

SPECTERS OF JESUS: GHOSTS, GOSPELS, AND
RESURRECTION IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

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ABSTRACT

Specters of Jesus:
Ghosts, Gospels, and Resurrection in Early Christianity

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Studies of the narratives of Jesus' resurrection frequently look to additional materials from the ancient world that involve people overcoming death in some fashion. Scholars thus compare the resurrection of Jesus with phenomena like apotheosis, translation, *Scheintod*, ghosts, and other resurrections. This compare and contrast model of scholarship relies on problematic categories, struggles to account for the details of each example, and often reproduces ancient polemics.

This dissertation employs the idioms of haunting and spectrality to read across these kinds of materials alongside Jesus' resurrection. Each chapter reads one gospel text alongside additional ancient texts from the early Roman imperial era. Thus, the Gospel of Mark pairs with materials concerning the Roman Emperors, Luke-Acts pairs with 2 Maccabees, and the Gospel of John pairs with *Leucippe and Clitophon*. This project explores the roles that spectrality plays in all of these texts. In each case, there appears to be complex and contradictory negotiations of life and death, absence and presence, and past, present, and future. Resurrection in these gospels proves to be a participant in these spectral dynamics. Spectrality and ghostliness are signs that these texts are haunted. By reading these diverse materials together, this dissertation argues that they are all haunted in their own ways by the globalizing presence of the Roman Empire. The metaphysical

globalization of Roman imperialism, like present day globalization, raises major questions about the human being's place in the world amid life and death. Each of the chapters of this dissertation explore how these texts are haunted by these questions, and how they provide their own haunting alternatives to this spectral order of things.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:

THE HAUNTED PASTS, PRESENCE, AND FUTURES OF RESURRECTION

If it—learning to live—remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death *alone*. What happens between two, and between all the “two’s” one likes, such as between life and death, can only *maintain itself* with some ghost, can only *talk with or about* some ghost [s’entretenir *de quelque fantôme*]. So it would be necessary to learn spirits.

- Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*

We can agree, I think, that invisible things are not necessarily “not-there.”

- Toni Morrison, “Unspeakable Things Unspoken”

A specter is haunting the western world—the specter of Jesus. All the powers of Christendom have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter: Pope and bishop, preachers and laypersons, modern scholars and ancient apologists.¹ The north African Christian Tertullian, writing in the second and third centuries CE, denounced the arch-heretic Marcion’s “phantom” Jesus (Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4). Likewise, in the fourth and fifth centuries CE, Augustine bemoaned his own former belief in a “mere phantom” Jesus (Augustine, *Confessions* 5.9). These denunciations echo the anxious moments of the canonical gospels where the resurrected Jesus tries to prove that he is not actually a ghost or spirit. Indeed, after his resurrection the Jesus of the Gospel of Luke assures his frightened disciples that “a spirit does not have flesh and blood as you see me having” (Luke 24:39).

¹ Adapted from the opening line of the Communist Manifesto: “A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.” Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002).

Such attempts to elevate the “material” at the expense of the “spiritual” no doubt contributed to what Patricia Cox Miller has dubbed the “material turn” that took place throughout Late Antiquity.² Passages in the gospels of Luke and John foreground how a number of ancient Christian writers came to emphasize the materiality of Jesus’ resurrected body and other bodies to follow. Yet, this anxious avoidance of a spectral Jesus mystifies the ambiguous manner in which (the resurrected) Jesus is made manifest in the gospels. It likewise obscures the diverse ways in which this complex figuration has impacted the philosophical and metaphysical traditions that we inherit in the modern western world. As Caroline Walker Bynum has shown, ancient and medieval theologies of the resurrection have shaped constructions of the human subject then and now.³ Despite efforts by apologists and many modern scholars to exorcise this specter of the resurrected Jesus, the possibility of Jesus-as-ghost remains a haunting alternative for stories and theologies of resurrection.⁴ This dissertation will instead conjure him forth in order to listen to, and speak to, this ghost.

The resurrected Jesus is haunted not only by his own alternative figurations, but also by a cavalcade of almost-but-not-quite-similar figures from the ancient world. The early Roman imperial era in which the gospels were written is marked by a proliferation of texts about persons and figures overcoming death. This material is myriad: ghost stories, necromancy, visions of the dead, the novelistic *Scheintod*, apotheosis of the

² Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

³ “The doctrine of the resurrection has been of enormous consequence in shaping assumptions we still hold concerning personhood and survival. Much about our current Western notions of the individual has taproots in medieval discussion of the ontological significance of the body.” Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 341.

⁴ I explain my use of the vocabulary of “haunting” in greater detail below.

emperors, resurrection of the dead, and more. As I explore below, modern scholarship on these diverse materials tends to separate them into rigid categories and traditions. In New Testament and Early Christian studies, scholars often focus on how to relate (the) resurrection (of Jesus) to this material. These comparisons typically employ typological and philological evaluations, focusing on “influence” or tracing genealogies. Such work manifests (Jesus’) resurrection as either utterly distinct from, or exactly like, the comparable ancient materials. The compare and contrast endeavor thus becomes interwoven with (and is often driven by) arguments over (orthodox) Christian uniqueness. Scholarship focusing on these essential definitions, genealogical connections, and origins thus distort ancient materials, reinforce theological orthodoxies, and obscure continuities with the culture at large.

By and large, scholarly attempts to master and categorize ancient beliefs concerning death and the afterlife have performed a mystifying kind of work. By separating different stories or ideas into bounded categories scholars deem certain comparisons anathema, which makes broader cultural shifts or ideologies more difficult to discern. Likewise, the exclusionary practices of these categorizing efforts have lent themselves all too easily to modern recapitulations of ancient orthodoxy and heresy discourses. This presents problems for historical analysis and textual interpretations. It likewise perpetuates the (ancient and modern) violence of orthodoxy.⁵

⁵ As Averil Cameron concludes after her survey of late antique formations of orthodoxy, “any view such as that of Radical Orthodoxy, which wants to return to orthodoxy as an essence must fall into the trap that such a concept is itself inherently violent. [...] Christians throughout the centuries have harried, tortured, and burned others in the name of this elusive orthodoxy. The dilemma, I would contend, leaves historians with a challenge: not how to read ‘heresy,’ but how to understand the mirage of ‘orthodoxy.’”

Rather than looking to comparative texts from the surrounding culture for “backgrounds” or confirmation of scholarly-constructed categories, I let these diverse materials from the early Roman imperial period paint a larger tableau about categories of a different sort. Taken together, the many tales the dead and the living interacting in various ways suggest that major concepts such as “life” and “death,” “past” and “present,” and even “presence” and “absence” were in a certain state of flux. The relationships between these terms “was and remains an open question.”⁶ So too was the place of human and other agencies amid attempts to resolve these open questions. In these ways, the boundaries and limits of these metaphysical relationships are being stretched and explored. Concepts like “resurrection” or “immortality of the soul” then, were contested and contestable ways of addressing such quandaries. As I will show, various individuals, figures, and groups from this period could employ this malleability to their own diverse ends in order to make claims to power or assert identities.

This study employs theories of haunting and spectrality in order to better grapple with the complex and contradictory dynamics of life and death in these ancient materials. Haunting is an idiom that captures the felt presence of what is otherwise absent, the ambiguities between living and dying, and the insufficiency of linear models of time. My work will read closely across the canonical gospels, various representations of (the apotheosized) Roman Emperors, Jewish martyrs expecting resurrection in 2 Maccabees,

Averil Cameron, “The Violence of Orthodoxy,” in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 102–14.

⁶ Here I echