσαν ἀτενίζοντες αὐτῷ, 4:20). Jesus’s statement that follows indicates that he is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy (4:21). This use of ἀτενίζω reveals the fixation inherent in the gaze focused on Jesus of the onlookers. In Luke 22, in contrast, the slave-girl fixes her gaze upon Peter and her statement condemns him. In the Gospel of Mark, the παιδίσκη also looks at Peter, but the word ἐμβλέψασα from βλέπω is used, meaning simply to look or see. If we assume, with redaction critics, that Luke is editing Mark, then the author makes it a point to change the verb. Mark’s παιδίσκη simply sees Peter while Luke’s looks intently or stares at the disciple.¹⁰⁵

Rick Strelan discusses the use of ἀτενίζω in the book of Acts, where it is used ten times. He argues that when used, the object of ἀτενίζω, or the person’s gaze, “particularly in Jewish and Christian literature, is a holy person or place.”¹⁰⁶ This coalesces with Luke 22 as Peter is an important character in the gospel, both a noted disciple and also close to

¹⁰⁴ Outside of Luke-Acts, it is only used twice in the New Testament, in 2 Corinthians 3:7 and 3:13. In Luke, it is used one other time outside of in the current story, in 4:20. In Acts the word is used a total of ten times: 1:10, 3:4, 3:12, 6:15, 7:55, 10:4, 11:6, 13:9, 14:9, and 23:1.

¹⁰⁵ In Matthew, the παιδίσκη does not “see” Peter in this same way, but makes her statement directly (26:69). The second questioner, probably also a female slave, sees him and speaks. The word used here is εἶδεν from ὁράω (26:71).

¹⁰⁶ Rick Strelan, “Strange Stares: Atenizein in Acts,” *Novum Testamentum* 41, no. 3 (July 1999): 236.

Jesus. More importantly to this project, Strelan shows that the use of this verb suggests, “The subject speaks or sees ‘with intuition’ or ‘with special perception.’”¹⁰⁷ When he connects this verb to the slave-girl in Luke 22, his work indicates that Luke’s use of this word indicates a somewhat prophetic role for the slave-girl: “Here, ἀτενίθειν indicates that the woman spoke on the basis of an intuitive insight which enabled her to see the truth relationship of Peter with Jesus.”¹⁰⁸ The slave-girl’s role as a prophetic focalizer in the narrative is not only anticipated by the reader, but confirmed by the use of the verb in Acts, as we will see.

An interesting connection for this project is the use of ἀτενίζω in Acts 3:4, especially as this narrative features Peter and he is the one gazing, in contrast to being the object of the gaze in Luke 22. In fact, as Strelan notes, this is “among the strangest stares in Acts.”¹⁰⁹ In this narrative, Peter and John are going to the temple in Jerusalem to pray when they encounter a man “lame from birth” (χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, 3:2). Peter looks intently at him, ἀτενίζω (3:4) preparatory to his profound utterance. Peter then speaks to him words of healing (3:6) and the man is able to walk (3:7-8). Strelan argues “The use of the aorist participle with the aorist main verb suggests the action is co-terminous and that Peter speaks on the basis of his ‘staring.’”¹¹⁰ This is confirmed as Peter questions why the crowd stares (ἀτενίζω) and then explains that the miracle was done not by his own power but by the power of God (3:12-13). Thus, in Acts 3, Peter

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 250.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 251.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

stares at a disabled man prior to his statement, then the crowd stares in awe of him, after the miracle.

Ironically, it is Peter himself who is the object of the intent gaze and profound utterance in Luke 22:56. Yet, the verb functions similarly as the slave-girl stares at Peter and her words are similarly profound. As Strelan concludes, “It is reasonable to say, on the basis of the evidence, that the verb is a technical term, used particularly in the context of a divine epiphany or a manifestation of divine power.”¹¹¹ Thus, using these arguments about the use of ἀτενίζω by Luke as well as in texts outside of the New Testament, it is clear that this verb indicates that the slave is not only voicing her own observation, but also prophetic words.

Luke’s παιδίσκη can also be connected to the look (βλέπω) that Jesus gives to Peter following his denial in Luke 22:61 strengthening this interpretation.¹¹² The prominent role that this παιδίσκη plays within the narrative, especially if her gaze is connected to the gaze of Jesus further solidifies this reading. John Nolland also draws a literary connection between the gaze of Jesus and the gaze of the slave-girl when he observes that they “provide the first and last impulses for the main action of this unity. Peter will seek to hide from the exposure implicit in the former, but he has no weapons against the exposure in the latter.”¹¹³ Nolland highlights the impact of the stare of the slave-girl with the phrases, “sharp gaze of a servant girl” and “penetrating gaze.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid., 255.

¹¹² Bovon, *Luke* 3, 230.

¹¹³ Nolland, *Luke* 18:35-24:53, 1095.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 1097.

Connecting the slave's gaze to Jesus further reveals her function as focalizer in addition to highlighting the truth and meaning of her words.

Luke's slave-girl is not the only female slave to stare intently at an apostle in early Christian literature. In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Thecla hears the words of Paul and feels drawn to him. Her mother is worried for her as she sits at her window and "gazes (ἀτενίζω) at Paul as if at some joyful spectacle" (8).¹¹⁵ It is worth noting here that Thecla has not even technically seen Paul, yet her gaze remains steady in the direction of the prominent apostle. In comparison to the slave in Luke, Thecla is a free, elite woman whom many scholars, such as Virginia Burrus, argue is falling in love with Paul, mimicking the plot of the ancient novels.¹¹⁶ While the female slave in Luke 22 is not gazing erotically at Peter, as perhaps Thecla gazes at Paul, ἀτενίζω is used in most of the Apocryphal Acts, which is perhaps because the authors of the Apocryphal Acts mimicked parts of the vocabulary from Acts.¹¹⁷

In the *Acts of Thomas* the word ἀτενίζω is used when a female slave is also gazing at a disciple, a scene which provokes an interesting parallel to Luke 22. Here, the apostle Thomas-Judas ends up sold as a slave in India and is at a wedding celebration for the king's daughter where all people are invited—as the text says "rich and poor, slave

¹¹⁵ The English text referenced is from J.K. Elliott, "Acts of Paul and Thecla," in *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 364–74; The Greek text referenced is found in: Jeremy W Barrier, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla: A Critical Introduction and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

¹¹⁶ Burrus, "Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance," 57.

¹¹⁷ Strelan, "Strange Stares," 245.

and free, alien and citizens” (4:6).¹¹⁸ After the dinner, some of those in attendance, most likely slaves, began to play music for the post-dinner entertainment. One of them was a Hebrew girl who played the flute for the group. When she came upon Thomas the apostle, she played near him for an hour. Thomas joins in the performance, first by playing a reed and then by singing a song, in Hebrew, which only the flute player could understand. Here the narrative of the *Acts of Thomas* is an interesting parallel to the scene from Luke at the high priest’s house: “Standing apart from him she played for the others, but frequently glanced back at him and kept watching him, for she loved him dearly as her fellow countryman. (He was also more handsome in appearance than anyone else present). When the flute girl finished playing, she sat down opposite him and stared (ἀτενίζω) at him” (8:3-6). Here, the object of the gaze is a prominent apostle, just as it is in Luke 22. While the same Greek word is used for her stare, ἀτενίζω, the flute player seems to stare intently with love at Thomas, while the female slave in Acts stares with suspicion. In both cases, though, the use of (ἀτενίζω) indicates that the slaves are intuitively prophetic, as the work of Strelan shows. In fact, the statement made by the flute player, to be discussed below, confirms her intuitiveness.

The Light of the Slave-Girl

¹¹⁸ All references to the *Acts of Thomas* are from the following version: Julian Victor Hills, ed., *The Acts of Thomas*, trans. Harold W. Attridge, Early Christian Apocrypha Series (Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2010).

The παιδίσκη position of “sitting near the light” (καθήμενον πρὸς τὸ φῶς) provides further evidence of the potency of her utterance (22:56). In fact, just two verses before this introduction of the slave-girl, Jesus speaks to his captors and aligns them with darkness: “But this is your hour and the authority of darkness” (ἀλλ’ αὕτη ἐστὶν ὑμῶν ἡ ὥρα καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ σκοτοῦς, 22:53). Here, we see darkness (σκοτός) directly connected to the enemies of Jesus, and then light (φῶς) directly connected to Luke’s slave-girl. Darkness, in Luke, seems to be metaphoric for Satan’s power, especially as seen in 22:3: “Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot.” All of this conspires to confer positive metaphoric significance on “the light” in 22:56. Indeed, light has metaphoric significance in many scenes in Luke-Acts, ranging from the “light for revelation” motif in the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32) to the prominence of light in Paul’s Damascus road encounter and its retellings (Acts 9:3; 22:6-11; 26:13-18).¹¹⁹

The Statement of the Slave-Girl

When Luke’s παιδίσκη speaks up, her words are just as intuitive as her gaze: “This one was also with him” (καὶ οὕτως σὺν αὐτῷ ἦν, 22:56). As noted above, the narrator indicates that Peter was “following” at a distance (22:54). Yet, the slave-girl sees Peter, recognizes him, and states that “this one” (οὗτος) was “with” (σὺν) Jesus. Her statement closes the distance between his earlier presence as a follower of Jesus and the

¹¹⁹ Other positive uses of “light” in Luke-Acts include: Luke 1:79; 8:16-17; 11:33-36; 12:3; Acts 12:7; 13:47; and 26:23.

present moment of the narrative. In other words, even though Peter follows “at a distance” he remains a disciple, one who is “with” Jesus. As mentioned above, Luke includes a view of discipleship that differs slightly in comparison to the other canonical gospels. In particular, Luke’s focus on poverty implies that a disciple must give up “all” and in this way, disciples are to follow Jesus, especially through imitation. The words of Luke’s slave-girl are confirmation of discipleship; her statement provides a clear definition for discipleship, even in the midst of Peter’s betrayal.

The theological significance of this phrase “with him” (σὺν αὐτῷ) is also confirmed within the text of Luke-Acts.¹²⁰ In some cases, those “with” Jesus include specifically the twelve disciples. For instance, Luke notes that the twelve were “with him” in 8:1, and then the narrator names women that were also following Jesus. These verses have been frequently discussed in the debate over Luke’s inclusion of women as disciples.¹²¹ Also in this chapter a man who Jesus healed from his demon possession asks to go “with him” (8:38), but Jesus refuses his request, suggesting that he go home instead and tell others of his healing. Additionally, at the Last Supper, Luke notes that the apostles were “with him” (22:14). This phrase is also used in a section that highlights three of the male disciples out of the twelve. In particular, Jesus takes only Peter, John,

¹²⁰ Several important passages including this phrase are: Luke 8:1, 38; 9:10, 28; 22:14; 23:55; and Acts 10:41; 13:31.

¹²¹ D’Angelo, “Women Partners in the New Testament”; Barbara E Reid, “Luke: The Gospel for Women?,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 21, no. 6 (November 1994): 405–14; Schaberg, “Luke”; D’Angelo, “(Re)Presentations of Women in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke-Acts”; Karris, “Women and Discipleship in Luke”; Veronica Koperski, “Women and Discipleship in Luke 10.38-42 and Acts 6.1-7: The Literary Context of Luke-Acts,” in *A Feminist Companion to Luke*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* 3 (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 161–96.

and James “with him” to the mountain to pray (9:28); the transfiguration takes place on the mountain (9:29-36).

However, there are other uses of this phrase in Luke and also Acts that include followers outside of the twelve. The first instance of this is when the apostles of John the Baptist join Jesus (9:10). Additionally, after the crucifixion, the text notes that those who followed the body of Jesus to the tomb were women who had come “with” him from Galilee. This reference connects to 8:1-3 as many of those women are named as followers from Galilee. In Acts, both Peter and Paul use this phrase and connect it to those who were with Jesus following his resurrection. When Peter speaks to a group in Caesarea, for instance, he says that Jesus did not appear to all people, but to those who were chosen as witnesses, who ate and drank “with him” after he rose from the dead (10:41). Likewise, Paul is speaking to a group in Antioch and declares that after his death Jesus appeared to those who came up “with him” from Galilee (13:31).

The slave-girl is sitting by the fire, in the light, when she gazes upon Peter. In this moment, she is identified with the light, with the fire, and her words are intuitive, as the use of ἀτενίζω indicates. She knows that Peter is one of Jesus’ disciples and she does not ask him if it is true (as the slave does in John). She states the truth affirmatively. Here, by the fire, the slave-girl becomes a mouthpiece for Lukan theology. Her statement defines Luke’s view of discipleship. Who is a disciple in the Gospel of Luke? The slave-girl provides the answer: one who is “with” Jesus.

Similarly, the female slave from *Acts of Thomas* recognizes Thomas for who he really is. During the dinner, one of the people pouring wine slapped Thomas unprovoked, and the flautist saw this happen. Thomas, looking up at this man, speaks of the man’s

immediate and long-term future: “My God will forgive you this unrighteous act in the world to come, but in this world he will manifest his wonderful powers: I’ll soon see this hand that struck me dragged along by dogs” (6:2). Later, after Thomas sings his song, the wine-pourer left the party and was attacked by a lion, his limbs torn apart. Predictably, a dog finds his right hand and carries it in his mouth back to the wedding party. When it is discovered that the hand was that of the man pouring wine, the flute player breaks her flutes and goes over to Thomas. She announces to the group: “This man is either a god or an emissary of God, for I heard him say to the wine-pourer in Hebrew, ‘I shall soon see the hand that struck me dragged by dogs.’ And that’s precisely what you’ve now seen – it happened just as he said.” Following this statement, the narrator adds: “Now some people believed her, but others did not.” (9:3-4). Just as the female slave recognized Peter, the flute player realized who Thomas was—an emissary of God. She declared his identity and some did not believe her, yet her words were true.

In the story in Luke, it is Peter who denies the truthfulness of the words spoken by the slave-girl. “But he denied it saying, ‘I do not know him, woman (v. 57).’” The verb used here to define Peter’s denial, ἀρνέομαι, conveys refusal and renunciation; he directly contradicts the slave-girl’s statement. Moreover, by specifically addressing her as female (γύναι), Peter implies that his testimony is more valued than hers. Ultimately, this denial only works to humiliate Peter when it is discovered that her words were true. As Joel Green writes, “That he was pressed to this testimony by a servant-girl - that is, by one of only peripheral status in the Mediterranean world - contributes further to Peter’s shame.”¹²² Indeed, a woman’s testimony could not be trusted over a man’s. Bovon notes

¹²² Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 787.

the complexity of the “truth” of Peter’s words. He writes, “The words, ‘Woman, I do not know him,’ constitute the predicted denial, representing in reality a lie, but a lie that speaks the truth of the moment.”¹²³ Here, Bovon goes to great lengths to show that Peter is the truth-teller in the narrative, all the while admitting that Peter is lying. His words are intriguing, and it is possible that the unknowing reader of Luke might believe that Peter is telling the truth. Additionally, Bovon is hinting at Peter’s fall in this moment, away from his teacher, Jesus. However, the astute reader of Luke knows that Peter is indeed a disciple. Thus, the truth is that Peter’s words are a denial, while the slave-girl’s are true.

There are also several important similarities between this passage and the women at the tomb as depicted in Luke 24:1-12. For instance, when the two men appear to the women at the tomb (24:4), they made a statement to the women reminding them that Jesus predicted his own death and resurrection (24:5-7). After this statement, the women “remember” (μυμνήσκομαι) Jesus’ words (vs. 8), and they go to tell the “eleven and all the others” (vs. 9). Yet, the apostles did not believe (ἠπίστεύω) the words of the women (vs. 11). Peter ran to the tomb to see for himself and after seeing the tomb, is amazed (vs. 12). Ultimately, the words of the women are proven true when the apostles had their “eyes opened” (24:31) and were able to see the risen Jesus for themselves. In Luke, the words of women are not understood to be true within the narrative until further proof is provided.

Here there is a clear juxtaposition between truth and deception. Bakhtin’s polyphonic dialogism is relevant here, as these two themes in the narrative converse, at play with one another in the text. Moreover, the statement made by the slave girl is given

¹²³ Bovon, *Luke 3*, 231.

equal weight in the narrative to Peter's words—Bakhtin's double-voicedness at work. Just as the slave-girl's words ring true, Peter's deception does as well. Peter has allowed himself to follow his Lord "at a distance" which questions his commitment to his role as a leading disciple in Luke. In this way, truth and deception are opposing forces that are used to enhance the dialogue within the text. As a reminder, Bakhtin's notion of dialogism can be seen most clearly when two or more opposing voices interact with one another within a narrative in polyphonic juxtaposition. The words of the slave-girl and Peter are in constant dialogue—the push and pull between truth and deception—and this heightens the tension of the narrative as well as enhances the meaning behind the words of the slave-girl and the upcoming actions of Peter when he realizes the depth of his deception.

Statements in Support of the Slave's Truth

Even though the slave's words are true, other witnesses are needed to confirm the slave-girl's words that Peter was indeed with Jesus. In this way, the relationship between slavery and gender is illuminated. As a female slave, her words are even less potent than that of a male slave. In this section I argue that in order to confirm Peter's denial, Luke adjusts Mark's narrative to create an incremental structure of accusations. That is, the first accuser is a female slave, the second is a male slave, and the third and final accuser is a free male. In this way, the status of the questioners begins with the person with the lowest status (enslaved female) and is not confirmed until the free male speaks "in truth."

Through this revision, Luke makes it clear that the accusations are indeed “true,” that Peter *was* with Jesus.

Following the slave girl’s statement, outlined above, verse 58 provides the second witness, “another” (ἕτερος) speaker, a male who says “You are also one of them” (καὶ σὺ αὐτῶν εἶ). His statement, while similar to the slave-girl’s, designates Peter as one of the group of disciples. Interestingly, in Mark the second accusation directed at Peter is made by the same slave-girl who made the first statement (14:69), while in Matthew 26:71 the second accusation is made by “another” (ἄλλη) female, which most translators assume to be the same female slave, a παιδίσκη, as in Matthew 26:69.¹²⁴ Luke, then, seems to have used the tradition of “another” also found in Matthew but changes the gender to that of a male.¹²⁵ After Luke’s male slave adds his voice to the female slave’s statement, Peter again refutes his words, “Man, I am not (ἄνθρωπε οὐκ εἰμί).” The Greek is declarative: Peter is not a disciple; he was not with Jesus; and he is not “of them.” This third speaker is designated as another, ἕτερος. Does this mean another slave? Or, simply another person? I argue that this second witness is likely also a slave in the narrative, similar to the παιδίσκη who first recognizes Peter, except male. A commonly noted aspect of Luke’s redaction includes pairing women with men, as discussed in the introduction.

Therefore, it is somewhat predictable that Luke changes the gender of the second speaker

¹²⁴ In the Gospel of John, the second questioner is not named but is simply “they” (the third person plural (18:25). The third questioner, though, is another slave, and John names him as a relative of the slave who had his ear cut off by Peter in the garden (18:26).

¹²⁵ Bovon notes, “Luke prefers to change characters and to attribute the second assertion to a man after that from a woman (an alternation, which, as we have seen, that he likes).” Bovon, *Luke* 3, 231. For more on the implications of Luke’s pairing, particularly pertaining to women, see: D’Angelo, “Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View.”

from female to male, allowing the status of slave to remain for the second speaker.¹²⁶ By figuring this second speaker a male slave, and not a free male, the identity of Peter's accuser climbs an illusory social ladder—the first questioner is the lowest of the low, a female slave; the second accuser is a little bit higher but still denigrated, a male slave.

A third witness is needed for Peter's prior discipleship to be confirmed—this time, I suggest, the words of a free person are required. The third and final accuser is labeled by Luke as a "certain other" (ἄλλος τις) who speaks up after one hour has passed (22:59). I suggest this certain other person is a free male, perhaps a person of status in the narrative. The statement made by this third accuser is more forceful and deliberate as he "insists" (δι᾽σχυρίζομαι): "In truth, this one was also with him, for he is also a Galilean" (Ἐπὶ ἀληθείας καὶ οὗτος μετ' αὐτοῦ ἦν καὶ γὰρ Γαλιλαῖος ἐστίν, vs. 59). The verb used here, δι᾽σχυρίζομαι contains connotations of speaking with force. Then, the first two words of the statement are "in truth" (ἐπὶ ἀληθείας), which function to solidify the statement about to be made. The addition of Peter's identity as a Galilean provides further proof of this third and final claim. This statement confirms the truth of the words of our παιδίσκη. Yet, even after this strong accusation, Peter still denies the claim: "Man, I do not know what you are saying" (Ἄνθρωπε οὐκ οἶδα ὃ λέγεις, 22:60).

In order to break down this statement, I ask a few questions of the narrative. First, who is this "certain other" person? The word τις can be used as an adjective to designate a particular person, or a person of importance.¹²⁷ Additionally, the word ἕτερος is not used again. Instead ἄλλος is used, which when used with τις can mean "some other" or

¹²⁶ Bovon, *Luke* 3, 225.

¹²⁷ *LSJ*, s.v. τις.

“any other” and is often used to indicate a comparison, or a difference.¹²⁸ I propose that this “certain other” person is therefore not a slave, but a free person. Moreover, I tentatively suggest that this “certain” other person is someone of note, perhaps a military officer or religious elder (recall that the setting of the narrative is in the courtyard of the high priest). Luke 22:52 provides three possibilities, when Jesus speaks to several people of note who are chief priests (ἀρχιερείς), military officers stationed at the temple (στρατηγούς τοῦ ἱεροῦ), and elders (πρεσβυτέρους). This certain other could be one of these important people, attempting to find followers of Jesus to also arrest and question. Ultimately, interpreting the third speaker as an important official heightens the narrative in Luke and confirms the statements made by the slaves, whose word would be easy for Peter to deny, as the testimony of slaves was not trusted.

Second, the verb διῴσχυρίζομαι, to “insist or to maintain firmly,” is only found in the New Testament three times and all three times the word is in Luke-Acts.¹²⁹ As we will see, the second time this verb is used is also in the context of a παιδίσκη, that of Rhoda who is introduced in Acts 12 and is the subject of the following chapter. The root of this word is ἰσχύς, force, which shows the way that διῴσχυρίζομαι is used not only to insist, but to insist vehemently. This free male, then, is speaking, but is doing so more firmly and with more confidence than the previous two speakers. In this dialogue, truth is persistent.

Third, the first words that the man speaks are “in truth” (ἐπ’ ἀληθείας). This phrase confirms the truth of the slave’s words. In this part of the narrative Mark uses

¹²⁸ Ibid., s.v. ἄλλος.

¹²⁹ Luke 22:59, Acts 12:15, and Acts 15:2.

simply ἀληθῶς (Mark 14:70). On this passage, Bovon has a number of interesting remarks. Concerning Luke's editorial change, Bovon notes: "the ἀληθῶς of Mark 14:70 is well chosen, since the adverb is used when it is a matter of checking whether a fact is true. The expression ἐπὶ ἀληθείας is also appropriate, but perhaps for another reason, it underscores the speaker's sincerity here of that man who is insistent and sincerely believes he is right."¹³⁰ This man, according to Bovon, "is convinced he is right and implies that Peter is wrong, that he has been lying."¹³¹ Indeed, the words of the man's statement are identical to the words of the παιδίσκη except that the preposition the slave-girl uses is σὺν while the man uses μετ'.¹³² To clarify, the third speaker adds a phrase, "for he is also a Galilean." This declaration of geographical location provides further verification as Peter was from the same area as Jesus had just been working.

Joseph Fitzmyer provides an alternate view concerning the identity of this third speaker. He also suggests that Luke has substituted a male slave for the female slave in verse 58, yet argues that the third speaker is also a slave. He notes the sequence of the words used by Luke to identify the set of speakers: τις (vs. 56), ἕτερος (vs. 58); and ἄλλος τις (vs. 59) and deduces that they are all three enslaved.¹³³ Fitzmyer does not see these slaves as truth-tellers in his interpretation; instead he views them as working against the will of God. He writes: "The servant girl and two servant boys have played the role of

¹³⁰ Bovon, *Luke* 3, 231–232, FN 68.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹³² Mark's gospel uses the preposition μετὰ in the slave-girl's first statement. Perhaps Luke's use of it here is echoing Mark.

¹³³ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 28b:1460.

Satan in Peter's *peirasmos*- associating Peter with the "guilty" Jesus, soon to be accused."¹³⁴ Fitzmyer concludes that these three characters who accuse Peter are servants of Satan in the narrative. However, as I have shown above, the use of light and dark in Luke identifies particularly the παιδίσκη with the light (22:56), while Satan is connected to darkness (22:53).

Similarly, in the *Acts of Thomas*, the flute player also makes a statement of "truth" and is also connected to both truth and light within the narrative. When Thomas sings his song, in Hebrew, he signs to a woman. The song begins: "The young woman is light's daughter; the radiance of kings has come to rest on her. Pleasant is the sight of her; it glows with beauty bright" (6:4-5). While the text does not indicate specifically to whom Thomas is singing, he is singing in Hebrew and since no one at the party speaks Hebrew except the female flute player, it seems that Thomas is singing his poem to her. In the fifth line of the poem, Thomas sings, "Truth also rests on her head, while with her feet she shows joy."¹³⁵ Here, the word "truth" is connected to both female slaves, through Bakhtinian dialogue.

Page duBois discusses the way that truth, ἀληθεία, is connected to deception, ἀπάτη. DuBois shows that this connection was a progression that evolved as many writers and thinkers transitioned from mythical to rational thought. In this way truth is opposed to deception, and truth is further understood when present alongside deception.¹³⁶ In Luke 22 this opposition can be clearly seen when the narrative bounces back and forth

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Acts of Thomas 6:8.

¹³⁶ duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 75–76.

between the three questioners and Peter. While all three of the speakers are stating the truth, Peter is not, and his deception is made all the more clear when juxtaposed with their words of truth. Bakhtin's idea of dialogic truth is beneficial here: "It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of consciousnesses, one that cannot in principle be fitted into the bounds of a single consciousness, one that is, so to speak, by its very nature *full of even potential* and is born at a point of contact among various consciousnesses."¹³⁷ Luke's version of this story certainly includes multiple consciousnesses, resulting in Bakhtinian dialogic truth.¹³⁸

Yet, Peter denies the truth of even the claim made by the free male, "Man, I do not know what you are saying" (vs. 60). As Peter denies again, the rooster crows, fulfilling the prophecy declared by Jesus in Luke 22:34. Here, Peter uses a negation, οὐκ, for the third time, indicating the force behind his denial. After the rooster crows, Jesus (κύριος) turns to Peter and looks at him, a look that, as mentioned above, many scholars have connected to the gaze of the παλίδισκη. In response, Peter is reminded of Jesus' prediction and he "went out and cried bitterly" (22:62). Many commentaries discuss this passage and several of them conclude that this moment represents the conversion or repentance of Peter.¹³⁹ For instance, Sharon Ringe notes, "In the very moment of Peter's

¹³⁷ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 81.

¹³⁸ To see other ways that Bakhtin's idea of dialogic truth benefits biblical scholarship as well as theology, see: Newsom, "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth."

¹³⁹ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 362; Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 1097; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 789; Bovon, *Luke 3*, 232; Carroll, *Luke*, 450.

greatest distance from Jesus, when Jesus' gaze falls upon him, he is already on the road toward being able to strengthen others."¹⁴⁰

Although Peter's characterization is important for Luke, this focus of scholars on the remorse of Peter also silences the voice of the slave-girl. Fred Craddock, for example, does not mention the woman being a slave, but suggests that Luke's insertion of the Lord turning to look at Peter is the "first step on the path to repentance and restoration."¹⁴¹ Centering the Lord's gaze minimizes the importance of the words of the three speakers, one of which is a παιδίσκη. The reading I have conducted here allows the truth of the words of the slave-girl to persist within the text. In this reading, she is the truth-teller. The (mostly male) commentators tend to focus on Peter, and as we saw in Bovon's comments, even work elaborately to show that Peter is telling the truth in the moment, even though Bovon does ultimately admit that Peter was not being truthful. This androcentric reading redeems Peter within the narrative and leaves the slave-girl as an empty voice, highlighting Peter's moment of shame. Turning this interpretation upside-down, allows the slave-girl to take up her role—she is the all-knowing truth-teller within the narrative.

This knowledge of the παιδίσκη is a result of her outsidedness in the narrative. Not only is she "outside" the group because of her gender and status, but she is also not positioned as a follower of Jesus, making her even more of an outsider in the narrative of the gospel. As we recall, the location of "outsidedness," for Bakhtin, is the ideal position for one to see and understand dialogic truth. He muses on this theoretical ideal:

¹⁴⁰ Sharon H. Ringe, *Luke* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 268.

¹⁴¹ Craddock, *Luke*, 265.

In order to obtain such a principle, I must succeed in finding a firm and convincing position...*outside* my entire life, with all its desires, strivings, and achievements, and I must succeed in perceiving all these in the category of another. Not an expression or utterance *of* my own life, but an utterance *about* my own life through the lips of another is indispensable for producing an artistic whole.

In this way, the utterance made by the slave-girl aids the production of dialogic truth through the polyphony of the narrative. Her outsidedness enables her to see what others gathered in the circle do not: what makes a true disciple.

Similarly, the παιδίσκη functions as a focalizer within this brief but vital narrative segment of Luke. As explored in chapter two, focalization is a term used in narratology to indicate the perspective through which the narrative is presented to the reader. This perspective often varies from text to text, and sometimes even within the same text the focalizing perspective will change. One of the ways information is provided to the reader is through these types of focalizations. In Luke 22, I argue that the focalization shifts from external focalization, when the narrative is presented through a broad point of view, to internal focalization, when a character within the narrative is able to see from a view outside of the narrative. During Peter's denial, the παιδίσκη functions as an external focalizer, when she sees Peter for who he really is, even prior to this moment and then makes a statement that is theologically truthful and provides a valuable insight about Lukan discipleship—that a disciple is one who is with his/her teacher. After the third accusation and denial, a shift in focalization occurs when the narrative focus moves to Peter and he “remembers” the words of his teacher, who predicted the betrayal. Through Peter's moment of internal focalization, the words of the παιδίσκη are now truth.

Conclusion: Truth is in the Eye of the Female Slave

The narrative arc of this passage from Luke 22, as I have laid it out here, is one of suspense that builds to the culmination of the rooster's crow. As Joel Green notes, "Luke records an escalation in the substance of Peter's denial."¹⁴² Peter is pictured walking at a distance from the crowd, the prize disciple separating himself from his leader. As the group enters the courtyard, they sit around a fire and a female slave-girl, low on the social stratum, gazes at Peter, her eyes lit from the light of the fire. She makes her statement—this man was also with him. Her statement is true, as is proven in just a few short verses. Additionally, it connects Peter to Jesus directly and spatially—Peter was “with” Jesus. In Luke, discipleship is a form of companionship. What makes a disciple? One who is *with* their teacher. These few words spoken by this slave-girl have more than one truth within them. Thus, the multi-voicedness within her utterance also functions as Bakhtinian dialogic truth, revealed in the dialogue that follows from the mouths of other characters, both slaves and free.

Peter, though, denies the truth of the girl's statement. As he does, his status as a free male lifts him above the slave-girl and his testimony is immediately believed over the slave's. A little while later, though, a male slave adds his voice to the chorus by stating that Peter is “one of them.” He is also a slave and so his word cannot be trusted either. Peter also denies his statement. Finally, a free male raises his voice to insist *in truth* that Peter was with him. This statement is the third and final one within the narrative structure—the free male has the final word. Yet, Peter still denies the truth of

¹⁴² Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 787.

the statement until the moment the rooster crows and reminds him of Jesus' prophesy from several verses earlier. In this narrative section, Luke provides three witnesses, in ascending order of importance: first, a female slave; then, a male slave; finally, a free male—the one whose witness will be believed.

The catch is that the reader knows the truth of the slave's words all along. Of course, Peter is a disciple. Certainly, Peter was “with him” and was “one of them.” The reader does not need the third free male to declare the truth of the statement—the reader already knows that Peter is lying, is denying his association with Jesus and his followers., and that he will return to the fold. F. Scott Spencer's work on this passage is especially relevant here. Referencing the other two places where a παιδίσκη is mentioned by Luke, he writes,

On three occasions—one in the Lukan passion narrative (22:56), the other two in the middle chapter of Acts (12:14-15; 16:17)—a παιδίσκη makes an announcement: *her voice is heard*. And what each slave-girl says is absolutely reliable: *she speaks the truth*. But, like the women witnesses to the empty tomb, each slave-girl proclaimer runs into resistance to her message: *her word is squelched or challenged in some way*. Shadows of doubt are even cast on the character and competence of each slave-girl as a witness: *she is stigmatized in some fashion as a suspicious, if not dangerous, deviant*.¹⁴³

Here, Spencer shows the androcentric nature of the text that I exemplified above using Bovon's commentary. Additionally, Spencer connects the three slave-girls and notes the way they all three function as truth-tellers in the text. Moreover, Spencer shows their words are challenged within the narrative. My reading shows this to be true as well, yet a full analysis of the statements of the following two speakers, alongside the turn to Peter's internal focalization, overturns the challenge to her words as the παιδίσκη is proven correct. Therefore, the words of the παιδίσκη ultimately stand true.

¹⁴³ Spencer, “Out of Mind, Out of Voice,” 136–137.

Kristeva's intertextuality as well as Bakhtinian theory furthers the view of the παιδίσκη as an "outsider" because of her status and gender. Like Callirhoe, when she was falsely enslaved, Luke's slave girl would be recognizable as a slave, her words would not be valued, and her statement could not stand without further confirmation. Yet, this outsiderness allows her to see Peter clearly, and her voice is incorporated in the polyphonic dialogue of Luke's gospel. The intensity of her gaze focuses on the prominent apostle, and her speech is intuitive. As a narrative focalizer, Luke's παιδίσκη (as well as in 16, as subsequent chapters will show) has comprehension within the narrative that has already been revealed to the reader. Pitted against the disciple Peter, we know that she is telling the truth. Two other witnesses, in higher social statuses than her own, confirm her words. Finally, the rooster crows and at that moment Peter cannot deny his discipleship anymore. Even more, the words of the παιδίσκη reveal a dialogic truth about Lukan theology: a disciple is one who is "with" Jesus. In Luke-Acts, this view of discipleship is proven true again and again. In this way, the slave-girl is also a mouthpiece for Lukan theology. As we will see, the παιδίσκη from Luke 22 sets the stage for two other truth-telling slave girls that will be found in similarly important parts of the narrative of Acts.

CHAPTER 4

The Girl Who Answers: Acts 12:12-19

*Somebody's knocking at your door,
Somebody's knocking at your door,
O children, why don't you answer?
Somebody's knocking at your door.*

~African American Spiritual and Folk Song

Slaves appear frequently as characters in Greek New Comedy and Roman comedy, such as in the words of Plautus and Terence. One popular trope was that of the running slave (*servus currens*).¹ The scene opened with a slave, usually male but occasionally female,² running into the scene, out of breath, to deliver an important message to his/her master or another character. Often, the slave anticipates a reward for the successful delivery of this message, which is presumably why the slave is in such a hurry. In the slave's attempt to deliver the message something always goes awry—the slave garbles or forgets the content of the message—and the delivery of the message is

¹ For explanations and examples of this motif, see Annalisa Rei, “Villains, Wives, and Slaves in the Comedies of Plautus,” in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*, ed. Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 92–108; Kathleen McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); C. W. Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 194; Roberta Stewart, *Plautus and Roman Slavery* (Oxford; West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2012); J. Albert Harrill, “The Dramatic Function of the Running Slave Rhoda (Acts 12.13-16) : A Piece of Greco-Roman Comedy,” *New Testament Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2000): 150–57.

² For instance, in Plautus' play “The Merchant” a female slave named Syra at one point functions as a *servus currens*. Plautus, “Mercator, or the Merchant,” in *Plautus III: The Merchant. The Braggart Soldier. The Ghost. The Persian*, trans. Wolfgang de Melo, Loeb Classical Library 163 (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1–128.

delayed in some way. When the message is finally delivered, the slave is revealed as stupid, drunk, or insane.³ The scene ends happily as all laugh at the expense of the slave. This trope was so common that in some plays a character performing as a free person could *play-act* the role of a *servus currens* and the audience would immediately recognize the humor in it.

Mimicking this routinely used trope, Luke incorporates a *servus currens* in Acts 12 in the character of Rhoda, the second παιδίσκη discussed in this project.⁴ This chapter argues for the significance of Rhoda's character in the book of Acts for a number of reasons. First, her comedic role in Luke-Acts, as a typical *servus currens*, functions to turn the story in a new direction; following Rhoda's role the focus of the text transitions from Peter to Paul. I make this argument in contrast to several scholars who suggest that Rhoda is simply comedic relief at a tense moment in the story. While I agree that Rhoda is a comedic figure, I argue that the humor in her role is purposeful and functions to humble Peter's character so that the reader more easily embraces the swift transition of focus to Paul's ministry.⁵ Additionally, the intertextual connections between Luke 22 and

³ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 63.

⁴Several scholars observe this motif at work in Acts, and have various reasons as to why Luke uses it here, which will be discussed in this chapter. Richard Pervo briefly mentions the reference to New Comedy in *Profit with Delight*, and later Albert Harrill provides a detailed explanation. See Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 63; Harrill, "The Dramatic Function of the Running Slave Rhoda (Acts 12.13-16)."

⁵ Kathy Chambers also argues that the comedy in this scene is not simply for entertainment value. She writes, "These scenes reveal more than Luke's invocation of comedic elements; they demonstrate how Christian adaptations of comedic tropes challenged the dominant cultural construction of status and gender, of ecclesial authority, slaves, and women." Kathy Chambers, "'Knock, Knock-Who's There?' Acts 12.6-17 as a Comedy of Errors," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004), 89.

Acts 12 remind the reader of Peter's previous interaction with a παιδίσκη, when he denies Jesus. Second, like Luke's other two παιδίσκαι, Rhoda is a truth-teller. While she is portrayed as a comedic slave, her undocumented words to Mary and the others at her house turn out to be true. Third, Luke deploys a comedic literary device in this pericope that also includes elements of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque. The aspects found in Acts 12 are all common tropes in carnival: impending transition/crisis; elements of humor that incite laughter; inclusion of a feast; opposing characters, settings, and ideas juxtaposed with one another in polyphonic dialogism; and the suspension of hierarchies. Discussing these three aspects of the story, I show that Rhoda functions humorously as a *servus currens* but also seriously as a truth-teller in the narrative, both of which indicate this scene is a carnivalesque narrative. The inclusion of carnivalesque narrative also suggests that Luke-Acts is a form of menippean literature, as argued in the second chapter.

I begin by discussing the immediate narrative context of Rhoda's scene: the miraculous prison escape of Peter (Acts 12:1-23). This scene also contains aspects of carnival and prepares the reader for the impending suspension of hierarchies in addition to the impending transition of the focal point from Peter to Paul. As mentioned, Peter and Paul are the two main characters in Acts. While both characters are integrated into various parts of this text, Peter's activity dominates the first half of the book (1-12), while the travels of Paul are the focus of the remainder (13-28). This leads many scholars to divide the book into these two parts.⁶ In fact, this division of Acts seems to create a contest between male apostles where the ministry of Peter wins out in the beginning of

⁶ For example, see Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*.

Acts, then Paul takes over for the rest of the narrative. For instance, M. D. Goulder observes:

In Luke's account in Acts, Paul seems to be keeping pace with Peter in the miracles he does. Peter and John heal a lame man in the temple (Acts 3), and Paul a lame man at Lystra (Acts 14). Peter heals the paralyzed Aeneas, and raises the dead Dorcas to life (Acts 9); Paul raises the dead Eutychus to life (Acts 20), and restores the sick Publius in Acts 28. But somehow Paul's miracles fail quite to impress as Peter's do. Publius had nothing worse than a fever and dysentery (28.8); and we wonder if Eutychus was quite dead, for Paul falls upon him and says, 'Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him' (20.10). So it seems as if Luke is doing his best to keep the scores level; for Paul to keep up with the Jerusalem Jones's.⁷

This contest is continued when one considers the narratives of the Apocryphal Acts, several of which feature either Peter or Paul.⁸

The scene of Peter miraculously escaping imprisonment and death at the hands of Herod along with Rhoda's moment at the door of Mary's house marks the transition between the two parts. Additionally, the setting of Acts also changes in chapter 13, from Jerusalem (in 1-12) to Antioch and then Asia Minor.⁹ Bruce Longenecker notes the transition that occurs in Acts 13:1 (a transition that he argues begins in 11:27-30) and questions the role that the scene in 12:1-24 plays, noting: "it is curious that Luke should have interrupted the journey(s) of Barnabas and Paul by including a long intervening

⁷ M. D. Goulder, *St. Paul Versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1995), 57–58.

⁸ See Robert F. Jr. Stoops, "Peter, Paul, and Priority in the Apocryphal Acts," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 31 (1992): 225–33.

⁹ Shelly Matthews provides a helpful overview of the geographical movement in Acts as it is contained in the narrative. See Matthews, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 25–43.

narrative.”¹⁰ My argument addresses this curiosity and offers an explanation for the conclusion of Acts 1-12 and the swift transition of the reader’s alliance from Peter to Paul and his colleagues.

In order to aid in this interpretation, I read Acts 12 alongside the *Acts of Andrew*, an apocryphal text that includes a stereotypical representation of a slave within a carnivalesque narrative. There, I argue that the παιδίσκη Euclia is also ultimately a truth-teller, even though the text presents her in an extremely negative light. In order to find the truth hidden in the textual body of Euclia, I read the *Acts of Andrew* against the grain, using a feminist lens. Alongside feminist analysis, a Bakhtinian reading reveals the carnivalesque elements in this text and overturns the roles of Maximilla, the slave owner, and Euclia the female slave. Read in this way, Euclia is another example of a truth-telling female slave, even though she comes to a horrid demise at the end of the narrative. The similarities between this representation and Acts 12 are revealed through a close examination of Euclia’s story. For instance, Rhoda is used in a comedic role in Acts, yet she turns out to be correct; this highlights the dialogic way that truth and deception interact within Luke-Acts, just as the analysis of Luke 22 showed. Euclia is also used humorously, and this reading of her punishment and death reveals a similar dialogic juxtaposition between truth and deception in the *Acts of Andrew*. Finally, Euclia’s ultimate demise shows the lengths that the author of the *Acts of Andrew* went to in order to perpetuate the ideology of slavery within this text—an authorial construction of truth. In contrast, Luke uses the παιδίσκαι in his text to reveal truth through their

¹⁰ Bruce W. Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of the New Testament Chain-Link Transitions* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005), 174.

characterizations and statements. Thus, the uniqueness of Luke's polyphonic text is revealed through this intertextual reading.

This takes us back to Rhoda, particularly the ways in which scholars have interpreted her presence in the middle of the narrative. Some see Rhoda as subverting hierarchies in Acts and some see Rhoda as sustaining those hierarchies. My argument addresses these opposing voices by engaging them in dialogue and showing the ways in which Rhoda's character in Acts does both things: subverts and sustains hierarchies. The author uses Rhoda for entertainment purposes; however, this also allows the carnivalesque moment to surface in the narrative. Rhoda does not escape the ideology of slavery in Acts. Indeed, as Demetrius Williams points out, "While certain elements of this episode are comedic, it must be kept in mind that Rhoda is portrayed as a stereotypical 'slave' as perceived in Greco-Roman culture."¹¹ Yet, as I show, the dialogical connection between this (mis)use of Rhoda alongside her function as truth-teller enacts the carnivalesque suspension of hierarchies at the point when Rhoda rises above the free characters—even the primary male apostle, Peter. As in all carnivals, however, such moments do not last, as is dramatized so horrendously in the case of Euclia. Nonetheless, the moment remains in the minds of the readers and the memories of communities. Because Rhoda's character, like the female slave from Luke 22, is a literary focalizer for Luke-Acts, her truth-telling also undermines any stable notion that only male and/or free characters or authors can speak the truth.

¹¹ Williams, "The Acts of the Apostles," 232.

Acts 12: A Humorous Novella with a Purpose

As Richard Pervo observes, Acts 12:1-23 is a “well-crafted novella containing different forms drawn from several sources.”¹² Certainly this narrative incorporates motifs from several genres of literature in antiquity and it utilizes them purposely, as this narrative marks a pivotal moment in Acts. First, the story incorporates the dangerous political situation that this religious community is currently in, as the leaders are being targeted and killed by political leaders. Additionally, the narrative forms a climax for the entirety of Acts, as in chapter 13 Peter disappears from the narrative and Paul takes over as the primary apostle. Moreover, the geographical focus of Acts after chapter 12 is not Jerusalem, as Paul spreads the message of Jesus through Asia Minor and then into Macedonia. Thus, I show that the purpose of Acts 12 is to provide a smooth transition for the reader to the second part of the story; in the end, Rhoda’s vital role in this novella will be highlighted as she aids in this transition.

This brief narrative opens with a condemning statement about Herod, the king (βασιλεύς) who has “laid hands to harm” those from the church (ἐκκλησία). Many scholars have explored the influence of the Roman Empire on the narrative of Acts, arguing that Luke is apologetic or sympathetic towards the Roman Empire.¹³ Virginia

¹² Pervo, *Acts*, 301.

¹³ For example, Douglas Edwards writes, “Luke’s narrative recognizes, and for the most part remains sympathetic with, Roman power exercised in proper fashion.” Douglas R. Edwards, “Surviving the Web of Roman Power: Religion and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles, Josephus, and Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe*,” in *Images of Empire*, ed. Loveday Alexander (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 187. For previous views of the ways in which Luke-Acts is apologetic and sympathetic toward the Roman empire, see: Burton Scott Easton, *Early Christianity: The Purpose of Acts, and Other Papers* (Greenwich, CT: Seabury Press, 1954); C. K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in*

Burrus, however, argues for the ambiguity and ambivalence of Luke-Acts's stance on empire. Showing the ways in which Luke's gospel displays ambivalence when depicting Pilate and Herod, Burrus writes concerning Acts, "Acts continues the pattern established in the Gospel, positioning the direct representatives of Rome ambiguously, while placing blame for the persecution of Jesus and his followers most squarely on the shoulders of the priestly elite of Jerusalem."¹⁴ The postcolonial reading conducted by Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo illuminates even more of this ambivalence by arguing that Luke uses Herod's role, along with his demise, to represent the "end of the 'divine voice' of Nero and all other emperors as represented in the imperial cult."¹⁵ Indeed, in Acts 12 we find Herod, a Judean imperial official, depicted as harming leaders of the church, in particular ordering James to be killed (12:2).¹⁶ Yet, Herod also appears to be on the side of the Jewish leaders. Moreover, this statement concerning the targeting of the leaders of the religious community in Jerusalem prepares the reader to for the expansion of the geographical setting of Acts and the burgeoning religious community to the Mediterranean world.

Recent Study (London, Epworth, 1961); Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (New York: Harper, 1961); Robert L. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, *Studies of the New Testament and Its World* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982); Klaus Wengst, *Pax Romana: And the Peace of Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988). For an analysis of these views and others see: Steve Walton, "The State They Were in: Luke's View of the Roman Empire," in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, ed. Peter Oakes (Carlisle; Grand Rapids: Paternoster; Baker, 2002), 1–41.

¹⁴ Burrus, "The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles," 137.

¹⁵ Muñoz-Larrondo, *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles*, 45.

¹⁶ For more on the motivations behind Herod's decision to kill James as well as the way this characterizes the view of the Jews in Acts, see Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 60–61.

A narrative analysis of this scene provides insight into the context of chapter 12. The geographical setting is in the city of Jerusalem, first in a prison (φυλακή) then outside of Mary's modest house.¹⁷ The reader is immediately reminded of the scene in Luke 22 as Peter's denial occurred also outside of a house in Jerusalem, although that house was probably larger and more elite. Luke twice notes that the timing of Acts 12 occurs during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a feast that followed Passover (12:3, 4).¹⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson notes, "Luke collapses any distinction between them....The reader, of course, is expected to make the connection between this arrest and that of Jesus also at Passover."¹⁹ I suggest that these references to the Passover feast serve two purposes. First, as Johnson suggests, along with the setting outside a house, it reminds the reader of Luke 22—the scene of Jesus' arrest and Peter's denial. In this way, Acts 12 is in literary dialogue with the scene from Luke 22. Second, the insistence on a feast sets up the carnivalesque moment. When describing the medieval carnival, Bakhtin notes the important connection that carnival had with feasts:

The feast is always essentially related to time, either to the recurrence of an event in the natural (cosmic) cycle, or to biological or historic timeliness. Moreover, though all the stages of historic development feasts were linked to moments of

¹⁷ Jennifer Glancy makes this argument about Mary's house, and I agree that it was not as elite, for example, as the house of the high priest depicted in Luke 22. Glancy writes: "Acts of the Apostles does not specify the extent of Mary's slaveholdings, but we may infer that she does not have an opulent household. Rhoda does not seem to be exclusively a gatekeeper: she must come to the gate when she hears the knocking." Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 39–40.

¹⁸ Fitzmyer accurately observes that these were technically two feasts, but that they were sometimes conflated into one by authors, such as Luke. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 487.

¹⁹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J Harrington, Sacra Pagina Series, Vol. 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 211.

crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man. Moments of death and revival, of change and renewal always led to a festive perception of the world. These moments, expressed in concrete form, created the peculiar character of the feasts.²⁰

This quote perfectly describes the scene in Acts 12, its connection to the arrest of Jesus, and this moment of change and renewal. Bakhtin's observations are even enhanced in this context, given that Passover is a reenactment of liberation from bondage. Noting the feast in this way leads up to the carnival moment, which is intricately related to the feast, as Bakhtin describes, "Carnival was the truth feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal."²¹ The connection Bakhtin makes between carnival and truth particularly resonates in Luke-Acts, as the representations of truth alluded to in this project come in moments of carnivalesque reversals.

Additionally, within carnival opposing groups of people interact, are represented and juxtaposed—slave/free, jester/king, women/men, etc. As mentioned in chapter two, this aspect of carnival stems from the polyphonic dialogism in the text, and here, in Acts, it is also a feature of the Menippean genre. In a rare occasion when Bakhtin discusses the Bible, he notes the ways that biblical narrative conveys seemingly discordant elements: "In these genres, and especially in the numerous 'Gospels' and 'Acts,' the classical Christian dialogic syncrises are worked out: that of the tempted (Christ or a righteous man) with the tempter, the believer with the nonbeliever, the righteous man with the sinner, the beggar with the rich man, the follower of Christ with the Pharisee, the apostle

²⁰ Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

(the Christian) with the heathen, and so forth.”²² While it is true that the hierarchal categories remain in the gospels and Acts (in Bakhtinian language, they are “worked out”), the carnival moments when these hierarchal relationships are suspended and subsequently reversed point to resistance in the narrative, and an identification between these two opposing groups.

Within this context, there are several characters that are juxtaposed in Acts 12. First, Herod is the king, and is obviously a character who is “on top” within the societal hierarchy of the Roman empire. Meanwhile, Peter is imprisoned and his life is in danger because of Herod’s desire to arrest and kill him (12:2). Herod becomes the main antagonist in Acts 12 when he kills James and then arrests Peter. Along with Herod, who is a Judean, the Jewish leaders²³ (Ἰουδαῖοι) in Jerusalem are presented negatively, as they are pleased with the arrest and death of these religious leaders (12:3). Similar to imperial leaders in Acts, the Ἰουδαῖοι are portrayed in oscillating ways in the text, both positive and negative, leading scholars to disagree on the particular view Luke holds concerning the Jews in Acts.²⁴ Yet, as Lawrence Wills shows, “It has been granted from

²² Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 135.

²³ While Ἰουδαῖοι is often understood and translated as “Jews” or “Judeans” I translate it here as “Jewish leaders” because many of the other characters are also technically Jews, but are not involved in the persecution of the early Christian community. See Joshua D. Garroway, “Ioudaios,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 524–26.

²⁴ Wills provides a synopsis of the traditional scholarly debates on both sides of this conversation in Lawrence M Wills, “The Depiction of the Jews in Acts,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110, no. 4 (1991): 631–633. For a more current discussion of the possibilities for understanding the “Jews” in Acts, see Matthews, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 59–72.

the beginning that *not all opponents are Jews*; nevertheless, almost all opponents are.”²⁵

Here, a Jewish king with imperial authority and the Ἰουδαῖοι are against the leaders of the new religious community presented, and most specifically Peter. In this way, the two opposing groups (Peter and the community of believers versus Herod and the Ἰουδαῖοι) are juxtaposed, yet, as Bakhtinian theory illuminates, the polyphonic dialogue between them is required in order for *both* groups to exist. By the end of Acts 12 the positions of these two groups are reversed after Peter is miraculously released from prison and Herod ultimately dies a miserable death (12:23); this reversal is also noted by Muñoz-Larrondo as a “marking of a new era.”²⁶

Yet, there is another hierarchy functioning within this narrative as well, as Peter becomes the “top” character in juxtaposition to Rhoda, the female slave. In Acts 1-12, Peter is the main protagonist. As presented in the gospel of Luke, he is a disciple of Jesus; in the first half of Acts he is portrayed not only as a disciple but as a miracle-worker, orator, and the ideal “hero.” In contrast, from the moment Rhoda is introduced she is the opposite of Peter—a female, enslaved, unreliable character. When Peter is also grouped with the community who has gathered at Mary’s house, Rhoda is the “bottom” of this hierarchical juxtaposition. Yet, as we will see, for a literary moment these hierarchies are suspended and Rhoda is positioned as the truth-teller in this carnivalesque narrative. Thus, while it appears as if the community of believers ends up as the dominant

²⁵ Wills, “The Depiction of the Jews in Acts,” 644.

²⁶ Muñoz-Larrondo, *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles*, 44.

group, throughout the narrative the moments of polyphony, carnival, and unfinalizability reveal otherwise.²⁷

As we can see, by the time the reader reaches Acts 12, the suspense has been building and the tension is high as the group of believers, and especially the hero, Peter, is in danger. Because of this the group gathered at the house of Mary begins to pray for the release of Peter. Perhaps the group has already gathered in order to celebrate Passover together, when they hear of Peter's plight. This is particularly appropriate due to the nature of the celebration of Passover; the church celebrates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery while praying for Peter's liberation from bondage. The prayers of the church are answered in Acts 12:6, as an angel appears in jail to come to Peter's rescue. It is here that things get humorous, a hint that a carnivalesque moment is imminent. Peter is sleeping, chained, and surrounded by soldiers when an angel appears and wakes him. Apparently, Peter is so stunned that he needs step-by-step instructions on how to put on his own clothes. The angel tells Peter to put on his belt and sandals; he obeys (12:8). Then the angel tells him to put on his garment and follow (ἀκολουθέω); again, Peter obeys (12:8). In this verse, we find the same verb, to follow, used with Peter in Luke 22. Yet there is humor too as the reader imagines Peter, naked and unsure what to do. "Like a patient parent," quips Pervo, "the angel must supervise his toilet. First the shoes are laced up, then his belt secured. Do not overlook the cloak. (All this will madden anxious

²⁷ The end of Acts, for instance, is left intentionally open for the dialogue between Paul and the "Jews" to continue. This allows the ending to be unfinalized, so that dialogism continues beyond the text. For more on the end of Acts, see Troy M. Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of the Acts Within Its Literary Environment* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

readers. Why spend all this time perfecting the outfit? He is breaking out of jail, not going to a papal reception.)”²⁸

Even after he is dressed, Peter appears to be sleepwalking as he blindly obeys the angel’s commands, not even realizing what is happening. Acts 12:9 states that Peter thinks the angel is a vision and that this ordeal is not real or true (ἀληθεία). Peter walks right past the guards and through the iron gate. The angel guides Peter outside the jail and then disappears. Finally, Peter comes to (ἐν γυνόμενος) and realizes, truly (ἀληθεία), that the angel saved him “from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people (Ἰουδαῖοι) were expecting” (12:11). Mitzi Smith correctly identifies this as another recognition scene, as Peter does not know that it is an angel at first who comes to his aid.²⁹ Now dressed and out of prison, waking up in the street, a bit confused by the events, Peter proceeds to Mary’s house.³⁰ The audience is now primed for humor. Rhoda will enter the scene momentarily.

Before turning to Rhoda, however, an explanation of the way that “truth” (ἀληθεία) is associated with Peter in this scene is needed. First, Peter is confused, having just awoken. He questions the truth, or reality, of what has just occurred (12:9). Then, after the angel leaves him and he is on his own he realizes the truth (12:11), that the Lord

²⁸ Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 62.

²⁹ Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles*, 127.

³⁰ The Acts Seminar also notes the humor present in this scene: “The narrative has not only human interest but also humor. Think of Peter, aroused from sleep and directed to get dressed. He is sure that he is still dreaming, and it is necessary for the angel to give him specific directions on what to wear. He is slow to realize what has happened (Acts 12:7-10; see also 10:17, 19, 28, where Peter ponders for a long time before understanding his vision).” Smith and Tyson, *Acts and Christian Beginnings*, 140.

rescued him from imminent death. This use of truth in the scene contrasts with Luke 22, where Peter is associated with falsehood. By this point in Acts Peter's reliability is secure, even to the reader, as the unrealistic events in this scene are marked as truth. Peter's prison scene is his moment of retesting. As noted in Acts 12:4, Herod was "intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people." This foreshadowing both evokes the setting of the passion narrative in Luke's Gospel, and also suggests that Peter is facing a public trial and execution similar to Jesus'. Pervo writes, "The meaning is clear: Peter will follow the path of his master."³¹ The prospect of sharing Jesus' bloody fate is the test that Peter fails in the gospel, and his readiness to share it in Acts is the test he now passes. But Peter's scene of cowardice and Peter's scene of courage both contain a truth-telling slave girl, which further marks the connection between the two scenes.

Thus, Bakhtin's notion of dialogism is already at work in this scene, as this narrative connects intertextually with previous portrayals of Peter. Indeed, the characterization of Peter changes during the transition from Luke to Acts. Loveday Alexander points to the dialogic nature of Luke-Acts when she writes, "Luke's characters progressively engage in the dialectical processes of 'remembering' and re-reading their earlier experience."³² In Luke, Peter follows Jesus, and yet in the end he denies his own participation in discipleship. In Acts, however, he regains his commitment and at the early scene of Pentecost, in Acts 2, is positioned as a leader of the group in Jerusalem. His speeches and statements in Acts 2:14-30 remember the events of Luke. After

³¹ Pervo, *Acts*, 308.

³² Loveday Alexander, "'This Is That': The Authority of Scripture in the Acts of the Apostles," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 25, no. 2 (2004): 200.

Pentecost, Peter takes the place of Jesus and travels throughout Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, healing people and speaking, all in the name of Jesus. When he is arrested, he speaks confidently of the power and message of Jesus (4:8-12; 5:29-32) and is subsequently released, first by the officials and then by the appearance of an angel (4:21; 5:19-20). In contrast to Luke, in Acts Peter is surrounded by truth and his previous betrayal is overturned.

After his encounter with the angel, Peter goes directly to the house (οἶκος) of Mary, the mother of John, where many others are praying (προσεύχονται, 12:12). This is likely a group consisting of friends of Peter who are gathered inside the house to pray for Peter, or who have gathered to celebrate Passover. Fitzmyer notes the connection this draws for the reader to the Pentecost narrative, particularly Acts 1:14, where a group is also gathered to pray in a home in Jerusalem.³³ In fact, since the sixth century Mary's house has been understood by some to be the site of the Last Supper as well as the place where Pentecost occurred.³⁴ While this tradition is not easily substantiated, Carolyn Osiek and Margaret MacDonald suggest that Mary's house is functioning as an early house church when they write, "The narrative indicates that Mary's house is the recognized center of activity for the community and the natural place where they would assemble in time of crisis."³⁵ We do not know any details about the role that Mary had

³³ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 488.

³⁴ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, German orig. 1963, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 94.

³⁵ Carolyn Osiek and MacDonald, Margaret Y., *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 157.

within this community, although it is reasonable to assume that she is the head of the household and the leader of this community.³⁶ For example, Ben Witherington notes that it is impressive that a woman is the head of this household, yet he also assumes she must be a widow.³⁷ On the other hand, Luke Timothy Johnson suggests that a woman as the head of the household is “striking but not unparalleled.”³⁸ He cites Lydia (in Acts 16) as another example of a female head of household in Acts as well as Martha in Luke 10:38-42, and even connects this female head of the household to the “believing women” mentioned in 1 Timothy 5:16.³⁹

If Mary is the head of the household, then she is likely understood to be the owner of Rhoda. Gail O’Day alludes to this possibility in her assessment that Mary is in a “privileged economic position” because her house is able to hold a gathering of believers and also that she has a slave.⁴⁰ The relational dynamics between a female slave owner and female slave in the ancient world were quite complex, and the pairing appears in numerous ancient narratives.⁴¹ The *Acts of Thomas*, for example, includes an example of

³⁶ Beverly Gaventa suggests that Mary is a widow, since her house “would otherwise be identified by her husband’s name.” Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 185.

³⁷ Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 386.

³⁸ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 212.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ O’Day, “Acts,” 399. See also Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” 180.

⁴¹ Jennifer Glancy writes, “Relationships between and among women rarely figure in ancient Mediterranean writings. However, in the worlds constructed by various prose fictions—from Greek romances to Jewish stories and novellas—the relationships between mistresses and their attendants constitute an acceptable arena for depiction of women interacting with women.” Jennifer A. Glancy, “The Mistress-Slave Dialectic:

an intimate relationship between two women, Mygdonia, a free elite woman, and her slave-nurse, Marcia. Mygdonia and Marcia both convert to Christianity within the narrative; they communicate openly and when in distress Mygdonia runs to Marcia's bed and spends the night with her slave.⁴² On the other hand, the *Acts of Andrew*, which will be discussed further below, presents Maximilla, a Christian slave-owner in a not-so-equal, and even inhumane, relationship with her slave, Euclia. As Osiek and MacDonald state, "Women owned slaves, both female and male, and women slaveholders, as far as we can tell, were no less brutal or authoritarian than men toward their slaves."⁴³ Ultimately, the relationship between Mary and Rhoda could have fallen into either of these two stereotypes, or somewhere in between. As I have already discussed, slave/master-mistress relationships were complexly ambivalent in antiquity.

In the story found in Acts 12, Mary and the others gathered in the house are juxtaposed with Rhoda. They are free while she is enslaved. Rhoda is depicted as "out of her mind" when the others do not believe her. Moreover, the author represents Rhoda as a stock comedic character, which functions to draw laughter from the readers. Yet, reading this scene through the lens of carnival suggests a momentary reversal of these hierarchies, especially as Rhoda, the funny slave, becomes the one who tells the truth. Moreover, I argue that Rhoda's role is also used transitionally in Acts, as a part of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque narrative. Just as carnival scenes often anticipated change, Rhoda's

Paradoxes of Slavery in Three LXX Narratives," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, no. 72 (1996): 72–73.

⁴² Jennifer Glancy's work on this text suggests that the intimacy in this relationship between two women is highlighted within the text in order to promote equality within the Christian household. Glancy, "Slavery in the Acts of Thomas," 16–17.

⁴³ Osiek and MacDonald, Margaret Y., *A Woman's Place*, 96.

carnavalesque role functions to destabilize Peter's role as the main disciple as well as the center of the religious community as set in Jerusalem. The following section explores Rhoda's role in the humorous novella found in Acts 12, using Bakhtinian theory as well as intertextual dialogue.

A Rose by Any Other Name: Rhoda's Role in Acts 12:12-19

Rhoda's role in Acts has generated a great deal of scholarly discussion because of the uniqueness of this scene as well as the numerous issues at play. Scholars ask questions concerning Luke's use of an entertainment motif, Rhoda's involvement in the community of believers, and the reason behind Luke's inclusion of this scene. Most scholars today agree that Rhoda, as mentioned above, is a clear example of the *servus currens*, or running slave, familiar from Greek and Roman comedy. Because of Luke's use of this marginalized character, a number of feminist scholars explore Rhoda's role in order to show, on one side or the other, Luke's affinity for or against women, a debate still contested in the academic study of Luke-Acts, as shown in the introduction. This section adds a new interpretation to the conversation by suggesting that Rhoda, while clearly functioning as a comedic stock character, is also used by Luke at this important narrative transition in Acts, to disrupt and overturn the importance of Peter as well as Jerusalem in the narrative of Acts. Rhoda's carnivalesque moment in the narrative prepares readers to transition to Paul as the new protagonist of Acts. Moreover, Acts 12 is a geographical moment of transition, as after this scene the setting of Acts moves from Jerusalem to Asia Minor, where in Acts 13, Paul and his colleagues will spread the

gospel. In this way, Rhoda's function as a truth-teller in a carnivalesque moment in Acts 12 that overturns narrative hierarchies opening the textual space for Paul and his traveling companions to take the church, and the story, to a new geographical location.⁴⁴

Returning to the text, Acts 12:11-12 describes Peter, just awoken from his trance, wandering the streets of Jerusalem having just escaped from prison and on the run from Herod. When he realizes that he is in trouble and needs a place to hide, he goes to Mary's house where a community of believers is meeting to pray for him. Using data from archaeology, we can piece together what this ancient house might have looked like. For instance, the *πυλῶν* (gateway) would have been the gate that separated the street from the inner courtyard.⁴⁵ It is on the door on the gate that the reader pictures Peter knocking. Johnson invites us to picture a similar courtyard as the one in Luke 22: "We are to picture here just such a courtyard before the house proper, with a wall and a 'door at the gate' on which Peter can pound."⁴⁶ However, as mentioned above, I follow Glancy in her suggestion that Mary's house is not as grand as the one from Luke 22 but a more modest establishment. Either way, the setting recalls Luke 22, indeed.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo argues that Acts 12 is a climax, or turning point, in the narrative of Acts, especially focusing on the death of Herod at the end of the chapter. While Rhoda is not a part of this argument, it is clear that this chapter functions as an important moment of transition in Acts. Muñoz-Larrondo, *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles*, 68–74.

⁴⁵ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 489.

⁴⁶ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 213.

⁴⁷ Pervo notes that Rhoda "turns the tables on Peter—now he must pay a penalty for denying Jesus to another (anonymous) slave girl (NRSV, "servant-girl"; Luke 22:56-57). This lowly slave is a perfect, if imaginary, flower of poetic justice." Richard I. Pervo, "Rhoda," in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, ed.

It is here, in Acts 12:13, that we meet Rhoda, the second slave-girl (παῖδίσκη) in Luke-Acts.⁴⁸ Rhoda's name, which means rose, was a typical name used for slaves in this period. For instance, in the ancient novel the *Ephesian Tale*, the main female protagonist, Anthia, has a slave named Rhoda. In ancient novels slaves are often named. In Luke-Acts, however, this is not the case. In fact, Rhoda is the only named slave in the Synoptic Gospels.⁴⁹ When Peter arrives, "Rhoda, the slave-girl, came (προσῆλθεν) and answered (ὑπακούσαι) his knock (κρούσαντος) on the door of the gate (θύραν τοῦ πυλῶνος)." ⁵⁰ The verb, ὑπακούω, meaning "obey, listen, or answer" is often used in association with slaves in ancient literature. This short verse presents Rhoda as an obedient, "good" slave.⁵¹ Someone knocked on the door and Rhoda came to answer it, which is just what a good domestic slave was supposed to do.

This is not the only time in early Christian texts that Peter encounters a doorkeeper who is also a slave, although male. The *Acts of Peter* includes a scene that

Carol L. Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross Shepard Kraemer (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 145.

⁴⁹ John's gospel provides a name, Malchus, for the slave whose ear is cut off in the scene of Jesus' arrest (18:10).

⁵⁰ My translation adjusts the focus to Rhoda, while other English translations begin with the clause.

⁵¹ As mentioned in the Introduction, slaves represented in literature were often forced into these two categories: good or bad. In numerous texts, as in the New Testament, good, responsible slaves are rewarded while "bad" slaves are punished, often corporeally. Sandra Joshel writes, "The good and bad slaves of Roman literature form two sides of the same coin. Where the good slave provides good service, the bad slave does his job poorly or not at all. The good slave puts his master and his interests first: the bad, himself and his own appetites." Sandra R. Joshel, "Slavery and Roman Literary Culture," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: The Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 223.

bears a slight resemblance to this one.⁵² In this narrative, Peter is seeking to find Simon the magician in order to confront him. He goes to the house where Simon is staying and calls to the doorkeeper, telling him to tell Simon that “Peter...is waiting for you at the door.”⁵³ The doorkeeper, most likely disobeying orders, replies: “Whether you are Peter, I do not know, sir, but I have an order. He learned yesterday that you had entered the city, and he said to me, ‘Whether by day or by night, at whatever hour he comes, say that I am not inside.’”⁵⁴ The slave here also functions as an unreliable slave—especially when one considers that he is disobeying his master through this statement, yet obeying Peter, the stranger at the door. While there are a number of differences in this scene and the one from Acts 12, it portrays a similar scene—Peter standing at a door, talking to a slave who is a doorkeeper, but unable to get in. Both slaves are positioned as comedic characters, yet they simultaneously function seriously in the story—the male doorkeeper obeys the “right” person in the narrative, Peter over his own master. Additionally, both Rhoda and the male doorkeeper make truthful statements—Rhoda’s to the church inside about Peter

⁵² In fact, the *Acts of Peter* is filled with slave characters. Judith Perkins argues that this text exhibits a concern for slaves, a perspective quite rare during this era. Perkins writes, “The *Acts of Peter*...subverts traditional hierarchies based on status and offers a more inclusive and egalitarian notion of community through its focus on the equality of all humans in their shared dependence on the Lord’s mercy.” Judith Perkins, “Resurrection and Social Perspectives in the Apocryphal Acts of Peter and Acts of John,” in *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, ed. Jo-Ann A. Brant, Charles W. Hedrick, and Chris Shea (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 237. On the other hand, Callie Callon argues that the *Acts of Peter* uses slaves in the text only to enhance the characterizations of Peter, Simon, and Marcellus, positively and negatively. In this way the text reinforces the ideology of slavery. Callie Callon, “Secondary Characters Furthering Characterization: The Depiction of Slaves in the Acts of Peter,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131, no. 4 (2012): 798.

⁵³ *Acts of Peter* 9:4.

⁵⁴ *Acts of Peter* 9:5-6.

being outside, and the male doorkeeper to Peter about the orders given to him by Simon. Apparently, in Luke-Acts and the *Acts of Peter*, slaves have a pattern of being truthful in their statements to Peter, without the need for coercive torture.

Here, at the door in Acts 12, we encounter a literary moment full of humor and comedic imagery.⁵⁵ More importantly, though, we also find the second moment in Luke-Acts where a παιδίσκη is a truth-teller. Verse 14 begins with Rhoda as the implicit subject. The verb ἐπεγινώσκω describes that Rhoda “recognized” Peter’s voice. Another, perhaps more literal, definition for this word is to “recognize/know again.”⁵⁶ In the same way that the παιδίσκη from Luke 22 gazed at Peter and recognized him, Rhoda heard Peter’s voice and recognized him.⁵⁷ Moreover, she was happy to hear Peter’s voice (ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς). This has led a number of commentators to assume that Rhoda was, in fact, a part of the Christian community.⁵⁸ For this project, the recognition serves as a literary moment connecting Rhoda to Peter and the παιδίσκη from Luke 22.

Even though Rhoda is a “good” slave who goes to the door when someone knocks, she ultimately forgets to open the gate for Peter, but leaves him standing outside

⁵⁵ James Dunn also notes the comedy in this scene: “Whoever first told this story evidently had a sense of humour: Peter who has just walked through the gates manned by soldiers is left standing at the door by a maid servant and has to keep knocking to gain attention.” Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 164.

⁵⁶ *LSJ*, s.v. ἐπεγινώσκω.

⁵⁷ For more on recognition in Luke-Acts, see Geoffrey Fillingham Nuttall, *The Moment of Recognition: Luke as Story-Teller* (London: Athlone Press, 1978).

⁵⁸ Ben Witherington suggests this when he writes, “That Rhoda must come to the gate when Peter knocks may suggest she was taking part in the prayer meeting, thus implying that not just women but even slaves could participate in the early Christian meetings (cf. Acts 1:14).” Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1998, 387.

as she runs back inside (εἰστρέχω, vs. 14). In the motif of the *servus currens* the slave is often forgetful as well, humorously failing at a job that is relatively simple to perform. In Acts, Luke tells us why—it is “because of joy.” Instead of opening the gate, Rhoda runs inside (εἰστρέχω) to announce (ἀπαγγέλλω) her important message: Peter is standing at the gate (ἑστᾶαι τὸν Πέτρον πρὸ τοῦ πυλῶνος, vs. 14)! While some commentators interpret Rhoda’s joy as an answer to the prayers of the community, there could be another reason for this phrase.⁵⁹ In the *servus currens* trope, a slave who successfully delivers his/her message is often rewarded in some way. This is why they are portrayed on stage as running, out of breath, and even forgetful (as their focus is the reward). Harrill notes that some slaves could even be hoping for manumission as a result of their job well done.⁶⁰ In this way, Rhoda’s joy is easily connected to the comedic strategy of a *servus currens*, who is so eager to deliver the announcement to her master that she forgets the man who is standing outside the gate and thus dangerously exposed to Herod’s soldiers, who will be scouring the city for him by now. As such, Rhoda’s forgetting to open the gate for Peter is not only a comedic element in the narrative but also a suspenseful element. Peter is left high and dry while Rhoda is excitedly relaying the news of his arrival to those inside and arguing with them about its veracity.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Wall, for example, identifies Rhoda as a “Christian woman.” Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” 180.

⁶⁰ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 64.

⁶¹ In fact, if the full comedic-suspenseful potential of the scene were exploited, when those inside finally go to investigate for themselves, it would be only to see Peter being dragged back to prison by the soldiers—necessitating yet another angelic intervention to see him free.

Adding to the humor of the story, as soon as Mary and those inside the house (described only as οἱ in the text) hear Rhoda's message they say to her, "Μαίνῃ," meaning "You are crazy" (12:15). But Rhoda did not give up and "kept insisting that it was so" (διῆσχυρίζετο οὕτως ἔχειν, vs. 15). Here, again, we find the verb διῆσχυρίζομαι, to insist with force, implying that Rhoda was stubborn concerning her statement of truth. This word is only used twice in Luke-Acts, and not otherwise in the New Testament, and both times it is found in the context of a παιδίσκη. The first place, as we saw in chapter 3, is used in Luke 22:59 to describe the third speaker in the story of Peter's denial, when he insisted "in truth" that Peter was in fact with "him." As shown, this word is the verb used to describe the third questioner, a free male, who insisted strongly that the words of the female slave were true. The second time it is found in Luke-Acts is here, describing Rhoda's insistence. Therefore, the use of this word aligns Rhoda with the third speaker from Luke 22, the one who insisted "in truth," and also marks the moment in the narrative where Rhoda speaks truth.⁶² Moreover, this same word is used in the *Acts of Peter* in the scene with the doorkeeper and Peter, certainly intentionally, as Pervo notes, "The Acts of Peter evidently saw the connection and provided an additional parallel."⁶³ Yet, despite Rhoda's forceful insistence, those within the house still do not believe her. Instead, believing Peter to be dead at the hands of Herod, they declare, "It is his angel" (12:15). Twice the group refutes Rhoda's words, first calling her "crazy" and then

⁶² Pervo confirms this connection and argues that the author is making an intentional parallel between Rhoda and the παιδίσκη from Luke 22 through his use of διῆσχυρίζομαι. Pervo, *Acts*, 307.

⁶³ Ibid.

suggesting an alternative explanation. Ultimately, Rhoda, the female-slave, is not believed by those around her.

This moment of disbelief in particular evokes the resurrection narratives of Luke's gospel. As Clarice Martin indicates, "Rhoda's function within the narrative story is reminiscent of the women disciples' experience, following the resurrection of Jesus in Luke (Luke 24:9-11)."⁶⁴ For example, Mary's moment of recognition ἐπιγινώσκω is the same word used to describe the moment when the eyes of the disciples were opened and they recognized Jesus post-resurrection (24:31).⁶⁵ Additionally, the phrase used to describe Rhoda's joy at seeing Peter, ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς, is also found in Luke 24:41 when the resurrected Jesus appears to a group of disciples and, even after seeing his hands and feet, they were still in disbelief, "from their joy."⁶⁶ In further support of this intertextual dialogue, the word for Rhoda's announcement (ἀπαγγέλλω) to the community inside Mary's house is also found in Luke's resurrection narrative; in Luke 24:9 the women "announce" the news of the resurrection to the eleven disciples.⁶⁷ Johnson takes this one step further into verse 15 (to be discussed below) where the people inside Mary's house call Rhoda "crazy" (μαίνομαι). Similarly, in the story of the women at the empty tomb in

⁶⁴ Clarice J. Martin, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, vol. 2 (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 783. Gaventa also notes the connections between this account and Luke 24. Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 185.

⁶⁵ Additionally, in 24:16 the same verb is used when the two were on the road to Emmaus and they did not recognize Jesus.

⁶⁶ Johnson observes this literary connection as well, see Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 213.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Luke's gospel, the disciples suggest that the women were "nonsense" (λῆρος, 24:11).⁶⁸

Yet, in Acts 12, it is the female followers who are the disbelievers, while Rhoda, the slave, is the truth-teller, confirming that Peter is alive. In comparison to Luke 24, the juxtaposition of truth and falsehood is overturned—the women at the tomb in Luke (Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Joanna) were truth-tellers but disbelieved by Peter and the male disciples; in Acts 12 it is Rhoda who is the truth-teller while Mary, the mother of John, and the others at her house disbelieved.⁶⁹ In this way, Rhoda is connected to the faithful female apostles at the tomb in the gospel of Luke, while Mary, the woman who leads the community of believers is not.

Many scholars have noted the implications of the total disbelief the church has concerning Rhoda's suggestion. Yet, this was typical for slaves in the Greco-Roman world. As discussed in the introduction, in antiquity slaves would not have been perceived as a credible source.⁷⁰ DuBois' analysis of Aristotle's words on slavery confirm this:

The master possesses reason, *logos*. When giving evidence in court, he knows the difference between truth and falsehood, he can reason and produce true speech, *logos*, and he can reason about the consequences of falsehood, the deprivation of his rights as a citizen. The slave, on the other hand, possessing not reason but

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Clarice Martin observes, "One important difference should be noted about the 'disbelief' tradition in Luke 24:9-11 and Rhoda's story: following the resurrection of Jesus, the women witnesses were disbelieved by 'men,' and in the Rhoda tradition, it appears that Rhoda was disbelieved by *women and men*, for 'they' commented that she was out of her mind (Acts 12:15). It is possible that her status as a 'slave' made her an even less credible witness in the eyes of those to whom she proclaimed God's saving deed." Martin, "The Acts of the Apostles," 783–784.

⁷⁰ See duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 35.

rather a body strong for service (*iskhura pros ten anagkaian khresin*), must be forced to utter truth, which he can apprehend, although not possessing reason as such.⁷¹

The pervasive distrust of the slave is an integral part of the comedy routine of a *servus currens*. As mentioned briefly above, J. Albert Harrill argues that Luke intentionally uses the comedic motif from Greek New Comedy, that of the stock character *servus currens*, in his creation of the character of Rhoda.⁷² The *servus currens* motif is often found in classical plays and is portrayed a slave who is infantilized and runs in and out of the scene, for a variety of reasons. Ultimately, the use of a slave in this way played upon and perpetuated the ideology of slaves as incapable of reasoning, as seen in Aristotle's natural slavery.⁷³ By characterizing Rhoda as a *servus currens*, Luke presumes his readers already think that most slaves are flighty and unreliable. In this way, Rhoda is certainly comedic relief as she embodies the trope of the familiar oblivious, absentminded, stupid, running slave.

Yet, even as Rhoda is portrayed as the absentminded slave, the literary connections between this story and Luke 22 and 24 disrupt her function as *simply* comedic relief. What is more, the use of this theatrical motif, the *servus currens*, functions as a part of the carnivalesque nature of the scene. As Bakhtin shows, laughter is inherently ambivalent, and the humorous nature of carnivalesque literature is intentional, pointing to something more serious than is often first noticed:

⁷¹ Ibid., 65–66.

⁷² Harrill, "The Dramatic Function of the Running Slave Rhoda (Acts 12.13-16)."

⁷³ Stewart, *Plautus and Roman Slavery*, 77.

Carnivalistic laughter likewise is directed toward something higher—toward a shift of authorities and truths, a shift of world orders. Laughter embraces both poles of change, it deals with the very process of change, with *crisis* itself. Combined in the act of carnival laughter are death and rebirth, negation (a smirk) and affirmation (rejoicing laughter). This is a profoundly universal laughter, a laughter that contains the whole outlook on the world. Such is the specific quality of ambivalent carnival laughter.⁷⁴

Indeed, crisis envelopes Acts 12 as the community in Jerusalem and its leaders are being targeted both by the Roman authorities and by Jewish leaders. Peter, the focal point of the story of Acts up until now, is being targeted, as is his religious community. Change is on the horizon for this community, as Peter slips out of focus and Paul takes over the main part of the narrative. Yet, the change of geographical location is also vital, as the centrality of Jerusalem is diminished and the message is spread throughout the Mediterranean world. The laughter that Rhoda's character provides is needed, to "embrace both poles of change," as Bakhtin puts it. The resulting laughter incited by this scene highlights the upside-down world created in this moment and the shifting of hierarchies and truths.⁷⁵

While the readers are still laughing at Rhoda's sprint back inside the house, the text reminds us that Peter is still outside at the door, knocking, while the others are inside debating on whether Rhoda is correct or not (12:16). In this way, Peter becomes the

⁷⁴ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 127.

⁷⁵ Chambers also includes the use of laughter in her analysis: "To laugh at the leaders of any community is a sign of freedom; for the leaders to be able to appreciate that laughter enough to accept its promptings in a canonical document is a sign of health; to celebrate that such humor disrupts the status quo in a way of benefit to those outside traditional bases of authority is a sign of the *Basileia*." Chambers, "'Knock, Knock-Who's There?'," 97.

“higher”⁷⁶ focus of the carnivalesque laughter as he is seemingly forgotten, standing outside the gate, fearing for his life yet not allowed inside. While Peter is still knocking, the focus of the narrative is on Rhoda, the παιδίσκη and her insistence to the others that the one they await is really, truly at the gate. For this moment in the narrative, hierarchies are reversed as Peter’s role is diminished and Rhoda takes the spotlight. The upside-down nature of this scene readies the reader for Peter’s impending replacement.

Finally, they open the door, and lo and behold, Rhoda was right. The group is “amazed” (ἐξίστημι, 12:16) and Peter proceeded to tell them about the miraculous prison escape, after which he leaves Mary’s house (12:17). This word, ἐξίστημι, also has the sense of “being out of one’s wit.”⁷⁷ Thus, there is a subtle connection between the words μάλνομαι and ἐξίστημι from 12:15 and 12:16. First, the community calls Rhoda crazy, or out of her mind (the NRSV translates it this way), for her insistence that Peter was at the door. Then, Rhoda is proven correct when Peter is seen by the community standing at the door, and they are the ones who are “out of their minds” in amazement. Kathy Chambers points out this parallel: “When the church members had proclaimed Rhoda to be ‘mad’ (μάλνη), they were incorrect; it is the omniscient narrator who correctly identifies those who are ‘beside themselves.’”⁷⁸ This literary reversal exposes the aspects of carnivalesque present in the narrative. Rhoda, the lowly slave is made fun of by the author and dubbed crazy by others in the narrative. Then, the narrative is turned on its

⁷⁶ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 127.

⁷⁷ *LSJ* and *BAG*, s.v. ἐξίστημι.

⁷⁸ Chambers, “‘Knock, Knock-Who’s There?’,” 95.

head as she becomes a truth-teller and the community is shown as the ones who are now crazy.

The narrative ends in Acts 12:18-19 as Herod and the guards search for but cannot find Peter. Herod orders the guards put to death because of Peter's escape (vs. 19). Herod leaves the area to address another issue in Caesarea, and while there is killed by an "angel of the lord" in a disturbing manner: "he was eaten by worms and died" (12:23). This is remarkably similar to the testimony of Josephus, who claims that Agrippa died after violent stomach pains that lasted for five days before he died.⁷⁹ Perhaps Josephus is a source here, or perhaps Luke is basing his story on a rumor concerning the death of this king.⁸⁰ Either way, the death of Herod adds finality to the plot of Acts 12, as he was positioned as the antagonist and is now dead.

Ultimately, Acts 12 functions as a transition narrative within the whole of Acts through the carnivalesque nature of the scene. Rhoda's role, as a *servus currens*, encapsulates the humor of this narrative as she is simultaneously used as a slave object yet also seriously revealed as the truth-teller. The use of comedy in Acts 12 begins with Peter's interaction with the angel, continues through Rhoda's moment on the stage, and ends with the appropriate yet tragic death of Herod. The climax of this Bakhtinian carnivalesque moment occurs in the doorway of Mary's house, not inside yet not outside, as the hierarchies within the text (female/male; slave/free; minor character/apostle) are suspended and the most marginalized of all the characters emerges a truth-teller. This reversal of hierarchies functions to prepare readers for the impending transition within the

⁷⁹ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 19.346-50.

⁸⁰ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1998, 389–390.

narrative: the change from Peter to Paul, who takes over as the head apostle for the remaining narrative of Acts, and the geographical adjustment as Jerusalem is not the center of this religious community. In order to further this interpretation, I read Acts 12 intertextually with an apocryphal Christian text, the *Acts of Andrew*, where we find another carnivalesque narrative where a female slave is also used and ridiculed (in much harsher ways than Rhoda), but also emerges as a truth-teller in the narrative, when one reads the story against the grain.

Euclia, the Tortured Truth-Teller

The stories of the three παιδίσκη in Luke-Acts are brief, but Euclia, a παιδίσκη in the *Acts of Andrew*, is a character with much more development and narrative space. Caught in the middle of a dramatic triangle between a Christian wife (Maximilla), a pagan husband (Aegeates), and Christian apostle (Andrew), Euclia is used by all three characters. Similar to Rhoda, Euclia is a comedic figure but also functions as a truth-teller, when one reads against the grain. As a whole, the narrative includes aspects of Bakhtinian carnivalesque literature. In contrast to Rhoda, though, Euclia is consistently portrayed negatively, as a “bad” slave who is not to be trusted. In the end, Euclia dies a horrible death at the hands of her slave owner, Aegeates, as a result of the actions of her mistress, Maximilla. Even though Euclia’s fate is tragic, I argue that reading her story with suspicion and alongside Bakhtinian theory produces a new interpretation of Euclia, that of another παιδίσκη who tells the truth, even as she suffers for it. Moreover, truth is

an active participant in this narrative as various characters prove their “truth” in different ways, depending on their status, gender, and participation in the Christian community.

The *Acts of Andrew* is a novelistic account of the travel, missionary activity, and death of the apostle Andrew.⁸¹ In the section that describes the death of Andrew, “The Passion of Andrew,” several stories take place, one including a trope that is common to the Apocryphal Acts—an elite married woman meets the apostle, converts, and becomes a close follower amidst the disapproval of her husband. In the *Acts of Andrew*, the elite woman (a slave owner) is Maximilla and her husband, the antagonist, is Aegeates. As Maximilla listens to Andrew’s teaching, she decides to become celibate and cease having sexual intercourse with her husband, instead spending her days and nights with Andrew.⁸² Maximilla prays, “Rescue me at last from Aegeates’ filthy intercourse and keep me pure and chaste, giving service only to you, my God” (14:7). However, instead

⁸¹ It is thought that the *Acts of Andrew* originally contained two sections, one on the travels of Andrew and one on the death of the apostle. Today the extant text is in three parts from different sources: The Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals; Gregory’s Epitome and Parallels, and The Passion of Andrew. The section I will be exploring is found in “The Passion of Andrew.” The Greek text referenced is found in Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); The English translation referenced are from Dennis Ronald MacDonald, “The Passion of Andrew,” in *The Acts of Andrew* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2005).

⁸² Saundra Schwartz’s discussion of this narrative segment shows the erotic elements and the ways in which readers would perceive Maximilla’s actions as typical of adultery. Writing of the scene where Maximilla takes Andrew into a bedroom, Schwartz suggests that, “Maximilla’s gesture, with its hand-holding and attendant entry into a bedroom, resonates with the entry of the bride and groom to the nuptial chamber or, given the absence of a man of the house, the entrance of an adulterous couple into the husband’s bedroom, a scenario fraught with resonance in the popular culture of the Mediterranean world.” Saundra Schwartz, “From Bedroom to Courtroom: The Adultery Type-Scene and the Acts of Andrew,” in *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, ed. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 297.

of telling Aegeates this directly, Maximilla concocts a scheme to simultaneously trick Aegeates and keep her chastity. She calls her slave Euclia, whose name means “of good report,” yet who is characterized negatively in the text as a “shapely, exceedingly wanton servant-girl” (17:1). Maximilla instructs Euclia to impersonate her in the bedroom so that Aegeates will have sex with Euclia and Maximilla will retain her chastity.⁸³ Euclia is not given much of a choice in the matter as Maximilla dresses Euclia in her own clothes and sends her into her husband’s bedroom.⁸⁴ In this way, Maximilla “uses her slave Euclia as an erotic body double” to avoid Aegeates’ sexual advances, as Glancy suggests.⁸⁵ Maximilla and Euclia exemplify the complex dynamics of the relationship of a female slave-owner with her female slave, perhaps a relationship that is similar to that of Mary and Rhoda in Acts 12.⁸⁶

In order to convince her of this subterfuge and to secure her silence in the matter, Maximilla promises Euclia that she will act as a benefactor (εὐεργέτης) for Euclia if she

⁸³ For a thorough discussion of the role chastity played in the independence of the female protagonists in the Apocryphal Acts, see: Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy*.

⁸⁴ Both Schwartz and Glancy accurately connect the story of Euclia and Maximilla to that of Hagar and Sarah. Glancy writes, “the story of Maximilla and Euclia echoes, in a disturbing way, the story of Sarah and Hagar. Sarah arranged for her husband to have sex with her slave in order to reproduce. Maximilla arranged for her husband to have sex with her slave so that she, Maximilla, could avoid having sex. In both instances, the Christians who relayed these stories were more concerned by the slave’s purported misbehavior than the gross sexual exploitation of a female slave by a female slaveholder.” Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies*, 68. Schwartz, “From Bedroom to Courtroom,” 304.

⁸⁵ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 22.

⁸⁶ Admittedly, Acts 12 does not indicate that Mary is Rhoda’s owner. However, the text states that it is Mary’s house and Rhoda is named as the slave of the household, so it is not much of an interpretive leap to suggest that Rhoda was owned by Mary.

helps her in this scheme (17:2). Perhaps Euclia understood this statement from her owner as a hint that she would be freed if she agreed. Indeed, the availability of manumission in the ancient world is another way in which owners retained power over slaves.⁸⁷ Moses Finley notes, “Graeco-Roman manumission...reveals in the sharpest way the ambiguity inherent in slavery, in the reduction of human beings to the category of property. It also reveals, through the variations, the dialectics of that ambiguity.”⁸⁸ While Maximilla does not directly state a promise of freedom, Euclia realizes the potential of her situation and is ultimately persuaded by her owner to engage in this risky masquerade.

In the same way that slaves were often treated in the ancient world, this text portrays Maximilla treating Euclia as an object to use for her own benefit. Even though this benefit is both bodily and a spiritual—focused on her Christian beliefs and the message of Andrew—the text gives no indication that Maximilla’s strategy is unethical. As Glancy notes, “The *Acts of Andrew* seems to exempt Maximilla of any moral culpability in the subterfuge, implying that Euclia’s actions are completely explicable in the context of her nature, depicted as both lascivious and greedy.”⁸⁹ This representation of Euclia is included for two reasons. First, the *Acts of Andrew* perpetuates the ideology

⁸⁷ For more on the process of manumission see James Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995); Susan Treggiari, “Freedmen and Freedwomen,” in *Ancient Greece and Rome*, vol. 1 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 227–30; Laura S. Nasrallah, “‘You Were Bought with a Price’: Freedpersons and Things in 1 Corinthians,” in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Schowalter (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 54–73.

⁸⁸ Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 97.

⁸⁹ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 22.

of slavery in which slaves are understood to be bodies that can be used as needed.⁹⁰ This is to say, Maximilla is treating Euclia in a way that readers would expect of her and not find to be unethical or against her religious beliefs. Second, Euclia is negative portrayed as a “bad” slave. As we recall, the text initially describes her as a “shapely, exceedingly wanton servant-girl” (17:1).⁹¹ Thus the text presents Euclia as one who desires sex. The *Acts of Andrew* uplifts sexual purity and valorizes abstinence. Maximilla protects her own purity, which is to be prioritized, and does so by using a slave; therefore the text presents Maximilla’s actions as legitimate. To support this, Sandra Joshel argues that slaves are treated and portrayed as “fungible” in Roman literary culture. Because slaves are viewed as objects, slaves could be used in numerous ways to meet the needs of the master: “The slave was exchangeable, replaceable, substitutable.”⁹² In this case, Maximilla uses Euclia as her personal substitute in order to protect her chastity.

Maximilla proceeds to dress Euclia like herself and sends her into Aegeates’ room at night so that he would have sex with her, thinking Euclia was his wife Maximilla. Meanwhile, Maximilla is free to spend her evenings with Andrew, the apostle. In this way, Euclia appears to “pass” as the free elite woman, Maximilla, but only to the oblivious Aegeates.⁹³ This subterfuge continues for eight months before Euclia asks for

⁹⁰ This has been shown by the work of Glancy. See Ibid., 22, 156; Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies*, 67.

⁹¹ Glancy writes, “Her own curves indict her.” Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 22.

⁹² Joshel, “Slavery and Roman Literary Culture,” 215.

⁹³ Schwartz argues, “Overall, the text reflects an aristocratic bias by making Euclia’s masquerade as a mistress seem ridiculous, while at the same time valorizing the behavior of aristocrats who shed their privileges. Indeed, following a paradigm of slave behavior,

her freedom (ἐλευθερώω, 18:1). Aegeates apparently engages in sexual intercourse with a slave instead of his wife this entire time; his wife easily tricks him. However, it is somewhat typical of the Apocryphal Acts to characterize the male householders negatively. The work of Kate Cooper highlights the ways the plots of the Apocryphal Acts revolve around a contest between men – that of the apostle and the male householder.⁹⁴ As noted above, the canonical Acts contains hints of a contest between men, but this functions differently as the contest seems to be between male apostles, such as Peter and Paul. In the *Acts of Andrew*, Aegeates and Andrew are certainly pitted against one another, and when thinking in terms of carnivalesque motifs, Aegeates functions as the buffoon, constantly being tricked and made fun of by the other characters. As Schwartz affirms, “he remains a cuckold, even though he happens to be at the apex of the adulterous triangle, with Euclia playing the role of the stranger in the bedroom and Maximilla thereby becoming the absent spouse—absent, it should be noted, because she is spending her time with two other men (Andrew and Stratocles) among other supernumeraries.”⁹⁵ In this scenario, Aegeates is tricked by the women for eight full months, and does not discover the subterfuge on his own, but must be told about it by

Euclia’s uppity demeanor provokes resentment from her fellow servants.” Schwartz, “From Bedroom to Courtroom,” 305.

⁹⁴ Kate Cooper argues this in her discussion of the Apocryphal Acts: “The challenge by the apostle to the householder is the urgent message of these narratives, and it is essentially a conflict *between men*. The challenge posed here by Christianity is not really about women, or even about sexual continence, but about authority and the social order. In this way, tales of continence uses the narrative momentum of romance, and the enticement of the romantic heroine, to mask a contest for authority, encoded in the contest between two pretenders to the heroine’s allegiance.” Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 55.

⁹⁵ Schwartz, “From Bedroom to Courtroom,” 303.

the other slaves in the house. Incidentally, the timing of eight months is curious, as this is enough time for Euclia to become pregnant and be far along in her pregnancy, perhaps to the point of showing or even giving birth, an idea that both Schwartz and Solevåg mention.⁹⁶ While the narrative does not indicate why Euclia asked for her freedom, it is possible that through this masquerade Euclia has become pregnant and needs out of the situation swiftly so that she and Maximilla are not discovered.

Ultimately, Maximilla agrees to Euclia's wish, making the slave a free woman. A few days later, though, Euclia asks for money and then later for jewelry; Maximilla grants her both. As the story is told by the narrator, Euclia is given everything she asks for by Maximilla; yet this does not satisfy Euclia, who we recall the text calls "wanton." The narrator reports: "But the simple truth of it is that, though Euclia regularly took clothing, fine linen, and headbands from Maximilla, she was not content with that, but flaunted the affair before the other servants, boasting like a show-off" (18:3). In this way, the other servants were frustrated and perhaps jealous of Euclia because she was bragging about the gifts she received, and her place of privilege among their masters. Here, I read the text "with suspicion" as it is clear that the narrative is centrally framed to highlight

⁹⁶ Schwartz suggests that the detail of the number of months could have been inserted by the author to lend authenticity to the story, but that it is more likely that the author intended for the astute reader to think that Euclia is pregnant, as "'eight months' was a highly inauspicious time in the beginning of a sexual relationship between a man and a woman." Ibid., 305. This suggestion has also been mentioned by Anna Rebbecca Solevåg who links this to several other childbirth metaphors present in the *Acts of Andrew*, such as the metaphorical childbirth scene which functions to represent the conversion of Stratocles, where Andrew acts as the midwife. Additionally, Solevåg suggests that if Euclia was indeed pregnant, this would ultimately punish Aegeates even further as he would be "deprived of both Platonic forms of immortality – immortality through offspring and immortality of soul." Anna Rebecca Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation: Gender and Class in Early Christian Childbearing Discourse* (Leiden; Boston: Brill Academic Publications, 2013), 191.

the slave owners, not the story of the enslaved.⁹⁷ Read through this lens, we recall that Maximilla first offered to be Euclia's benefactor in exchange for this very risky assignment. Yet when Euclia began requesting this promised payment, she is portrayed as greedy and a braggart. Additionally, other slaves have seen the attention that Euclia is receiving and are jealous; thus Euclia becomes the enemy to all. Meanwhile, Maximilla's lies and deception to her husband are not noted by the narrator, nor is her mistreatment of Euclia. When tracking the "truth" in the narrative, it is clear that Maximilla is the one who is deceptive while Euclia follows orders. Yet, because of Euclia's slave status in addition to the high view of chastity, this deception is justified by the text. Schwartz explores the role of truth in this "bedtrick:" "Early Christians, seeking to propagate their vision of the truth, would use this ready-made motif as a matrix within which to set their own belief in absolute spiritual truth against the potential for falsehood inherent in the bodily function of sexuality."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza describes the practice of reading through a hermeneutic of suspicion within feminist biblical studies: "A critical feminist rhetoric of inquiry does not only recognize that the ethos and methods of biblical studies are ideologically scripted. It also underscores that wo/men, like men, are linguistic and historical subjects who can subvert and alter the cultural script of the elite male/father/master domination (patri-kyriarchy). To that end, feminist readers must cultivate the habit of suspicion, especially when reading sacred kyriocentric (elite male, master-centered) texts. Such a hermeneutics of suspicion requires that feminist readers learn how to recognize and analyze biblical texts as rhetorical symbol systems." Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 92. While the *Acts of Andrew* is a certainly a kyriarchal text, in this case the power is in the hands of a free woman over an enslaved woman. The *Acts of Andrew* as a whole, though, is also patriarchal and Maximilla's role can be to function between the two men, as Cooper argues. Here, I focus on the character of Euclia, as the most marginalized and oppressed character in this narrative scene.

⁹⁸ Schwartz, "From Bedroom to Courtroom," 302.

The text is certainly on the side of Maximilla, as it portrays Euclia as a protagonist and enemy to Maximilla's dedication to Christianity. In order to assure that the reader blames Euclia for this situation, the narrator adds a sentence indicating Maximilla's misplaced trust in her slave: "Maximilla no doubt supposed that Euclia was true to her word, and to be trusted because of the gifts given to her; and at night she took her rest with Andrew, along with Stratocles and all her fellow believers" (19:1). In this narrative, Euclia, the female slave, was *assumed* to be "true to her word," (οἰομένη ἀφλύαρον) which, as has been noted, is not typical for slaves in antiquity. As was clear in Acts 12, Mary and the other believers certainly did not believe that Rhoda was "true to her word" but instead suggested that she was crazy. Yet, in the world of ancient novels, slaves are often depicted as confidantes and trusted advisors to their masters. In this way, novelists often present slaves as trustworthy in order to *enhance* the disloyalty that follows when a trusted slave lies or betrays the trust of her owner. Here, Maximilla fits squarely into the literary motif of a slave owner who trusts her slave to obey and keep her word, which functions to make Euclia's "deception" look that much worse. Moreover, Euclia, by disobeying the orders of her mistress, fits into the literary trope of the "bad" slave.⁹⁹ As Whitmarsh summarizes concerning novels in the Greco-Roman world, "[I]n general the novelists do privilege the top-down perspective of their protagonists: it is rare to find any challenge to the truisms that bandits and pirates are bad, slaves deceitful and manipulative, nurses are untrustworthy."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Euclia is depicted in this narrative as

⁹⁹ J. Albert Harrill shows multiple examples of "good" slaves and "bad" slaves used as stock characters in ancient comedy. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Whitmarsh, "Class," 85.

deceitful and manipulative, and Maximilla's trust of her heightens this portrayal. Yet, when reading with a hermeneutic of suspicion focused on the kyriarchal hierarchies present within the narrative it appears that it is actually Maximilla who is being deceitful and manipulative, not Euclia.

The slippage between a free and enslaved person is interesting here, as Maximilla, who is free, feels that she cannot simply deny her husband intercourse. Instead, she must trick him into thinking that he is still having sex with her—a plan that ultimately is deceptive, risky, and financially costly. Glancy notes: "Maximilla relies on an enslaved body to secure the freedom of her own body."¹⁰¹ Her actions are explained away within the narrative so that she can escape the sexual advances of her husband, and her use of Euclia is justified as well because Euclia was merely a slave. This reminds us of the pervasiveness of the sexual use of slaves in antiquity, even in early Christian texts. DuBois writes, "The slave body was sexually available, especially to males of the master class."¹⁰² Drawing the connection between the desire for sexual purity and the use of slaves in antiquity, Glancy writes:

The violent reaction of ascetic Christians against the sexual use of their bodies demarcated the voluntary character of the servility of the ascetic body. Ascetics, unlike slaves, could say "no" to the sexual use of their bodies. In fact, the utter refusal of ascetic Christians to participate in any sexual activities reinforces the horror of a central facet of slave life while it reinscribes the place of the slave outside the circle of honorable persons. Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in the tale of Maximilla from the *Acts of Andrew*.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 156.

¹⁰² duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 104.

¹⁰³ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 156.

In this way, Euclia functions as Maximilla's opposite, or "evil twin," in terms of class and sexuality.¹⁰⁴

Through the sexual use of Euclia, the difference between her body, the slave body, and Maximilla's body, a free woman, is exemplified. Maximilla's chastity must be preserved. In fact, the way that Euclia is introduced, as a "shapely, exceedingly wanton slave," suggests that Euclia was already sexually inviting, clearly a foreshadowing by the author. This is observed by Solevåg who writes, "Euclia is presented as the opposite of Maximilla, as she supposedly takes delight in her sexual encounters with Aegeates."¹⁰⁵ Yet, Maximilla's body must remain pure – as Maximilla believed sex with Aegeates to be a "heinous and despicable act" and Andrew affirmed this belief.¹⁰⁶ DuBois' words provide a fitting description of what occurs in the narrative of the *Acts of Andrew*:

There are many moments at which the free encounter and describe, even narrativize the slave body, producing difference, establishing distinctions, seeking often to close down interrogation of the boundary between slave and free. The slave body does more than occupy space in ancient culture. It cannot be acknowledged, set on the margins, and then dismissed from further discussion of the literary or rhetorical merits of a text, or simply listed in a social-scientific account of the ancient economy. The slave body informs all the physical, spatial, sexual and social relations of ancient society, disturbingly persistent, potentially unruly, and ubiquitous.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Schwartz dubs Euclia Maximilla's "evil twin" in her analysis. Schwartz, "From Bedroom to Courtroom," 301.

¹⁰⁵ Anna Rebecca Solevåg, "Adam, Eve, and the Serpent in the Acts of Andrew," in *Hidden Truths from Eden: Esoteric Readings of Genesis 1–3*, ed. Caroline Vander Stichele and Susanne Scholz (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2014), 15.

¹⁰⁶ MacDonald, "The Passion of Andrew," 21:5, page 86.

¹⁰⁷ duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 112.

Indeed, Euclia's body is an ever-present reminder of the free status of Maximilla, as Maximilla is able to arrange a way to escape unwanted sexual attention, but Euclia does not have that power. Moreover, their relationship disrupts the distinction between slave and free in antiquity, as Euclia was able to "pass" as a free elite woman, even if only to Aegeates. In this way, Bakhtin's polyphonic dialogism is found in the *Acts of Andrew* as these opposing ideas are juxtaposed; yet rely on each other in dialogue within the text. Schwartz notes this as well when she writes, "As a variant of the trickster in myth, the bedtrickster also probes the boundaries between truth and falsehood."¹⁰⁸

Maximilla further shows her willingness to go to great lengths to protect her sexual purity when some of Aegeates' slaves discover the ruse and request payment for their silence (21:1). Maximilla acquiesces to their request and pays each slave 1,000 denarii in exchange for their silence (21:3). Yet, "at the instigation of their father the devil," the slaves decide to tell Aegeates of Maximilla's deceit (21:3). Three of these slaves, apparently male, take the money they received from Maximilla and approach their master with this knowledge as well as Euclia's role in the scheme. Aegeates believes the word of these slaves and does not torture them. Yet, Aegeates immediately interrogates and tortures (βαρύνει) Euclia. This is a curious part of the narrative, as it seems Aegeates has already learned (and believed) the truth from the other slaves, who he does not torture. Yet, he tortures Euclia in order to ascertain the "motivation" behind her actions (22:2). From this brief section of the text it appears that Euclia did not immediately share Maximilla's involvement in the masquerade with Aegeates. As a result of the torture, Euclia "confessed to all the payoffs she had received from her lady for

¹⁰⁸ Schwartz, "From Bedroom to Courtroom," 302.

keeping quiet” (22:2). This scene verifies the connection between truth and torture in antiquity. As duBois observes, “In classical culture citizens take slavery for granted, and physical punishment and torture are part of the institution of slavery.”¹⁰⁹

Aegeates resorted to torture in the case of Euclia, but not when the three male slaves came to him with their knowledge. This reveals the connection between slavery and gender, as duBois illustrates, “I want to articulate the gender marking of the term *aletheia* and its relationship to the *basanos* that reveals truth.”¹¹⁰ Here, she connects truth to forgetting by showing the ambiguity in the relationship between the two concepts. Truth must be sought from the interior of the earth, represented by the interior space of the woman’s body.¹¹¹ DuBois references the journey of Odysseus to the underworld as a female space of hidden truth. She writes, “As such, she is like the slave under torture, the physical space, unknowable, inaccessible to the real subject of truth, yet through which the knower must pass in order to acquire truth, like the slave whose body bears a message that the slave is unable to see, let alone read.”¹¹² It seems that Aegeates must also pass through Euclia’s body to find and believe the full truth behind his wife’s deception.

Even though Euclia confessed to her actions as well as the part that Maximilla had to play in this plan, this was not enough for Aegeates who “wanted the matter hushed up, since he was still affectionate for his spouse” (22:4). Therefore, Aegeates decides to

¹⁰⁹ duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 33.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 76.

¹¹¹ See also Page duBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

¹¹² duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 82–83.

brutally punish Euclia. First, he cuts out her tongue (γλωσσοτομάω), which suggests his desire to silence her and simultaneously humiliate her (22:4). Then, he mutilates (ἀκρωτηριάζω) her, the Greek suggesting that her body is cut in numerous places (22:4). This word also has sexual connotations, which suggests that Aegeates perhaps mutilated Euclia's genitals. Finally, Aegeates has Euclia's mutilated body thrown outside. The text then states, "She stayed there without food for several days before she became food for the dogs" (22:5). Apparently, even after the removal of her tongue and her mutilation she is still alive for several days. Euclia dies a slow and degrading death. Moreover, the suggestion that Euclia was left outside to be food for the dogs connects her to another memorable (and often depicted as evil) biblical character, that of Jezebel.¹¹³

Thus, Aegeates discovers, through torture (βάσάνιζω), further details concerning the truth of the deception—Euclia was a part of a scheme orchestrated by his wife, Maximilla. As a result of this truth, Euclia is brutally tortured and eventually killed. While the torture is not described in detail, the ancient audience knew the types of torture that were usually inflicted on slaves. DuBois describes the various forms of torture through a reading of the play *Frogs* by Aristophanes: "The catalogue of torture devices here is most instructive. We find binding to the ladder (*klimaki*; later a rhetorical term); the whip (*hustrikhis*) routinely used for punishing slaves, the name of which is derived from the word for hedgehog or porcupine, and which suggests sharp spines; flaying;

¹¹³ See 2 Kings 9:36. Additionally, a paraphrase of this text by Evodius of Uzala similarly connects Euclia to Jezebel as the author recounts that Maximilla put make-up on Euclia, as found in 2 Kings 9:30. MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals*, 347, fn 16. Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation*, 194. Additionally, Jezebel appears in Revelation 2:20-23, where she is also connected with sexual promiscuity.

stretching on the rack (*streblon*).”¹¹⁴ In addition to the death of Euclia, “the rest of the servants who had told their story to him [Aegeates] – there were three of them – he crucified (σταυρώω)” (22:6). It seems that Aegeates did much of this in order to be sure that the story was “hushed up since he was still affectionate for his spouse” (22:3).

To a modern audience this torture, mutilation, and death seem brutal and inhumane. In the world of antiquity, however, this type of treatment of slaves was typical, seen in every day life as well as portrayed in plays and novels (such as *The Odyssey*); slaves were legally treated as an objects and their bodies were regularly used and abused by owners. In addition to being accustomed to this type of brutality afflicted on slaves, an ancient audience might also read the torture scene in the *Acts of Andrew* as humorous, while simultaneously retaining a sense of the seriousness of torture. This type of humor is exemplified through the reading of Aristophanes’ play *Frogs* by duBois as she shows the carnivalesque elements within a torture scene. She writes: “The comic beating is quite hilarious, of course. But it does not put into question the reality of torture. The exchange has a carnival quality, Dionysos masquerading as slave, slave masquerading as Dionysos masquerading as Herakles, the god beaten like a common slave. The slave remains uppity and insolent, the god cowardly and ridiculous.”¹¹⁵ Similarly, carnivalesque motifs fill the narrative of *Acts of Andrew* in a number of places, but Euclia’s story is particularly carnivalesque. Taking a closer look at this narrative segment the reader finds a slave masquerading as a free, wealthy matron, and passing persuasively for eight months. For a literary moment, Euclia becomes a free woman, and for a longer moment, Aegeates is

¹¹⁴ duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 30–31.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 33.

convinced by the scheme—a clear reversal of hierarchies, both of status and gender.

When Euclia is brutally killed, though, the humor exposes the status of slaves as less than human, while also revealing the power that Euclia wielded within the narrative, that she must be killed in order for the truth to also die. For those eight months, Euclia was a “faux free” person, not a slave. She exercised her power as a free person and even viewed herself as “better” than the other slaves. As a result of this brief reversal of hierarchy, Euclia died a brutal death. Yet, as Bakhtin illustrates, change is often included in the carnivalesque. For Euclia, events cannot return to how they were because of the truth hidden inside her.

Aegeates is included in several comedic scenes, especially when juxtaposed against the apostle Andrew. In this way, carnivalesque motifs are used in the characterization of Aegeates. Throughout the *Acts of Andrew*, Aegeates plays the buffoon. He is duped by his wife as well as by a female slave, the lowest of the low on the social strata. Aegeates is similarly tricked in a number of other scenes in the Acts, as his wife and Andrew visit each other right under his nose. For instance, in one scene, Maximilla and other believers were listening to Andrew speak in Aegeates’s room when he comes home. Before he could discover them, Andrew prays for a distraction and Aegeates was hit with an “urge for a bowel movement, asked for a chamber pot, and spent a long time sitting, attending to himself” (13:7). In this scene Aegeates is naïve, a fool, tricked by his wife as well as the apostle. At the end of the novel, Aegeates seemingly wins through ordering the death of Andrew by “his being hung and his being eaten by dogs if still alive at night” (54:8). Yet, Andrew, hanging on the cross, smiles,

another carnivalesque moment in the narrative. Because he is unable to win his wife back, Aegeates ultimately throws himself off the cliff to his death (64:6).

When examining the *Acts of Andrew* through a feminist lens and Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque, a number of observations become apparent. First, while the slaves undergo bodily torture, slave bodies are sites of truth within these texts – a truth that is unquestioned after torture is enacted upon the body. In this case, even though Maximilla is portrayed as a pure, chaste, Christian elite woman, she is ultimately not a site of truth within the text; instead, it is Euclia who is the site of truth and it costs her dearly. Similarly, Mary, the free elite woman in Acts 12, is also not a site of truth in the narrative, while Rhoda knows the truth. Additionally, within *Acts of Andrew* there exists carnivalesque moments of kyriarchal reversal—moments when a female slave is able to masquerade as a free, elite woman, a “faux free” woman, the carnival reversal of the “faux slave” as seen in many of the novels. This reading of Euclia in the *Acts of Andrew* illuminates the function of truth in Acts 12, which is that the truth was in mouth of the slave, Rhoda, and not in the words of the free elite woman, Mary, nor was it in the other believers present. In this way, both the *Acts of Andrew* and Acts 12 include moments of hierarchal reversals, especially concerning the element of truth within both of the texts.

Every Rose Has Its Thorn: Rhoda in Scholarly Conversation

Rhoda's inclusion in the narrative of Acts is unusual, thus it has drawn a great deal of scholarly conversation, especially among those interested in the role of women or slaves in Luke-Acts. As the introduction shows, Luke-Acts exhibits polyphonic dialogism

when it comes to views on both women and slaves: there are both positive and negative portrayals within the narrative, yet these opposing voices converse within the text to produce a Bakhtinian dialogic narrative. Similarly, scholars interpret Rhoda with what appear to be opposing conclusions. Some scholars see Rhoda as an example of a liberative and egalitarian view of the early church, as a female slave is embraced into the Christian community and her words are proven true within the text. Other interpreters see her in a similar light as Euclia, merely another slave being used as a tool by the author, characters, and text, in this way a product of the ideology of slavery in antiquity and a character that functions to sustain these hierarchal structures. This final section will examine both sides of this conversation in an attempt to continue the dialogic search for truth beyond the text itself.

Rhoda Subverts Hierarchies

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in his socio-rhetorical commentary of Acts, Ben Witherington suggests that Rhoda could have been a part of the prayer meeting held at Mary's house, because she was not waiting at the door but had to go to answer the door.¹¹⁶ Witherington presents the early Christian community as open to women and slaves as equal participants. But Witherington further suggests that Rhoda's insistence was rewarded, as "a crucial message is passed to the Christian community to be sent on

¹¹⁶ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1998, 387.

its leaders.”¹¹⁷ In this way, Luke upholds Rhoda as an example for his readers.

Witherington argues: “Luke intended a rebuke to those in his audience who had a tendency to devalue the word or work of women.”¹¹⁸ Therefore, Witherington is an example of one scholar who views the role of Rhoda as subverting ancient gender hierarchies within the early church.

Ivoni Richter Reimer reconstructs the stories of the women found the book of Acts from the perspective of Latin American feminist liberation theology. She suggests: “The slave woman Rhoda behaves as if she were not a slave.”¹¹⁹ Like Witherington, she proposes that Rhoda could have been a part of the community of believers, also using Rhoda’s initial recognition of Peter at the door as her justification for this reading. When the others in the house do not believe Rhoda’s words, Richter Reimer notes that this is not because she is a slave but because the message she had was simply that incredible, as Peter had been arrested and was in jail. Finally, the inclusion in the text that Rhoda “insisted” to the believers in the house suggests that Mary’s house provided a place for Rhoda to feel as if she could assert herself. Richter Reimer concludes, “It says that in this community in Mary’s house the barriers between masters and slaves were broken down; here there are neither slaves nor masters/mistresses, but all are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).”¹²⁰ In this way, Richter Reimer’s interpretation goes further than the text by

¹¹⁷ Ben Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 147.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Reimer, *Women in the Acts of Apostles*, 242.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

suggesting that these hierarchies are dismantled and erased, at least in the space of Mary's house.

In addition to noting the comedic elements and agreeing that Rhoda functions as a *servus currens*, Kathy Chambers argues that Rhoda's narrative "demonstrate[s] how Christian adaptations of comedic tropes challenged the dominant cultural construction of status and gender, of ecclesial authority, slaves, and women."¹²¹ Chambers shows the subversive function of comedic texts, and the significance of the use of comedy. Additionally, she hints at the hierarchal reversals that occur in Acts 12, as well as the idea that Rhoda is a truth-teller, when she writes:

Rather than allowing the house church to silence her, she doggedly insists on the veracity of her claim. Thus, Rhoda effectively takes over the characteristics that one might expect to be accorded to a free, male, apostle: she announces the truth despite the refusal of her audience to listen and despite their insistence that she is mad.¹²²

Chambers concludes that this episode "confirms the import of the voice of women and slaves" and that Luke is subtly "challenging constructions of status and gender."¹²³ While admitting that women and slaves remain secondary to men and free people in Luke-Acts, Chambers' feminist analysis points to resistance in the narrative and a space for Rhoda to speak and be heard.

¹²¹ Chambers, "'Knock, Knock-Who's There?'," 89.

¹²² Ibid., 94.

¹²³ Ibid., 96.

Rhoda Sustains Hierarchies

As mentioned, Albert Harrill also argues that Rhoda functions as a comedic tool for entertainment purposes. Noting the way that previous commentators read this scene as “historical” and piece of realism, Harrill rejects this interpretation suggesting that Luke draws from Greek comedy when he writes Rhoda into Acts, therefore she is used mostly for entertainment purposes, but also to create suspense in the narrative.¹²⁴ Moreover, Harrill suggests that the *servus currens* dishonored slaves because through this characterization slaves were portrayed as infantile and feminine. Concerning the focus on Rhoda’s character, Harrill writes, “For a brief moment Rhoda holds the narrative spotlight in Acts, and blows it.”¹²⁵ Ultimately, Rhoda is merely another slave used by a free person, the author of Luke-Acts, to serve his purposes. Harrill concludes, “Rather than advancing a theme of liberation that subverts slavery, Luke reinforces its institution and ideology by making Rhoda a running cliché which encourages laughter at her as a moral inferior even when her news is true.”¹²⁶

Similarly, Robert Price also suggests that Luke uses Rhoda for a particular reason, which is to suppress women. As many other scholars have done, Price notes the similarities between Peter’s arrest and imprisonment with Jesus’ arrest and passion in Luke. His noted similarities include: the setting of Passover, Peter’s three days in jail

¹²⁴ Harrill, “The Dramatic Function of the Running Slave Rhoda (Acts 12.13-16),” 151.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 156.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 157.

alongside Jesus' three days in the tomb, and the appearance of an angel in both narratives.¹²⁷ Price then connects Rhoda with the women at the tomb, both of whom bring messages of "truth" to people who do not believe them.¹²⁸ Ultimately, he argues that Luke intentionally connects Rhoda to the women at the tomb, and the unreliability of their words, in order to remove any implication that women were commissioned to be leaders. Price concludes, "Rhoda (whether under this or some other name like Mary, Joanna, or Salome) did originally (in Luke's sources) behold the Risen Christ and was commissioned to take his message to the eleven, but Luke has changed all that. If she saw someone, it was not Jesus, only Peter."¹²⁹

Like Price, Mitzi Smith argues that Rhoda is subordinated within Acts, but her argument is that this occurs in order to uplift the role of Peter in Acts, which is required because according to Smith, Peter is characterized negatively in Luke. Connecting Rhoda to the female slave in Luke 22, Smith suggests that they are both "recognition" scenes.¹³⁰ Noting the clear juxtaposition between the gender and status of Peter and Rhoda, Smith labels Rhoda an "other." Viewed in this way, Rhoda could also be read through the lens

¹²⁷ Robert M. Price, "Rhoda and Penelope: Two More Cases of Luke's Suppression of Women," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004), 102.

¹²⁸ Price, "Rhoda and Penelope: Two More Cases of Luke's Suppression of Women."

¹²⁹ Ibid., 103.

¹³⁰ Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles*, 126.

of Bakhtin's "outsidedness."¹³¹ Smith argues that the text silences Rhoda, as her "voice is othered as representing madness and as unreliable."¹³² In this way, Luke uses Rhoda in order to allow Peter's character to be redeemed within the narrative (as his character suffers in the gospel of Luke). Looking to the grammatical structure of the narrative, Smith shows that Rhoda has less agency than the other people in the house. Peter does not have agency in the scene either, but he has the "last word" and experiences a miracle, so he still remains dominant.¹³³

Scott Spencer connects all three slave-girls in Luke-Acts and argues that they all speak the truth, but then all three are challenged in some way, and therefore are silenced. Spencer sees the truth in their words, but ultimately argues: "maidservants' voices are consistently more suppressed than celebrated in Luke-Acts."¹³⁴ Spencer solidifies his argument by using Rhoda as the best example of this silencing of the three female slaves. He writes, "Rhoda's witness is stifled and stigmatized as surely as that of the other slave-

¹³¹ While Rhoda is certainly still an "other" due to her status, I do not argue she is an "outsider" in the way that the slaves in Luke 22 and Acts 16 are. In contrast to these other slaves, Rhoda is spatially on the inside of the house, although there is no way to know whether Luke intended her to be a part of the community gathered there. Yet, as other New Testament and early Christian texts attest, some slaves were active parts of early communities such as the one Luke constructs in Acts 12. Because of this possibility, I do not interpret Rhoda functioning in the same way as the slaves in Luke 22 and Acts 16, who are clearly viewing the narrative from a position of "outsider."

¹³² Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles*, 127.

¹³³ Through transitivity analysis, Smith observes, "Rhoda is the participant-actor in two ergative mental processes (she hears knocking, she recognizes Peter's voice). Rhoda is a participant-actor in two ergative material processes, but one is negated (she attended to the door, she did not open the door). Rhoda is a participant-actor in one non-ergative reflective material process (she ran), and two ergative verbal processes (she told what she saw, she persisted in telling). Rhoda affects only an inanimate object (the door) and herself." Ibid., 129.

¹³⁴ Spencer, *Dancing Girls, Loose Ladies, and Women of the Cloth*, 158.

girls. Demonized as being ‘out of her mind’ differs in form but not in substance from sinister associations with satanic schemes and Pythian prophecies.”¹³⁵ Spencer aligns with the group of scholars who see Luke as reinforcing hierarchal structures through Acts 12 and Rhoda’s character.

Conclusion: Rhoda’s Dialogic Purpose in Acts 12

While the above scholars seem to be in strict opposition to each other, I argue that, in some ways, both sides are correct. As I have shown, Luke-Acts includes within it Bakhtinian polyphonic dialogism, where two opposing voices/opinions are able to exist in one text in constant dialogue with one another. Concerning the story of Rhoda, scholars such as Harrill, Price, Smith, and Price see her as a tool being used by the author for a particular purpose. Because she is a slave and named a slave within the text, there is no erasing the fact that ancient readers would have viewed Rhoda’s character with their understandings of ancient slavery, so pervasive in the Greco-Roman world. Viewed this way, Rhoda is a tool, an object, being used by the author and characters, in the same way that all slaves in antiquity were used. Yet, on the other hand, scholars such as Witherington, Richter Reimer, and Chambers also accurately identify hints of resistance to hierarchal structures within the narrative and view Rhoda as an example of a marginalized character who rises above her status in the narrative to speak words of truth.

Reading Rhoda in the light of Bakhtin’s carnival, dialogism, and alongside Euclia from the *Acts of Andrew* allows for both of these truths to stand and to enhance the

¹³⁵ Ibid., 159.

interpretation of the narrative. In carnivalesque literature, societal hierarchies are present and firm, yet there are brief moments where these hierarchies are suspended before they return back to their original positions. Such a suspension can be seen in Acts 12—a brief moment where Rhoda functions not as a lowly slave, but as a truth-teller whose voice is heard and word is proven to be true, in contrast those around her. Eventually, the moment is over and the hierarchies return. Rhoda disappears from the narrative of Acts and is not mentioned again. Yet through Bakhtinian dialogism, Rhoda is directly connected to the slave in Luke 22 as well as the slave whose voice will be heard in Acts 16. Moreover, Rhoda is associated with the women at the tomb in Luke 24, who are also disbelieved but whose testimony is true. In contrast to Euclia, who tells the truth but is brutally punished for it, neither torture nor death is required for Rhoda, whose truth is allowed to stand in the text. Moreover, Rhoda *is* used by the author, not to uplift Peter, but to prepare the reader for the imminent narrative transitions in store for the rest of Acts—from Peter to Paul, and from the centrality of Jerusalem to that of the wider Mediterranean world. Her comedic role, flightiness, and truth-telling functions within this vital moment in Acts; her voice remains an echo in the text, reaching back to remind the reader of the παιδίσκη in Luke 22 and paving the way for the loud voice of the παιδίσκη in Acts 16.

CHAPTER 5

The Girl Who Prophesies: Acts 16:16-18

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

~Sojourner Truth

Paul, Silas, and Timothy arrive in Philippi and go directly to the place of prayer to share the message of Jesus with the people gathered there, who were all women. During their stay in this Roman city they continue each day to the place of prayer to speak to all who would listen. One day, on their way there, they encounter a certain female slave, a παιδίσκη, with a divining spirit, prophesying. The slave begins to follow Paul and his colleagues each day shouting her prophesy: “These men are slaves of the Most High God who preach to you the Way of salvation!” For many days, this bold slave-girl follows them, speaking her words of truth. Finally, Paul becomes extremely annoyed and turns around to the slave and orders the spirit inside her to come out. Paul’s words work and the slave-girl is unable to prophesy anymore. This makes her owners furious, as they rely on her to make them money. They seize Paul and Silas and bring them to the city center. They throw the men in front of the magistrates and accuse them, but not of this violation of their slave; instead they are accused of being “Jews” and spreading anti-Roman religious customs around the city. The men are stripped, beaten, flogged, and imprisoned, but then they are miraculously released from prison.

This narrative, found in Acts 16, contains the story of the third truth-telling παιδίσκη from Luke-Acts. In perhaps the most dramatic scene of the three, this slave-girl

is the only female from both Luke and Acts to give a speech that makes a direct prophecy, such as what was predicted by Peter's speech citing Joel's prophecy in Acts 2:18.¹ Similar to the other two female slave-girls discussed in this project, the slave from Acts 16 is involved in a significant scene, vital to the plot of Acts. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Luke's narrative now follows Paul and his colleagues, instead of Peter as it did prior to Acts 12. Chapter 16 functions as a transition in the ministry of Paul as he is now with Silas, instead of Barnabas, and this group has just crossed over from Asia Minor into Macedonia, the impetus of this transition was a vision received by Paul in 16:9-10. During this important transition in Acts, Luke incorporates the third and final παιδίσκη in the narrative, connected to the previous two female-slaves, in order to direct attention to Paul's ministry. Yet, the words of the slave are double-voiced, including the author's intention as well as a dialogic opposing voice. This is illuminated through the use of Bakhtinian theory, as will be shown.

In this chapter I argue that the words of the slave-girl are best interpreted through Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia, which is defined in *Dialogic Imagination*:

"Heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel (whatever the forms for its incorporation), is *another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced*

¹ The only designated female prophet found in Luke is Anna, in Luke 2:36-38, who speaks about Jesus as a child. But, her words are not conveyed. The other female prophets in Acts are the four daughters of Phillip, briefly mentioned in Acts 21:9; but again the text does not include direct speech. Arguably, both Elizabeth and Mary function as prophets as well, in the infancy narratives (1:41-55). However, they are not designated as such specifically.

discourse.”² Through this analysis, I show that the παιδίσκη in Acts 16 speaks words of truth, a prophecy that is proven correct within the narrative scene; her truth-telling also conveys Lukan theology. Finally, the παιδίσκη becomes a focalizer in this part of the narrative. Her positionality, as understood within the Bakhtinian theory of “outsidedness,” in comparison to Paul and his companions, allows her to have this view and speak the truth about Paul and Silas.

Many scholars note the importance of Acts 16 to the plot of Acts. Fitzmyer, for instance, writes: “The Lucan story succeeds once again in depicting the Spirit-guided missionary efforts of Paul and his companions in an important Roman town in the eastern Mediterranean area. It is the first place evangelized by Paul in Europe.”³ While admitting Acts 16 is an important transition in Acts, Jeffrey Staley rejects the idea that this missionary venture is the first in “Europe,” arguing that is a way to read the text from the perspective of the colonizer.⁴ For the Acts Seminar, Acts 16 is also significant:

This is clearly a transitional section in Acts. It moves the action from the decisions of the Jerusalem Council to the resumption of Paul’s missionary travels. It is, however, an important transition, marking a significant change of personnel. In the mission narrated in Acts 14, the main actors were Paul and Barnabas; in what follows the focus will be on Paul, supported by Silas.⁵

² Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 324.

³ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 583.

⁴ Jeffrey L. Staley, “Changing Woman: Toward a Postcolonial Postfeminist Interpretation of Acts 16.6-40,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004), 177–92.

⁵ Dennis E. Smith and Joseph B. Tyson, eds., *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report* (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2013), 179.

Adding his strategy of reading the novelistic elements in Acts, Pervo writes, "For this first independent Pauline endeavor, Luke pulls out all the stops."⁶ Indeed, the mini-novella found in Acts 16 is full of adventure, and many of the motifs within the narrative mimic the Greco-Roman novels. For Pervo, there are certainly "twists and turns" in the plot but the story ultimately has a "happy ending" similar to that of the ancient novels.⁷

When reading Acts 16, many readers and commentators focus on the activity of Paul and Silas. Yet, the female slave-girl refuses to go unnoticed, inserting herself into the narrative relentlessly, even though she is in a marginalized social position, especially when compared to the male apostles. Clarice Martin observes this when she writes: "Acts 16:11-40 narrates the only story in Acts about a female who is 'quadruply marginalized' according to traditional androcentric and patriarchal norms, by virtue of her gender (woman), status (slave), her possession by a spirit of divination, and her economic exploitation (exploited by her owners as a fortune-teller)."⁸ Yet, this marginalized woman and her words demand Paul's attention, and ours, as she follows him (and the reader) with her incessant shouting.

⁶ Pervo, *Acts*, 401.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Clarice J. Martin, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, vol. 2 (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 784.

**Lydia and the Slave-Girl:
Perspectives of an “Insider” and an “Outsider”**

Acts 16 is full of binaries—characters, ideas, and settings placed in opposition to one another. The final verses of the previous chapter set this up, as Paul and Barnabas, who had been travel partners, split paths through a “sharp disagreement” (παροξυσμός) apparently over the involvement of John Mark (15:38-39). It was ultimately decided that Barnabas travel with John Mark to Cyprus and Paul take Silas with him to Syria and Cilicia. Beginning in chapter 16, the narrative follows the journey of Paul, Silas, and Timothy (who joins them as they pass through Lystra). Thus, chapter 16 begins just following this split between Paul and Barnabas. While Paul and Barnabas do not stay in dialogue, according to the narrative, other opposing voices engage in dialogic interaction throughout the chapter. These voices show the way in which this chapter is specifically dialogic, and also heteroglossic, as these characters and ideas mingle and converse within the narrative.

One of the first and most obvious places that voices interact in Acts 16 is with the change in narration to the first person plural—what is dubbed the “we” passages in Acts.⁹ Acts 16:10 is the first of four passages where this occurs. Prior to Acts 16:10, the perspective of narration was in the third person, an anonymous view of the narrative. With no prior warning, the narration switches to “we,” which has elicited a great deal of

⁹ “We” passages are the places in Acts where the narration switches from the use of the third person to the first person plural. This occurs four times in Acts narrative (Acts 16:9-18; 20:4-16; 21:1-18; and 27:1-28).

speculation on the part of readers. For the purpose of this project, I view this change as one indication of the Bakhtinian dialogic nature of Luke-Acts. Nadella approaches Luke in a similar way:

The authorial viewpoint, represented or articulated by one or more characters, is ever present in the text but rarely suppresses other viewpoints. As a result, the author's worldview is neither dominant nor normative but is one among the many equally valid voices. In this reading, the presence of contradictory voices and the dialogues among them make Luke a sophisticated literary document that offers a new and dialogic vision of truth.¹⁰

Here in Acts, this is even more clear than in the Gospel, as the author allows another voice to enter the narrative, that is the elusive “we” narrator. In Acts 16, this first-person-plural perspective enters the dialogue and then leaves (at verse 18) without any introduction, judgment, or notice by the third person narrator. Similarly, speeches are seamlessly incorporated into the narrative of Acts, many of which include direct citations of texts from the Hebrew scriptures. These multiple voices speak simultaneously as a part of the heteroglossic aspect of the narrative.

As mentioned in the introduction, the whole of Luke-Acts contains diverging perspectives, within the text and as a result within the scholarly conversation about the text. In Acts 16, several of these discussions converge, as the text presents multiple voices and perspectives including that of marginalized persons such as women, the poor, and slaves. Luke regularly pairs characters with one another in order to present these various perspectives.¹¹ Similarly, scholars have attempted to “pair” the characters in this

¹⁰ Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 27.

¹¹ This pairing is seen most clearly when one engages in redaction criticism by comparing Luke to Mark or Matthew. Often, Luke adds a second person to the parable or healing story found in the other synoptic gospels. See D’Angelo, “Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View.”

chapter in a variety of ways. One pair often mentioned in discussions of Acts 16 is that of Lydia and the slave-girl. The juxtaposition of the women does seem intentional, as the slave-girl enters the story just after Lydia. This section outlines the various scholarly conclusions about Lydia's role in the text, particularly concerning the way she relates to Luke's παιδίσκη. Then, I turn to the characterization of the slave-girl as well as an exegetical analysis of her statement. Ultimately, I affirm the pairing of these two women, but through the use of Bakhtin's theories on "outsidedness" and "insideness," I suggest that Lydia is the "insider" in the story, while the slave-girl is the "outsider." While some scholars view Lydia as the positive half of the pair, this Bakhtinian reading turns the tables and places the slave-girl in the advantageous position, as the outsider.¹²

Lydia: "Inside" the Pauline Circle

Paul, Silas, and Timothy travel through Asia Minor to the area of Macedonia, and end up in Philippi (16:12). The group arrives on the Sabbath, and so they head to the riverside, where they think the place for prayer (προσευχή) might be (16:13), to find the Jews in the city.¹³ Perhaps Philippi did not have a synagogue, so Paul and his colleagues

¹² Mitzi Smith also argues for the "outsidedness" of the παιδίσκη in Acts 16. While her analysis will be explored later in this chapter, her argument supports my own that this slave-girl functions as an "external other" in Acts. Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles*, 44.

¹³ In the second half of Acts, Paul and his cohorts move from city to city speaking and teaching. While there are numerous differences and a variety of events that occur in each visit to a different city, Paul almost always visits the synagogue first to talk to the "Jews" there, to present the message. For a helpful view of these visits alongside the ways in

went to the water, where they thought the Jews might have assembled. When they arrive they find a group consisting only of women (16:13). This is an interesting inclusion by the author and is the only time in Acts that a congregation is noted as specifically all-female. This enigmatic detail has evoked quite a bit of commentary. For instance, some scholars suggest that this must not have been a true synagogue.¹⁴ As Luke Timothy Johnson writes: “The most obvious reading of the story would be to see this as a separate encounter on the way to the synagogue (see 16:16), in which Paul takes advantage of a crowd of women on the beach to preach.”¹⁵ On the other hand, Shelly Matthews suggests that these women “are a part of a larger group of literary sources indicating women’s prominence among Christians in Philippi.”¹⁶ Several other documents from early Christianity, including Paul’s letter to the Philippians, attest to a presence of female leaders in this city.¹⁷

When Paul, Silas, and the others sit down in order to talk with the women who had gathered there, one particular women stands out of the group—Lydia, who is a dealer of purple cloth from Thyatira, a worshipper of God (16:14).¹⁸ Lydia listens and the Lord

which the “Jews” are presented throughout Acts, see Wills, “The Depiction of the Jews in Acts,” 640–642.

¹⁴ Wall, “The Acts of the Apostles,” 231; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2008, 491.

¹⁵ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 292.

¹⁶ Matthews, *First Converts*, 93.

¹⁷ Euodia and Syntyche are noted as leaders in Philippians 4:2-3. Martin writes, “According to Paul, who undertook the initial evangelization of Philippi...a number of prominent women who functioned as co-workers with him from Philippi were very present and visible actors in the church.” Martin, “The Acts of the Apostles,” 784.

“opened the [her] heart” to Paul’s words.¹⁹ As a result, she decides to be baptized, along with her whole household (ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, 16:15), suggesting that she is the head of her household.²⁰ Clarice Martin connects Lydia to Mary, the mother of John, who led the church in her house in Jerusalem in Acts 12, which is an interesting connection considering that another loud slave-girl is present in the narrative following Lydia’s.²¹ This makes Lydia the first convert in Philippi, and a seemingly elite one at that. Following the baptism, Lydia persuades Paul and his companions to stay at her house during their visit to Philippi. Perhaps Lydia’s house becomes the central house church for the community in Philippi, as Osiek and MacDonald suggest: “Paul and Silas accept hospitality at Lydia’s insistence for an indefinite period, so that her house becomes the center of evangelization and instruction as well as ritual celebration.”²²

The status of Lydia has sparked a great deal of attention among feminist interpreters, many note her wealthy and prominence in the community. For instance, Shelly Matthews argues that Lydia is a rich woman, because of her profession and her status as a householder.²³ Adding to this interpretation, Beverly Roberts Gaventa

¹⁸ Fitzmyer notes that the name Lydia is found in Latin literature (Horace, Odes 1.8.1, 1.13.1, 1.25.8) and that it denotes the place where she was from, a land called Lydia in Asia Minor, which was in the region Thyatira was in. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 585.

¹⁹ The only other place the phrase “open the heart” is used is in 2 Maccabees 1:4.

²⁰ Matthews, *First Converts*, 86; Luke Timothy Johnson also suggests that Lydia is wealthy. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 293.

²¹ Martin, “The Acts of the Apostles,” 784.

²² Osiek and MacDonald, Margaret Y., *A Woman’s Place*, 158.

²³ Matthews, *First Converts*, 85–89.

suggests that Lydia was perhaps divorced or widowed because she has a household of her own.²⁴ Gail O'Day also notes the prominence of Lydia as a wealthy benefactor for Paul's ministry in Philippi. She writes, "Lydia embodies Luke's ideal of women's contribution to the church: to provide housing and economic resources. Acts 16:40 suggests that Lydia's house quickly became a center of the Philippian church, but Luke does not credit Lydia with any leadership role in that development."²⁵

Read in this light, then, Lydia's "household" probably included slaves, whom she required to also be baptized. Matthews notes this as well, and suggests that this inclusion in the text "rais[es] the thorny issues of agency and will in household baptisms (though the narrative is silent on the matter, household baptisms would, presumably, have involved forced conversions)."²⁶ Moreover, Matthews argues that Lydia did not seem to have been included in the leadership of Paul and Silas at Philippi. This is surprising when placed in contrast to the leadership of Euodia and Syntyche, as reported in Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:2).

On the other hand, Richter Reimer suggests that Lydia was not part of the elite circle in Philippi. She bases her conclusion on Lydia's profession, which she says was "socially despised as dirty work, outside the city and near the water that was so abundantly available in Philippi."²⁷ Richter Reimer agrees that Lydia is the head of her

²⁴ Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 236.

²⁵ O'Day, "Acts," 400.

²⁶ Matthews, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 48.

²⁷ Reimer, *Women in the Acts of Apostles*, 107.

household, though, and suggests that Luke's use of Lydia's house as a center for Paul's ministry in Philippi is ultimately subversive, since Paul is then using the house of a woman who is not in the elite social circle as the center of his ministry.²⁸

Pertinent to the project at hand, it has also been suggested that Lydia could have been a freed slave, because her name is used for female slaves in ancient texts, and also because of her vocation, which may have been associated with slaves.²⁹ The fact that a woman who is explicitly identified as a female slave plays a role in the upcoming narrative lends further weight to this suggestion. Because of Luke's tendency to pair characters, many scholars juxtapose Lydia with the slave-girl in Acts 16, concluding that Lydia is Luke's "good" example, while the prophesying slave-girl is the "bad" example. If Lydia is indeed a slave, this makes this juxtaposition even more plausible, as the "good" slave/"bad" slave contrast is a significant feature of Greco-Roman literature.³⁰ While he does not agree that Lydia was a slave, Scott Spencer views the two women as opposing characters in the narrative; Lydia is affirmed while the slave-girl silenced. Spencer argues that Lydia's role is one of a "passive hearer and helper of Paul" while the female slave is an "active announcer and annoyer of Paul."³¹ The Pythian female slave, in this view, does speak words of truth but does so through the wrong source, namely, Apollo. Lydia, by contrast, is passive and willing to let Paul vocalize the prophecies.

²⁸ Ibid., 127.

²⁹ Pervo, *Acts*, 403; Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 237.

³⁰ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 33; Joshel, "Slavery and Roman Literary Culture," 216–223.

³¹ Spencer, *Dancing Girls, Loose Ladies, and Women of the Cloth*, 156.

Spencer concludes his discussion of this third slave girl with these words: “Obviously, many issues remain unsettled in this strange story. But in any case, we are left with one disturbing fact: for whatever reason, a prophetic slave-girl proclaiming the good news of God’s salvation—as envisioned in the Joel citation at Pentecost—is ultimately silenced and forgotten.”³²

In an alternate view, Robert Price suggests that Lydia and the slave girl were actually one person historically—Lydia was a seller of purple and had a prophetic gift. Price then argues that Luke purposely divided Lydia’s character into two characters, adding the pythonic slave-girl, in order to illustrate that female prophets should be silenced.³³ Thus, the characters are still pitted against one another. Gaventa agrees with this juxtaposition and compares the two women noting the striking differences when she writes, “Unlike Lydia, this woman is in control of nothing. She is a slave. Like Lydia, she earns money, but it belongs to someone else.”³⁴ Additionally, Demetrius Williams contrasts the two characters as positive and negative examples, further showing that Paul offers Lydia salvation while he does not even speak to the slave-girl after removing the Pythian spirit from her.³⁵

Jeffrey Staley, in his feminist postcolonial reading of this text, argues that they are paired together not as a positive/negative comparison, but both as “border women,” using

³² Ibid., 158.

³³ Robert M. Price, *The Widow Traditions in Luke-Acts: A Feminist-Critical Scrutiny*, Dissertation Series / Society of Biblical Literature, no. 155 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 229.

³⁴ Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 238.

³⁵ Williams, “The Acts of the Apostles,” 235.

the work of Musa Dube to show the way in which these women functioned here, in the first city in this area that Paul visited.³⁶ Ultimately, Staley suggests that both Lydia and the παιδίσκη function in Acts to justify the colonizing spread of the new Christian religion.³⁷ Their location in Macedonia indicates that they are the first people Paul encounters during his arrival in this Roman territory. Lydia is then used by the text to support the welcoming of the invading colonizer, while the slave-girl is silenced because of her opposition to this new group of people and their religious ideas.³⁸

Shelly Matthews uses rhetorical analysis to illuminate Luke's use of Lydia's character in Acts. For instance, she examines the way in which Lydia is first introduced: "a certain woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth of the city of Thyatira" (καί τις γυνή ὀνόματι Λυδία πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων, 16:14). Matthews deduces, "Given Luke's skill at creating symbolic characters, the string of modifiers attached to Lydia's name is clearly intended to import much about who Lydia is."³⁹ Rhetorically, Lydia is positioned as a person of high class and status in Philippi. While Matthews suggests that Lydia could be connected with Cornelius from Acts 10, she ultimately

³⁶ Staley, "Changing Woman: Toward a Postcolonial Postfeminist Interpretation of Acts 16.6-40," 191.

³⁷ Margaret Aymer's reading of this passage is similar to Staley's as she views Lydia as a woman who is colonized by Paul and the Christian mission in order to then spread the word to the rest of the city. The slave girl, she writes, "refuses to be colonized by Paul, Silas, and her companions." Thus, Paul silences her. Margaret Aymer, "Acts of the Apostles," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol Ann Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, Twentieth-Anniversary Edition, Revised and Updated (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 543.

³⁸ Staley, "Changing Woman: Toward a Postcolonial Postfeminist Interpretation of Acts 16.6-40," 191.

³⁹ Matthews, *First Converts*, 86.

juxtaposes Lydia with the παιδίσκη because of the author's use of προσευχή in both narratives (vs. 13 and vs 16).⁴⁰ Through this juxtaposition, Luke ultimately redirects Lydia's prominence in the narrative, "her portrayal only as a convert accommodating Paul and his mission, and not as a Christian missionary/leader in her own right."⁴¹

Joseph Marchal examines the scene in Acts 16 focusing on the women in the passage and the rhetoric used in the narrative. Marchal notes that the female slave shouted "incessant, but accurate, exclamations" through the god Apollo.⁴² In Marchal's reading, the slave-girl is paired with Lydia and rhetorically shows Paul's dominance over the other religious groups in the area. In fact, Marchal interprets all the females from Acts 16 as participating in Luke's "rhetorics of apologetics," a phrase used also in Matthew's reading.⁴³ He writes, "Acts 16 shifts the blame for conflicts outside of the early Jesus movement and onto lower-status figures, effectively distancing Paul's leadership from lower-status women."⁴⁴ Marchal's reading suggests that the author's rhetorical purpose for including the slave-girl in Acts 16 is to identify Paul's ministry with an elite group.

In addition to being paired with the slave-girl, it is also possible for Lydia to be paired with Cornelius, a Gentile who seeks out Peter in order to be converted (Acts 10), as noted by Matthews. Perhaps even more plausible, due to its proximity in the text, is the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 89.

⁴¹ Ibid., 94.

⁴² Joseph A. Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation: A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Power Dynamics in Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 87.

⁴³ Matthews, *First Converts*, 62–71, 85–95.

⁴⁴ Marchal, *Hierarchy, Unity, and Imitation*, 88.

suggestion that Lydia is paired with the jailer, who is converted after the episode with the female slave and the miraculous prison release of Paul and Silas.⁴⁵ Pervo notes that the two conversions, Lydia's and the jailer's, bookend the events occurring at Philippi, they are the "pillars on which the narrative, and the Philippian community, are erected."⁴⁶ This pairing, then, aligns with the male/female pairing that often occurs in Luke, and in both cases would be positive examples.

This overview of possible interpretations exemplifies the multiple scenarios for Lydia's characterization and prominence in Acts. As we have seen, most scholars view her as a wealthy, prominent character. Additionally, most scholars pair her with the female-slave as a "positive" / "negative" example from Acts. It is certainly clear that Lydia is presented within Acts as an "insider" in the circle of Pauline ministry that has come to Philippi. Whether she is rich or poor, slave or free, Lydia is the first person in Philippi who believes in Paul's message and the first to be baptized as well. Lydia opens her home to Paul and his travel companions, thus her house becomes the central space for Paul's ministry while he is in the city. In this way, Lydia becomes one of the characters on the "inside" of Paul's ministry and this gives her a particular function within the text. In comparison to Lydia, the slave-girl is clearly presented as an "outsider" to this group, as the following discussion of her character, vocation, and statement will show.

⁴⁵ Kartzow provides a helpful chart of all the possible pairings suggested by scholars in Acts 16. Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Destabilizing the Margins: An Intersectional Approach to Early Christian Memory* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 124.

⁴⁶ Pervo, *Acts*, 400.

The Outsider: A Prophesying, Truth-Telling Slave-Girl

Acts 16:16 indicates that the group has been staying in Philippi and regularly going to the place of prayer, and that during one of their regular trips there, they encounter a “certain slave-girl” (παῖδίσκην τινὰ) who has a spirit of divination, literally a “spirit of a python” (πνεῦμα πύθωνα). I first explore several classical and contemporaneous texts, in order to better understand, intertextually, how ancient readers might have imagined pythonic spirits. Next, I show that within the narrative, this female slave embodies Bakhtinian “outsidedness” in comparison to the circle including Paul, Silas, and now Lydia. Her perspective as “outsider” allows her to have a unique perspective in the narrative, which leads to her prophetic words of truth. Finally, I analyze the statement made by the slave-girl, arguing that her words are heteroglossic in meaning. This reveals that the double-voiced statement made by the παῖδίσκη is prophetic as she becomes a mouthpiece for Lukan theology.

First, the word πύθων, python, is an allusion to the serpent or dragon said to guard the Delphic oracle and live at the foot of Mount Parnassus.⁴⁷ The python was slain by Apollo, according to the tradition relayed by Plutarch.⁴⁸ When connected with the word spirit, πνεῦμα, as it is in Acts 16:16, the word is often translated “spirit of divination.”⁴⁹ Yet, according to Carol Fontaine, πύθων could also be a reference simply to a “snake,”

⁴⁷ *LSJ*, s.v. πύθων.

⁴⁸ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1:438-447; Plutarch, *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 9 (*Moralia* 414E) and *The Oracles at Delphi* 21 (*Moralia* 414B-405A).

⁴⁹ *LSJ*, s.v. πύθων.

which then has a number of allusions to texts from the Hebrew Bible, as serpents are ambiguous symbols associated with wisdom and magic.⁵⁰ In contemporaneous literature of the Greco-Roman world, though, πύθων was associated with either the oracle at Delphi, or some other kind of spirit of divination, such as a ventriloquist (ἐγγαστρίμυθος), who was believed to have such a spirit dwelling in his (or her) belly. For this reason, some of these diviners were called “belly-talkers,” as many thought they were impregnated by a God. Plutarch denounces this possibility in particular stating that it is “foolish and childish in the extreme to imagine that the god himself...enters into the bodies of his prophets and prompts their utterances, employing their mouths and voices as instruments.”⁵¹ As Pervo observes, this idea must have been popular to prompt such a denial by Plutarch. Yet, examples of female oracles, perhaps impregnated by a god, are included in ancient Greek literature.⁵²

As has been shown already, the author of Acts was apparently quite familiar with classical sources and so the slave-girl could be an intentional reference to these belly-talkers. Some scholars disagree, however, and suggest that the slave-girl is possessed by a demon or evil spirit. For example, Conzelmann argues that Luke was most likely not thinking of ventriloquism when he wrote this story but instead of possession by an evil

⁵⁰ C.R. Fontaine, “The Strange Face of Wisdom in the New Testament: On the Reuse of Wisdom Characters from the Hebrew Bible,” in *Recycling Biblical Figures: Papers Read at a NOSTER Colloquium in Amsterdam, 12-13 May 1997*, ed. Athalya Brenner and J. W. van Henten (Leiderdorp, The Netherlands: Deo Publishing, 1999), 217.

⁵¹ Plutarch, *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* 9 (*Moralia* 414E). Quoted in Pervo, *Acts*, 405, fn 41.

⁵² See David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 28–29; David Potter, *Prophets and Emperors: Human and Divine Authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 172–173.

spirit, because of the similarities of this story to the exorcism stories found in the gospels.⁵³ Todd Klutz agrees and engages in a comparison of the exorcism stories found in Luke, particularly in 4:33-37, 8:26-39, and 9:37-43, with this story in Acts 16:16-18, which he labels an exorcism.⁵⁴ He determines that the similarities between these exorcisms suggest that Luke “identify[ies] both Paul and Jesus with the highest sources of authority in the assumed context of culture.”⁵⁵ While there are several similarities between the narrative in Acts 16 and the exorcisms found in Luke-Acts, I suggest Acts should be read alongside the developing novelistic texts from this period, as shown in the introduction. In this way, the identification of the slave-girl as a πύθων functions to connect her to the use of oracles in antiquity, rather than the stories of demon-possession from the gospels. As Hans-Joseph Klauck writes: “We may leave open here the question whether the slave-girl in Philippi had mastered the technique of ventriloquism and made an impression in this way, or whether she worked in a different manner; it is at any rate clear that we are here in the realm of the classical *manteia*, a concept which embraces the art of soothsaying and everything connected with oracles.”⁵⁶ For this reason I now turn to

⁵³ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987; German orig. 1963), 131.

⁵⁴ Todd Klutz, *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 129 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁵⁶ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark LTD, 2000), 66.

other ancient texts in order to provide a literary context for the way in which Luke presents this παιδίσκη.

Many people in antiquity believed in divining spirits and sought help from those who prophesied. The most obvious example of this is the oracle found in Delphi, which is also connected to the Pythonic spirit, and therefore has a direct connection to the Acts 16 prophesying slave-girl. There were a number of myths associated with the Delphic oracle, who was a prophetess usually called Pythia. In fact, the oracle at Delphi was always a female prophet. Most oracle shrines would be near a natural source of water, such as a spring or pool.⁵⁷ At Delphi there was a spring as well as a grotto that was “the source of an ‘inspiring vapour,’ over which the Pythia sat on her tripod.”⁵⁸ Aune continues, “The Greeks believed that oracular responses in human speech were not only divinely inspired, but that they were the utterances of the gods themselves through human intermediaries.”⁵⁹ The words of the prophet(ess) were believed to be words directly from a god, who had possessed the oracle. In this way, the slave-girl in Acts 16 can be interpreted as a character possessed by the spirit of a god, and the words of that god were speaking through her.

A scene from Heliodorus’ novel *An Ethiopian Story* depicts a visit to an oracle. In this story, Kalasiris, a priest and secondary character who plays an important role in the plot of the novel, tells parts of his life story, including a visit to Delphi. Kalasiris explains

⁵⁷ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, 27.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 28. Here, Aune is quoting Strabo, the Greek geographer, who discusses the Delphi oracle. See Strabo, *Geographica*, xi.3.5.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 33.

that he was once the high priest at the temple of Isis, in Memphis. While there he performed “constant devotions to the goddess with hugely expensive sacrifices and dedications.”⁶⁰ Once, a beautiful Thracian woman who often used her beauty and sexuality to trap men visited him at the temple. Predictably, Kalasiris falls into her trap, and is filled with passion for her. Not wanting to defile the temple and precinct, he decides to exile himself and leaves the country. Then, Kalasiris travels to Delphi to pay a visit to the oracle there. His description of Delphi and the oracle is quite similar to others in antiquity. Kalasiris says:

After admiring the town with its streets, squares, and fountains and visiting the famous spring of Kastalia, with whose waters I performed the ritual of ablution, I hastened to the temple in a state of high excitement, for the crowd was abuzz with the rumor that it was time for the prophetess to awake. I entered the temple, and as I knelt in private prayer, the Pythian priestess broke into speech.⁶¹

The prophecy of the oracle speaks directly to Kalasiris’ situation, a rare occurrence for the first-time visitor to Delphi and he “prostrated [him]self on the altar and besought the god’s favour in all things.”⁶² Within the novel, Kalasiris references this visit with the oracle to show his belief in the gods and the fortuitous nature of his travels. The other characters (and it appears ancient readers) believe this and in the power of the Delphic oracle.

Page duBois agrees with this representation of the Delphic oracle and argues that it is a site of truth, a place where only the genuine seeker can go to uncover the truth, hidden within. She writes:

⁶⁰ Heliodorus, “An Ethiopian Story,” in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, trans. J. R. Morgan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 399.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 400.

⁶² *Ibid.*

The Pythia sat on her tripod and received emanations from within the earth that conveyed the message of the god Apollo to the consultant of the oracle. Her body was the conduit, the necessary vehicle for the transmission of the divine truth, and in fact that truth was so mediated, so distorted and mystified, perhaps by its passage through her body, that frequently it became indecipherable, enigmatic for the questioner. The Apollonian truth, pure and uncontaminated, after passing through the material body of earth and woman, takes on a distorting residue of corporeality that separates and distances the divine word from the mortal seeker.”⁶³

DuBois connects this to the Odyssean journey for truth to the underworld, and shows the ways that truth is inscribed on the body. In Delphi, the “body of the woman is stamped, sealed, with the god’s truth; the body itself becomes a sign, with its acoustic rendition of the ineffable divine truth. The consultation of the oracle involves not only the search for the hidden truth, which emerges from inside the earth, but also the passage through the medium of the woman.”⁶⁴ In this way, duBois compares the temple to the body of a woman, the truth being housed within both sites.

In Delphi, it is unclear in most sources how the female oracle functioned, or what her status was (other than being revered by the visitors to the oracular site).⁶⁵ Moreover, it is not directly clear that Luke is making a reference to the oracle at Delphi through his description of the divining *παίδίσκη*. In support of this, Lynn Allan Kauppi she suggests

⁶³ duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 85–86.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁵ Esther Eidinow discusses the circumstances under which slaves and/or slave owners visited oracles, and the prophecies that the oracle gave to slaves and slave owners. While not as common as a free person visiting an oracle, there are ancient texts that attest to slaves visiting oracles. At Delphi, there seemed to be a specific procedure to the visit from a slave. Esther Eidinow, “‘What Will Happen to Me If I Leave?’ Ancient Greek Oracles, Slaves and Slave Owners,” in *Slaves and Religions in Graeco-Roman Antiquity and Modern Brazil*, ed. Stephen Hodkinson and Dick Geary (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 244–78.

that Luke might not have been referring to the Delphic oracle in particular, but instead to a “specific type of mantic or oracular behavior known in the Greco-Roman world.” She admits that it is possible that some of Luke’s readers would have immediately connected this slave to Delphi, but that this could have been understood more broadly to mean any sort of oracle.⁶⁶ In the broader sense, then, Luke’s παιδίσκη could be a type of ventriloquist, or belly-talker.

Another scene from Heliodorus’ novel *An Ethiopian Story* humorously describes an interaction with a divining spirit, not particularly from Delphi. In this part of the story, Charikleia, the young female protagonist, is terribly ill and her family cannot figure out the cause of her illness. The aforementioned priest, Kalasiris comes to the house and finds out that they are all quite worried about her. Knowing the cause of her illness (she was lovesick), Kalasiris stages a divination where he pretends to heal the girl of her illness. Kalasiris first instructs the others to bring a “tripod, some laurel, fire, and some incense.”⁶⁷ After getting these items, he performs the magic act: “Having secured our privacy, I launched into a sort of stage performance, producing clouds of incense smoke, pursing my lips and muttering some sounds that passed for prayers, waving the laurel up and down, up and down, from Charikleia’s head to her toes, and yawning blearily, for all the world like some old madman.”⁶⁸ This comedic portrayal, in addition to the one present in Aristophanes, of a divination in process sheds light upon what one might have seen when visiting a “belly-talker” or one with a divining spirit.

⁶⁶ Lynn Allan Kauppi, *Foreign But Familiar Gods: Greco-Romans Read Religion in Acts* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2006), 31–33.

⁶⁷ Heliodorus, “An Ethiopian Story,” 427.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Instances of humorous portrayals of divining spirits can also be found in ancient Greek theatre. For example, in the play “Wasps” by Aristophanes, the character who plays the Chorus Leader turns to the audience in a humorous soliloquy where he mentions the ventriloquist called Eurycles, also referenced by Plato. The chorus leader announces:

Now then, people, give me your attention, if you like frank talk. Our poet wants to chastise the audience today. He claims they’ve wronged him without provocation, even though he’s treated them abundantly well, at first not openly but secretly, by helping other poets, taking his cue from the prophetic device of Eurycles: slipping into other men’s bellies and making lots of comic material pour out.⁶⁹

In this scene, Aristophanes uses the idea of prophetic ventriloquism as a comedic motif to incite laughter from the audience.

These examples from ancient literature suggest that Luke’s readers could immediately evoke various images of a “certain slave-girl with a divining spirit” (παιδίσκην ρινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα, 16:16). Whether humorous or serious, this figure in Acts is clearly marked as a slave and, because she is enslaved, is used by her owners to make money. Her enslavement already marks her as an “outsider,” in that slaves were not viewed as full persons but rather objects, for use by their owners. In fact, Acts 16:16 notes that her work “brought much profit to her masters by fortune-telling” (ἥτις ἐργασίαν πολλὴν παρείχεν τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς μαντευομένη). This word, μαντεύομαι, means to divine or prophesy, and usually refers to the telling of fortunes or

⁶⁹ Aristophanes, *Wasps*, in *Aristophanes II*, trans. Jeffrey Henderson, vol. 488, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1998), 353.

predicting the future.⁷⁰ Johnson writes that *μαντεύομαι* was “the technical term for ecstatic prophecy in the Hellenistic world.”⁷¹ In Acts 16, we have a female prophet who is also a female slave, being used by her owners as a source of income.

Yet some slaves in ancient narratives, like the prophesying slave from Acts 16, are able to work miracles and prophecy, and choose to do so without the permission of their owners. For instance, in the *Acts of Andrew*, a female slave named Trophime is introduced as the previous mistress of Lesbius, a proconsul.⁷² However, in the context of the narrative, both Lesbius and Trophime convert to Christianity, because of the teaching of Andrew (22:12-23:1). Trophime decides to leave her husband in order to be a devoted follower to the apostle Andrew, who was teaching in the house of the proconsul (23:2). Predictably, her husband is enraged at this turn of events and tells Lesbius’ wife that Trophime is having an affair with her husband. Lesbius’ wife, who has not converted to Christianity, believes the man and sends Trophime to work for a pimp and live in a brothel as a prostitute (23:5). While working in the brothel, the slave Trophime is able to find her own agency; she lays down in the brothel and places a gospel text on her breast.⁷³ This successfully wards off many men who come to the brothel to have sex with

⁷⁰ *LSJ*, s.v. *μαντεύομαι*.

⁷¹ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 294.

⁷² This story is found in the sections of the *Acts of Andrew* included in *The Epitome* by Gregory of Tours, chapter 23. See Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2005), 66.

⁷³ While this passage has not been thoroughly explored by scholars for its implications on slavery and prostitution, Kate Cooper mentions this narrative for its inclusion of a “gospel text,” an interesting addition to the story. Kate Cooper, “The Patristic Period,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture*, ed. John F. A. Sawyer (Malden, MA ; Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 33.

her (23:7). Yet, one man is not dissuaded and rips Trophime's clothes off, knocking the gospel to the floor in the process (23:8). Trophime cries out and prays, and in this moment an angel appears in the brothel, and the man immediately dies (23:9-10). Trophime later raises the man from the dead. Thus, Trophime is able to perform miracles in the same way that Andrew the apostle is, and in the name of Jesus (23:12).

This story includes many menippean motifs in it, as noted in the Bakhtinian overview in the second chapter, including the setting of the narrative, in a brothel, and the miraculous events included in it. Moreover, in the moment in the brothel, a carnivalesque reversal takes place where the female slave/prostitute rises above her attacker, who is killed. The *Acts of Andrew*, then, describes a story where a female slave takes control of her own situation (and her own body) even in the midst of her enslavement. While Trophime remains a slave and is forced to work in a brothel, she finds a way to protect her chastity within this fictional narrative. As Glancy notes, "Ancient sources yield no insights into the actual reactions of slaves to their masters' sexual initiatives."⁷⁴ Yet, I connect Trophime to the παιδίσκη in Acts 16 as she enacts her own agency. As the narrative in Acts suggests, she abandons her job, which was to make money for her masters, to follow Paul and Silas and declare her prophecy about them. It is clear they did not hire her or elicit this divination from her, but she chooses to speak regardless of the repercussions that will inevitably follow.

The result of the παιδίσκη choosing to follow Paul and Silas and speak her prophecy out loud is the loss of her prophetic gift, and perhaps the resulting loss prophet to her owners. The narrative does not indicate that she is now free as a result of Paul's

⁷⁴ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 23.

action, but, like Trophime, she remains a slave. Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo provides an interesting interpretation of this through his postcolonial reading of Acts. Broadly, Muñoz-Larrondo reads Acts as participating in a hidden transcript, written by Luke, that subtly criticizes the Roman empire. Thus, in his discussion of Acts 16, he argues that even though “Paul is not preaching directly against slavery in Acts, the physical liberation of this one woman may serve as condemnation of a system that sustains and promotes widespread slavery in the Empire.”⁷⁵ While I think that Paul’s actions toward the slave-girl were more of a result of his annoyance than his resistance to imperial domination, Muñoz-Larrondo’s reading resonates with mine in that her presence in the narrative, her “outsidedness,” and her role as truth-teller, allows her to rise above her status and gender for a moment when her words are heard.

Because of the potency of the statement made by the slave-girl, Paul and the παιδίσκη can be connected within the narrative in that they both function as prophets. Concerning the New Testament and early Christian texts, Barbara Rossing argues: “prophets and their prophecy...varied in both form and function.”⁷⁶ In Acts, prophecy is enacted by the Holy Spirit through the events at Pentecost, but then, as Aune shows, takes on a variety of forms throughout the text. Yet, prophetic statements in Acts typically function to spread the message of Jesus.⁷⁷ Here, the work of Mitzi Smith is helpful as she pairs the slave-girl with Paul, because her profession is similar to Paul’s—they are both

⁷⁵ Muñoz-Larrondo, *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles*, 181.

⁷⁶ Barbara R. Rossing, “Prophets, Prophetic Movements, and the Voices of Women,” in *Christian Origins*, ed. Richard Horsley, vol. 1, *A People’s History of Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 262.

⁷⁷ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, 91.

prophets. Smith argues: “The slave girl likely is neither a Jewish woman nor a Godfearer, but she is a Gentile and a devotee of Apollo.”⁷⁸ Her words are both coherent and also true, as Smith’s analysis shows, because Paul never rejects the words of the slave-girl, but simply exorcises the spirit because he was “annoyed.” Through “transitivity analysis,” Smith analyzes the grammar in the passage as well as the way a character participates in the action of the text.⁷⁹ Through this investigation, Smith positions the slave-girl as an “external outsider” while both Paul and Lydia are “internal insiders.”⁸⁰ While the slave shows more agency than both Paul and Lydia, she is still on the outside, allowing her to enact her agency. Smith writes, “The grammar demonstrates that the Pythian slave girl is the character constructed with the highest degree of transitive agency in relation to the apostle Paul. In terms of transitivity analysis, she affects other persons as much as her masters do.”⁸¹

Smith’s reading supports my argument that the slave-girl fits into the Bakhtinian concept of “outsidedness” or “outsideness.”⁸² In *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, Bakhtin describes this theoretical idea through his description of creative understanding:

⁷⁸ Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles*, 42.

⁷⁹ Smith explains that her methodology for this project utilizes “ergative” and “transitivity analysis.” In this way she is concerned with the way that participants are used grammatically in the narrative, as well as “causation.” Her analysis focuses on the grammatical structure as well as the agency that characters embody in the text. For example, she notes “Transitivity analysis shows that when the apostles are inserted into narrative instabilities with external others, the apostles are passive displaying the lowest level of transitive agency when compared to *the Jews* and charismatic others.” Ibid., 9.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 39–43.

⁸¹ Ibid., 45.

⁸² Bakhtin’s translators spell this concept in English both ways.

“In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture.”⁸³ Nadella, who also finds this Bakhtinian concept at work in the gospel of Luke, describes this well: “Unlike some narrative critics who insist that insideness is the ideal position that can provide easy access to the chamber of secrets, [Bakhtin] presents outsidedness as a location that can offer a fuller view of the object of perception than does insideness.”⁸⁴ Moreover, the notion of outsidedness is best understood within the dialogic novel, which incorporates various voices equally within the narrative. In Acts 16, as I have shown, the prophesying slave-girl is clearly on the outside of the circle. Her position of outsidedness provides her with a view of the narrative that other characters, including Lydia, Silas, and even Paul, do not have. In this way, she is able to voice her prophecy including these words of truth from her position of outsidedness. The following section will explore her interaction with Paul and Silas as well as her statement of prophecy, in order to illuminate the multiple truths within it.

The Slave-Girl’s Prophecy: The Truth about Paul and Silas

While she followed Paul and us, she was crying out saying: ‘These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the Way of Salvation!’

~Acts 16:17

⁸³ Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 7.

⁸⁴ Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 45.

The statement made by the παιδίσκη is potent; it contains words that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. As Bakhtin's theory shows, her utterance is heteroglossic, and when interpreted in this way the multiple meanings within it function dialogically. As Gaventa observes, "The announcement is wonderfully ambiguous, since the pagan bystanders of the narrative audience could understand it to claim priority for a particular god over other gods, while Luke and his Christian audience would see it as an unwitting announcement of the only God's salvation for all people."⁸⁵ Similarly, Pervo designates her words as "free advertising offered by his [Paul's] erstwhile competitor," and suggests that this scene is comedic while showing a misuse of divine power by Paul.⁸⁶ As we can see, numerous scholars address the possible meaning of her statement; this chapter adds another possible interpretation to the scholarly conversation, through the Bakhtinian idea of heteroglossia.

The first two words of this verse are αὕτη κατακολουθοῦσα, which I translate "while she followed." The root of this word κατακολουθέω is ἀκολουθέω, which was previously discussed in chapter three. It is a frequently used Greek word, especially in the context of Luke-Acts, and is used to describe the way that Peter follows Jesus in Luke 22:54, except that Peter follows at a distance, while the slave girl seems to continually follow Paul, as the narrative indicates. In this way, the παιδίσκη seems to be following Paul as a possible disciple, except that Paul becomes annoyed by her attention.

⁸⁵ Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 238.

⁸⁶ Richard I Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 63.

A second word in this verse that has intertextual significance is the reference to the slave-girl “crying out” (κράζω). This word is used multiple times in the Synoptic Gospels and is usually associated with one who has a spirit (πνεῦμα or δαίμων), and also within scenes of exorcism.⁸⁷ Because of this verb, some scholars connect the interaction between Paul and the slave-girl with the scenes where Jesus meets a person possessed with a spirit and removes those spirits. For instance, Conzelmann observes, when this occurs in the gospels, the demons also speak statements that are truthful (Mark 1:24 and Luke 4:41, for example), and they are always silenced.⁸⁸ For instance, there are several similarities between this scene in Acts and the one in Luke 8:27-33, including the use of the verb κράζω (in Luke 8:28, ἀνακράξας) as well as the phrase that the demon-possessed man uses to describe Jesus, “son of the most high god” (υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, vs. 28). In many ways, this scene mimics the exorcisms of Jesus, including the description of the spirit leaving the girl (See Luke 4:36, 41; 8:33; 11:14; Acts 8:6).

Yet, there are several differences in Luke’s depictions of Jesus’ exorcisms of and this one in Acts.⁸⁹ For instance, in Luke the person being possessed is tormented physically by the spirit, yet the slave-girl is not (see Luke 8:29). Additionally, Luke usually portrays the person as healed, yet the healing of the slave-girl is not noted in Acts, only that the spirit left her (16:18). Finally, Jesus often speaks to the healed person after

⁸⁷ This verb is used in connection with spiritual and demonic actions in the Synoptic Gospels. For example, see Mark 1:23-24, 3:11, 5:5-7, and 9:26; Matthew 8:28 and 17:14-18; and Luke 4:31-33, 8:27-28, and 9:39.

⁸⁸ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 131.

⁸⁹ Matthews notes a number of these differences and she suggests, “This is not a typical exorcism.” Matthews, *First Converts*, 89–90.

the exorcism, yet Paul only speaks to the spirit within the slave-girl and then the slave-girl is not mentioned after the spirit has left.

Richter Reimer includes an exhaustive study of the word κράζω in Mark, Matthew, and Luke, in order to explore reading this Acts passage in the context of the gospels. She concludes that while Mark and Matthew use this verb, usually in connection with ἀνα to specify the actions of a spirit or a demon, Luke uses it Acts rather frequently in connection with someone who is not possessed by a spirit.⁹⁰ For example, in Acts κράζω is used when a crowd is shouting (7:47; 19:28, 32, 34; and 21:28, 36), when Stephen is praying (7:40), and even when Paul himself is speaking (14:14; 23:6; 24:21).⁹¹ Therefore, the “crying out” of the slave-girl in Acts 16 does not indicate that she should be identified as one who needs exorcism.

The members of the Acts Seminar also engage this conversation when they propose:

But if readers of Acts are to understand the slave woman’s proclamation as stating truth, we must ask why Paul finally disavows her support and expels the spirit that inspired her utterance. In Luke 8, Jesus exorcised the demon from the Gerasene to relieve the victim’s self-torment, but Paul seems to be motivated only by annoyance at the constant shouting (Acts 16:18), and the exorcism leaves the slave woman – now unemployed – in worse condition than before.⁹²

Yet, in this particular exorcism in Luke, the healed man “begs” to go “with him” (σὺν αὐτῷ, 8:38), but Jesus refuses and sends him away (cf GK ἀπέλυσω, vs. 38). As I argued in chapter three, the phrase “with him” indicates discipleship in Luke, and so I suggest

⁹⁰ Reimer, *Women in the Acts of Apostles*, 158–160.

⁹¹ Ibid., 159.

⁹² Smith and Tyson, *Acts and Christian Beginnings*, 197.

that this man, healed of the exorcism, was not allowed by Jesus to be one of the group of followers.

Through her following and the crying out of her message, the παιδίσκη recognizes the power of Paul and Silas, and it seems she is drawn to them in some way. As in Luke 22 and Acts 12 this παιδίσκη also sees and recognizes an apostle. When the Acts 16 slave-girl first sees Paul and Silas, she refuses to leave them alone: “And this she was doing for many days” (16:18). Spencer suggests that this παιδίσκη might even know Lydia and the other women gathered at the place of prayer, because of her continually following Paul and Silas to that place.⁹³ She is figured as persistent because verse 18 indicates that Paul became “annoyed” at the slave-girl and “turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out from her.’ And it came out that same hour.” Paul’s reason for this exorcism seems to be simply annoyance, and not a desire to heal the slave-girl or even provide proof that his God is more powerful than hers. In fact, Paul never states that the slave girl’s words are wrong nor that she needs to be healed. He seems to act on impulse and out of personal irritation, not out of her need or his desire to prove his ability to work miracles.

Some scholars have suggested that her words were not helpful to Paul’s mission, thus Paul needed to exorcise the spirit from her. One reason for this argument is the phrase she uses, “the Most High God” (τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). When she uses this title, is she referring to her God (Apollo, perhaps)? Or, is she referring to the God of Paul and Silas? Or, is she referring to one all-powerful God? The options that have been presented for the god that she means by the words “Most High God” are: Apollo, Zeus, or Yahweh.

⁹³ Spencer, *Dancing Girls, Loose Ladies, and Women of the Cloth*, 156.

As noted above, the text says that she has the spirit of a python (πνεῦμα πύθωνα), thus she appears to be a Pythian prophetess; so her oracles would be immediately connected to Apollo. Many scholars note this, including Reimer, Matthews, and Pervo, who are all convinced that the slave-girl speaks through the power of Apollo.⁹⁴ Read in this way, Luke connects the god Apollo to the person of the lowest status in the scene, a female slave. However, Fitzmyer suggests that the highest god in this world would have meant Zeus, as the “highest” god in the Greek pantheon.⁹⁵ In this way, Fitzmyer views this exorcism as representing Christianity’s triumph over paganism. In fact, he interprets this action as one of Paul’s miracles, as the girl is free from the spirit. He writes, “A pagan religious practice is made to acknowledge that salvation comes from the Most High God of Christianity.”⁹⁶

On the other hand, Luke Timothy Johnson points out that Luke uses the phrase “Most High God” quite frequently in the gospel (1:32, 35, 76; 2:14; 6:35; 8:28; 19:38) and one other time in Acts (7:48), in a sermon given by Stephen.⁹⁷ When Luke uses it here, it represents the God of the Septuagint, and the God of Paul. While the phrase ὑψίστος θεός is certainly used in many Gentile contexts, but ὑψίστος is also used to describe God in the Septuagint over 100 times. Johnson, then, concludes that the slave-girl recognizes that the God worshipped by Paul and Silas is higher than her own.

⁹⁴ Pervo, *Acts*, 405, FN 49; Reimer, *Women in the Acts of Apostles*, 154–155; Matthews, *First Converts*, 90.

⁹⁵ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 585.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 583.

⁹⁷ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 294.

Therefore, Johnson shows the way that the use of slave's title "the Most High God," "forms an interesting parallel to the relationship between the paidiske and her kyrioi."⁹⁸ Thus, Fitzmyer suggests that the god referred to by the παιδίσκη is Zeus, while Johnson believes the phrase to represent Yahweh.

I argue that this phrase "the Most High God" used by the female slave is heteroglossic in meaning. For instance, Bakhtin notes that the motif of double-voicedness "carries even greater weight in the realm of religious thought and discourse (mythological, mystical and magical)."⁹⁹ Thus, the words of a "deity, a demon, a soothsayer, a prophet" are transmitting words that are full of multiple meanings.¹⁰⁰ Understood in this way, the phrase dialogically incorporates the pagan gods as well as the God of Paul and Silas. Here, Luke as the author could indicate the God of Paul and Silas, or Yahweh. Yet, Bakhtin dialogism indicates that words always have meaning outside of the author's intended meaning; thus, the phrase could also refer to Zeus or Apollo. Bakhtin describes this juxtaposition: "Within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other. The utterance so conceived is a considerably more complex and dynamic organism than it appears when construed simply as a thing that articulates the intention of the person uttering it."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 351.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 354.

This Bakhtinian interpretation merges the Greco-Roman understanding of the divine into the God found in Luke-Acts, and then uses the spirit of the Python within the female slave to show that *this* God, Paul's God, is better than the pagan Gods. The basis of this argument lies in the use of this phrase by Luke in the gospel and also in Acts. In Luke, as mentioned above, the phrase is repeatedly used to reference the God of the Hebrew Bible. Then, in Acts, the phrase is placed in the mouth of Stephen, a vital character in Acts, and contextually is understood to be in reference to the God of the Hebrew Bible. Why, then, when the female slave uses this exact same phrase, do most scholars assume this to be used in reference to a pagan god? Instead, I suggest that Luke uses this phrase in the same way as it was used by Stephen, but by placing it in the mouth of a slave-girl who is also a Pythian prophet the phrase has even more narrative power than perhaps intended by the author—it refers to the God of the Hebrew Bible, the God of Paul and Silas, and even the god of the slave-girl. Therefore, this phrase in the slave-girl's prophecy is inherently true, to all who hear it. As Bakhtin confirms, "It is typical for a novelistic hybrid to fuse into a single utterance two utterances that are socially distinct."¹⁰²

In addition to their being "slaves of the Most High God," the slave-girl indicates that Paul and Silas are preaching (καταγγέλλω) the way of salvation (ὁδὸν σωτηρίας). This is certainly seen in Acts, as Paul and his companions preach in every city that they visit. In chapter 16, the first thing Paul and Silas do is speak to the women by the water (vs. 13), which ultimately leads to the conversion of Lydia. Furthermore, in Acts, the new

¹⁰² Ibid., 361.

sect of believers is often referred to as “the Way” (ὁδὸν).¹⁰³ In fact, this particular phrase used in reference to the community of people who follow Jesus is unique in the New Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, as Johnson points out, “the word for “road” took on the obvious metaphorical sense of ‘manner of life,’ a sense it retains in the New Testament.”¹⁰⁴ Additionally, the theme of salvation is primarily a Lukan one.¹⁰⁵ Robert Tannehill notes the importance of this theme when he writes, “the narrator of Luke-Acts believes that events are moving in a single direction (although the path may not be straight and the direction obvious) toward the fulfillment of God’s purpose of inclusive salvation.”¹⁰⁶ This goal of salvation, according to Tannehill, includes the Jews and the Gentiles. As noted above, Paul’s visit to Philippi is the first one to a predominately Greek city, and the area of Macedonia is a new area for Paul and the apostles as well. Thus, the slave-girl is telling the people in the city that what Paul and Silas are preaching, about the “Way of Salvation” is the truth—that is what they have been doing in Philippi. Additionally, salvation is an integral part of the theology of Luke, as Tannehill shows; thus this female slave (similar to the παιδίσκη in Luke 22) is also a mouthpiece for Lukan theology.

Finally, in her prophecy, the slave-girl identifies Paul and Silas as “slaves” of the Most High God. These words, I argue, are prophetic and turn out to be “true,” at least symbolically, for two reasons. First, the slave-girl calls these men “slaves.” While it is

¹⁰³ See 9:2; 19:9; 23; 22:4; 24:22; and 24:14.

¹⁰⁴ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 162.

¹⁰⁵ See Luke 1:69, 71, 77; 19:9; Acts 4:12; 7:25; 13:26, 47.

¹⁰⁶ Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1986, 12.

clear within Acts (and the Pauline letters) that both Paul and Silas were not actually enslaved, in his letters Paul often uses the metaphor of slavery when he describes himself. For instance, Paul uses this metaphor in the opening of the letter from Paul (and Timothy) to the church at Philippi, “Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus...” (Phil. 1:1). Thus, Paul positions himself as a slave in a letter he wrote to the believers in this city (in addition to other cities), and so the prophesy of this slave-girl is not far from Paul’s own self-presentation. Second, following this incident with the slave-girl Paul and Silas are arrested, beaten, and flogged. This treatment was something that was not often experienced by Roman citizens in antiquity, but was regularly experienced by slaves, as has been shown in this project. Therefore, the slave-girl’s prophecy can be understood as “true” in these two metaphoric ways.

The metaphor of slavery was used in ancient classical literature and is found in many Christian texts as well. This metaphor speaks volumes about the social understanding of slavery in antiquity and in early Christian circles. I. A. H. Combes argues that even though this metaphor was used in the context of the slave society of the Greco-Roman world, the metaphor came to mean something different for Christians. He explains the use of slave as a metaphor when he writes, “Nowhere in the New Testament (with the possible exception of John 8.30-35) is there any trace of the use of ‘slave’ as a label for the naturally inferior, the stupid or the vicious, as is so common in other forms of literature.”¹⁰⁷ While this might be true for the use of the metaphor in the New

¹⁰⁷ I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series 156 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 93.

Testament, this argument does not work for all the references for slave in this body of literature, as has already been shown.

Similarly, Dale Martin argues that Paul's use of the metaphor of being a slave to Christ "did not connote humility but rather established his authority as Christ's agent and spokesperson."¹⁰⁸ In this way, Martin suggests that Paul's rhetoric signaled to the lower classes that Paul was on their side, and perhaps even upset his elite readers. Additionally, Paul's use of this metaphor gave his marginalized followers (such as slaves) hope that they too would be able to overcome their low status through their commitments to Christ. Peter Garnsey, though, observes that when Jewish and Christian writers used the analogy to slavery, they actually meant what is closer to "obedience." He writes, "It had almost nothing in common with ancient domestic servitude, let alone the notorious slave-gangs who worked the mines or the estates of the rich in late Republican Italy."¹⁰⁹ While the metaphor of slavery, as used by Paul and others, is not directly a positionality of slavery, Paul imagines himself and positions himself as a God's slave. This is also what the words of the slave-girl indicate: that Paul and Silas were slaves *of* the Most High God, meaning their God. It seems the Paul who wrote the letter to the Philippians, at least, would agree.

Additionally, Paul and Silas are treated as slaves would have been treated in antiquity. In order to show this, I return to Acts 16 for the rest of the story that occurs in Philippi. When the slave-girl's owners realize that Paul had removed the spirit from her, their source of income, they seize Paul and Silas and drag them to the marketplace

¹⁰⁸ Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 147.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine*, W.B. Stanford Memorial Lectures (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 242.

(ἀγοράν) (16:19). Interestingly, instead of bringing charges against the men for harming of their slave, they tell the magistrates (στρατηγοῖς) that Paul and Silas are Jews. As Jews, they are proclaiming customs (ἔθνη) which Romans are not permitted to observe (16:21). This makes the crowd very angry as well, which results in the magistrates taking Paul and Silas, stripping them, and beating them (16:22). After this corporal punishment, they throw them both into jail, heavily guarded, with their feet in the stocks (16:23-24). Through an earthquake, Paul and Silas are miraculously freed from their chains and the jailer is so overtaken that he converts and is baptized (he and his whole family, 16:33). The jailer then takes them to his house to feed them and they all rejoice (16:34).

In the morning, the magistrates sends word that Paul and Silas should be released but Paul said, “They have beaten us in public, uncondemned men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves” (16:37). As Pervo notes, “The chief difficulty is that Paul and Silas do not state that they are Roman citizens and, as such, could not be beaten unless convicted of crime. The answer to this dilemma is that citizenship is a trump card that the narrator will not play until he is ready.”¹¹⁰ When the magistrates realize they are Roman citizens, they come to the prison and apologize to Paul and Silas. Then, they ask the two to leave the city (16:39). After one last visit to Lydia’s house, Paul and Silas leave Philippi.

As is clear from this paraphrase, Paul and Silas did not claim their status as Roman citizens, and the leaders of Philippi strip them, beat them, and imprison them. The bodies of Roman citizens were not usually susceptible to corporeal punishment; slave

¹¹⁰ Pervo, *Acts*, 408.

bodies, however, were often subjected to corporeal punishment. Jonathan Walters helps to explain this when he writes: “The status of being a respectable, freeborn Roman citizen was thus marked, at least in theory, on the corporeal level by bodily inviolability. Roman citizens, however low their social status, were not to be beaten, raped, or otherwise assaulted.”¹¹¹ This understanding was pervasive within the Roman Empire, and Philippi was a Roman colony where these guidelines would be regularly imposed. Luke includes that Paul and Silas were beaten, and, as Walters delineates: “Beating was a punishment with an intimate connection with the hierarchy of social statuses, with the distinctions between free and slave, citizen and noncitizen, and being beaten was a humiliating mark of low status. It was a mark of slavery that one could be beaten.”¹¹²

As Pervo notes, Luke presents Paul’s (and Silas’s) Roman citizenship only after the beating. Within the narrative, Paul and Silas do not offer this information either, but allow themselves to be beaten and flogged. Glancy confirms, “Unlike slaves, citizens enjoyed broad protection against judicial torture during the early Empire, but even for citizens, such protection was not absolute.”¹¹³ As mentioned above, Paul often describes himself in his letters using metaphors of slavery. Davina Lopez shows the ways that Paul’s language in his letters confronts Roman ideologies of power, which in turn aligns

¹¹¹ Johnathan Walters, “Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought,” in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. Judith P Hallett and Marilyn B Skinner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 38–39.

¹¹² Ibid., 37.

¹¹³ Glancy, “Torture,” 123.

Paul with defeated, conquered people.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Glancy also notes the ways in which Paul positions his own body as vulnerable. She writes, “Because vulnerability to beating was a servile liability, any free person who was whipped or struck suffered an injury to honor far in excess of whatever temporary pain or permanent mark was inflicted.”¹¹⁵ In her analysis of 2 Corinthians 11, where Paul boasts of his previous beatings, Glancy argues that Paul reminds the Corinthians of his beaten body in order to reveal his weakness and connect him to the body of Jesus, which was also beaten.¹¹⁶

Another source provides further insight on Paul’s experience in Philippi. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2, Paul, together with Silvanus (that is, Silas) and Timothy, writes, “For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, our visit to you has not been in vain, but having suffered previously and having been mistreated as you know in Philippi, we took courage in our God to speak the good news of God to you in the midst of great conflict.”¹¹⁷ The witness from this letter adds another facet to the intertextual dialogue happening with the narrative of Acts, in that the narrative of Acts is supported by this Pauline letter that Paul and his colleagues were mistreated in Philippi—treated as slaves

¹¹⁴ Davina C. Lopez, *The Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul’s Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 168.

¹¹⁵ Jennifer A. Glancy, “Boasting of Beatings (2 Corinthians 11:23-25),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123, no. 1 (2004): 109.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 134–135.

¹¹⁷ For more on 1 Thessalonians, including a look at the representation of women in this letter, see Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, “‘Gazing Upon the Invisible’: Archaeology, Historiography, and the Elusive Women of 1 Thessalonians,” in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonike: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen, *Harvard Theological Studies* 64 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 73–108.

(stripped, beaten, flogged, and jailed) when they were free Roman citizens, according to Acts.

Read in this light, Paul and Silas allow themselves to be beaten, assuming the status of slaves, when they are in Philippi. The prophecy of the slave-girl who calls Paul and Silas “slaves of the Most High God” seems even more powerful and prophetic with this acknowledgment: she is ascribing a condition to Paul and Silas that has yet to be publicly revealed. Indeed, the position of this παιδίσκη as an “outsider” has given her a unique perspective concerning Paul and Silas and the narrative as a whole. In this way, she functions as an external focalizer. She rises above the text of Acts and is able to see the narrative clearly from her position as outsider and focalizer.

Leucippe: A Free Elite Woman Treated as a Slave

In Acts 16 I have argued that Paul and Silas are treated as slaves in Philippi, being beaten, flogged, and jailed, when this should not occur because they were Roman citizens. This fulfills one more aspect of the slave-girl’s prophecy, and also reveals a Bakhtinian status reversal in the text: the slave-girl is not portrayed as beaten or punished, while Paul and Silas, free men, are treated as slaves. Paul and Silas are not the only free characters in an ancient narrative to be accidentally mistreated in this way. In fact, the ancient novels have a common trope of free elite characters being mistaken for slaves and treated as such. This often occurs as a part of the trials that the protagonists go through before they are reunited with their partners. For example, in Achilles Tatius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the main female protagonist, Leucippe, a free woman, is beaten

and works as a slave; she is unrecognizable even to her husband, Clitophon. While a number of additional aspects concerning slavery in *Leucippe* could be highlighted, here I will focus on her mistaken identity and the description of a female slave's body, highlighting the physical brutality her character experienced when she was enslaved.

The story of *Leucippe and Clitophon* follows the basic plot of most of the Greco-Roman ancient novels in that the male and female protagonists meet at the beginning of the novel, are destined to be with one another by fate and the gods, but are dramatically torn apart from one another through various circumstances. The bulk of the plot of the novels consists of the horrible situations in which the lovers find themselves, unable to be with the person that they love. The ends of the novels depict the two lovers joined together once again, happily.¹¹⁸ In *Leucippe and Clitophon*, one of the dramatic circumstances that tear the two lovers apart is that Leucippe is kidnapped by pirates and, as Clitophon watches in horror, although from a distance, she is beheaded and her body thrown into the sea.¹¹⁹ Clitophon, then, believes his love to be dead, but Leucippe is actually alive and is sold as slave (δοῦλη) to a wealthy woman in Ephesus, a primary city of the slave trade in the Greco-Roman world. When Clitophon finds himself in Ephesus, he encounters a female slave, but does not recognize her as Leucippe, his love, because

¹¹⁸ Admittedly, this is a simple paraphrase of the plot of the ancient novel, and also of the ending of the novels. Much scholarship has been done to show that the plots do vary in some very important ways, and also that the endings to the novels can be read in ways other than simply "happy endings." See Loreto Nunez, "Liminal Games: Fluidity of the Sphragis of a Novelist," in *The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections*, ed. Marília P. Futre Pinheiro, Judith Perkins, and Richard Pervo (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2013), 143–68.

¹¹⁹ As is already clear, the plot is reminiscent of Chariton's in many ways.

her appearance is so heavily altered by her slavery. This physical appearance is one of the best literary descriptions of the physical body of a female slave that exists from antiquity.

When the reader first encounters Leucippe as a slave, it is not clear that it is the female protagonist being described, and a general portrayal of the slave is given: “On our arrival we were walking through the rows of plants in the garden when suddenly there threw herself at our feet a woman wearing heavy fetters and holding a hoe, her head shorn, her person dirty, clad in a short and wretched garment.”¹²⁰ This fictional description vividly portrays the horrible circumstances of enslavement. There are a number of observations we can make about the body of a female slave from this narrative description. First, the slave was chained. As duBois writes, “The slave body was, for one thing, described frequently as fettered, bound, beaten, always vulnerable to beatings and to whipping, with refinements.”¹²¹ Indeed, archaeological evidence from antiquity attests to the existence of iron chains found in various places around the Roman Empire, used for criminals as well as for slaves. Hugh Thompson surveys the archaeological data found in the ancient world associated with slaves, and records and describes items have been found throughout Greece and Italy that suggest restraints were used in areas where slaves might have been working (such as near quarries, silver mines etc.).¹²² The artifacts described and pictured in Thompson’s book include: shackles (or, fetters) for the legs, arms and necks; chains; iron rings (perhaps a type of hand cuffs); and collars and *bulla* (a

¹²⁰ Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, trans. S. Gaselee, Revised, vol. 45, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1984), 273.

¹²¹ duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 105.

¹²² Thompson, *The Archaeology of Greek and Roman Slavery*, 221.

plate carrying an inscription, usually of ownership).¹²³ However, Thompson indicates that leg shackling and other such restraints were probably not a widespread practice in the Greco-Roman world, since they are found mostly in areas of mining and places dependent on slave labor (as well as in burial sights filled with prisoners) and they have not been discovered in other excavated areas.¹²⁴ As we recall, Paul and Silas had their legs shackled when imprisoned in the jail in Philippi (Acts 16:24).

A second observation from this novel is that the head of the female slave was shaved. Other texts, as well as archaeological evidence, confirm that many female slaves might have had their head shaved or their hair cropped in antiquity as a result of their servitude.¹²⁵ Third, the slave was working and was dirty. While most female slaves in the ancient world were domestic and would have not been working outside, others certainly did hard labor, as well as forced into prostitution or other such vocations. Fourth and finally, the enslaved Leucippe was wearing a short slave tunic; similar to the one that Callirhoe was wearing in Chariton's novel. When thinking about this in the context of Acts 16, we can imagine that the prophesying female slave might have also worn a similar tunic and also had her head shaved. Thus, she is recognizable as a slave and thus an outsider.

After the slave's body is described in such detail, Melite, who is the owner of Leucippe but who was away when she was purchased, appears astonished and also upset by the slave's beaten body as well as her testimony. The slave, who is really Leucippe,

¹²³ Ibid., 217–244.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 221.

¹²⁵ Lee, *Body, Dress, and Identity in Ancient Greece*, 49, 74.

then tells her story and shows Melite the scars that she was given as a result of being beaten, which was another reality in the life of a slave. The text indicates: “And she slipped down part of her dress to show her back cruelly striped with welts.”¹²⁶ Yet, the reaction by Melite also shows that not all slaves were treated as cruelly as Leucippe. Melite exclaims, “Have you ever seen any slave (οἰκέτης) in our household, even the most worthless, treated so despicably? Who is she? Tell me the entire truth!”¹²⁷ Even in this circumstance, Melite’s reaction shows that many slave owners did not treat their slaves in this cruel of a fashion. Yet, it is clear that some owners did. As Keith Bradley notes, “physical coercion from the owner played a large part in servile life in one way or another and...subjection to brutality was a basic component of slavery.”¹²⁸

In this short analysis of Tatius’ novel, we have found the physical portrayal of a female slave as well as a description of the possible physical brutality and torture a slave in antiquity might have endured. Additionally, because of Leucippe’s status as an elite free woman, we also have an example of a non-slave being beaten and tortured as if she were a slave. While Paul and Silas were arrested and beaten for different reasons, the motif of a free person being treated and beaten as a slave is present in ancient novelistic literature, and Luke seems to be referencing it in Acts 16.

¹²⁶ B. P. Reardon, ed., “Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon,” in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, trans. John J. Winkler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 242.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Keith Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 122.

This intertextual exploration returns us to the representation of Luke's παιδίσκη, who proclaims the enslavement of Paul and Silas in her prophetic utterance. Bakhtinian theory illuminates the ways in which the slave's statement is heteroglossic as well as dialogically true. Even though Paul and Silas were free Roman citizens, the magistrates at Philippi treated their bodies as if they were slaves, which was predicted by the slave-girl. As Matthews notes, the text never returns to the fate of the παιδίσκη after this story, "she drops from the scene after her role as narrative prop in the story is over."¹²⁹ Yet, there remains a moment of status reversal here as well; the female slave acts as her own agent through her prophecy and daily following of Paul and Silas, while the free men were chained, beaten, and imprisoned. The slave owners of the παιδίσκη are left without the money from her work, while Paul and Silas are ultimately released (16:39). While the enslavement of the παιδίσκη continues, her words speak on, and continue to have dialogic meaning through the rest of Acts.

Conclusion: The Propheying Python

The story of the third παιδίσκη from Acts 16 is perhaps the most dramatic and also the most persuasive as the slave-girl speaks a direct statement that is proven to be true. This slave is marginalized. She is marked a female, slave, and pagan prophet. Yet, her presence in the narrative is stark and unforgettable. Within the context of Acts as a whole, the scene in Philippi is a part of the polyphonic dialogic narrative; it contains multiple possibilities of "pairs" of characters, as well as opposing voices in dialogue with

¹²⁹ Matthews, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 50.

one another within the text. This scene of transition is vital to Acts as Paul expands his ministry to a new area with new travel partners. Paul's interaction with the slave-girl invites engagement with Bakhtinian theory in multiple ways as it includes polyphonic voices in dialogue (including multiple narrators within this individual scene), evidence of "outsidedness" and "insideness" as a narrative perspective, heteroglossic utterance, status reversals, and finally a dialogic sense of truth, found in the words of a marginalized character.

Through this exegetical, intertextual, and Bakhtinian analysis it is clear that Luke's third παιδίσκη is an outsider. But it is precisely this position that allows her to function as a truth-teller and an external focalizer within the narrative. Her statement is proven true in three different ways, each concerning the two characters of Paul and Silas:

- 1) Paul and Silas are viewed and treated as "slaves," which is seen through the corporal punishment that they endure and also through the statements of the officials in Philippi;
- 2) Paul and Silas are slaves of the "Most High God," meaning in the context of Luke-Acts, the God of Paul, that is, Yahweh. In terms of her own context, this could also mean that the slave-girl believes Paul and Silas to be worshiping the highest of all the gods in the Greek pantheon as well. Either way, within the narrative this statement is true: Paul and Silas are presented as worshiping the Most High God;
- 3) Paul and Silas are preaching the "Way of Salvation." In Acts, the group of people who believed in the message of Jesus as presented by the apostles are

called the Way, and in Acts they are often “saved” when they become followers of the Way. This is illustrated by the conversion of the jailer by Paul and Silas. In conclusion, the slave-girl’s prophecy is true in multiple, heteroglossic ways, and she functions as an external focalizer through the Bakhtinian perspective of outsidedness. Moreover, she participates in dialogic truth itself, through her persistence as an opposing voice in the narrative.

The statement made by Luke’s final παιδίσκη contains the dialogic truth of Luke-Acts, as well as the memories of the previous two female-slaves. Thus, truth is located in the interior of her textual body, extracted through Bakhtinian theory. She is, perhaps, the only female prophet in Acts to fulfill the prophecy given by Joel through the voice of Peter (2:18), as a female slave and also a prophet. Yet, her words come not from the holy spirit, but instead from a Pythian spirit, out of the Greco-Roman imagination. Even still, her prophecy is true and her words support Lukan theology, as shown above. What is more, the end of Acts actually supports her prophetic statement, as Paul is imprisoned in Rome yet still preaches the way of salvation (28:28-30).

CONCLUSION:
WHEN TRUTH EQUALS FREEDOM

*The caged bird sings
With a fearful trill
Of things unknown
But longed for still
And his tune is heard
On the distant hill
For the caged bird
Sings of freedom.*

~Maya Angelou

The narratives explored in this dissertation include three slave-girls, each of them labeled a παιδίσκη. Yet, in the midst of their textual enslavement, each of these slaves finds a way, through feminist Bakhtinian dialogue, to sing of freedom—to speak their truth. Luke’s first παιδίσκη sits by the light of the fire in a position of outsidedness. Even as an outsider, her eyes gaze attentively, thoughtfully, at Peter as she sees what the others do not—he is a disciple of Jesus. As a focalizer, she speaks and her words contain truth, not only about Peter, but also about Lukan theology. Rhoda, the second slave-girl, enters comedically into the narrative of Acts and makes us all laugh with her performance of the *servus currens*. Yet, that is not all she does in Acts 12; additionally, she turns the tables on Peter. What is more, she is a truth-teller in this carnivalesque narrative. She incites change, as the plot of Acts takes a drastic turn following her appearance. The third and final παιδίσκη speaks the loudest and most persistently of all three. This slave-girl with the spirit of the python refuses to be silent as she disrupts the ministry of Paul and Silas

with her piercing words of truth. She is all three slave-girls in one: an outsider, a mouthpiece for Lukan theology, a focalizer, an over-turner of tables, and a truth-teller.

Bakhtin's search for dialogic truth forms a basis for this dissertation, as I conducted a search for truth within the polyphonic dialogism of Luke-Acts. The voices and statements made by the female slaves in Luke 22, Acts 12, and Acts 16 provided a fertile space for this literary search. I utilized Bakhtinian theory and Kristeva's intertextuality alongside a feminist hermeneutic in order to produce an interpretation of narratives from Luke-Acts containing three female slaves. Highlighting the polyphonic nature of Luke-Acts, I engaged the numerous voices speaking within the narrative and brought the voices of these three slaves to the surface of the text and into dynamic dialogue with other contemporaneous texts. As Bakhtin writes, "It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of consciousnesses, one that cannot in principle be fitted into the bounds of a single consciousness, one that is, so to speak, by its very nature *full of event potential* and is born at a point of contact among various consciousnesses."¹

In their involvement in the polyphonic narrative, the voices of these three παιδίσκαι are in constant dialogue with one another, with male apostles, and even with the author, as their voices speak. Additionally, the narratives containing Luke's παιδίσκαι are in dialogue with other literary female slaves and faux slaves. To highlight this literary dialogue, I utilize Kristeva's intertextuality as I examine the characterizations of Callirhoe, the flute player, Leucippe, Euclia, Iphidama, and Trophime. These figures fill

¹ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6.

their novelistic texts in similar ways as Luke's slave-girls fill the text of Luke-Acts—with their words of truth. In each narrative, the slipperiness of enslavement can be seen as free women are misunderstood to be slaves and slaves masquerade as their mistresses.

Through this juxtaposition, truth is constructed by the text itself. Moreover, truth and slavery are intricately connected through the simultaneous perpetuation of the ideology of slavery as well as the “othering” that occurs when one encounters a slave. DuBois illuminates this identification when she writes, “‘The slave’s body is thus construed as one of these sites of truth, like the *adyton*, the underworld, the interiority of the woman’s body, the elsewhere toward which truth is always slipping, a utopian space allowing a less mediated, more direct access to truth, where the truth is no longer forgotten, slipping away.’”²

Also hidden within the slave body are conceptions of gender, sexuality, and class. Thus, this dissertation adds to the conversations concerning women and slaves in Luke-Acts as well as ancient narratives. The three slave-girls found in Luke-Acts are not often included in the scholarship on Lukan discourse, yet their words and function enhance the conversation as their existence in the text illuminates the ambivalence in the narrative. Luke perpetuates societal hierarchies while also inserting moments of resistance; the polyphonic nature of Luke’s narrative, exhibited in the prologues of both Luke and Acts, include multiple voices, even as they oppose one another. Through this dialogism the three παιδίσκαι are freed from the confines of the text and able to speak their words of truth. While this freedom is only through literary dialogism, the textual bodies of the slave-girls escape enslavement for a moment, as they function as truth-tellers even in the

² duBois, *Torture and Truth*, 105.

midst of the free male apostles. In Luke-Acts, truth is hidden in the textual interior of the female slave body and the drawing out of this truth offers moments of freedom.

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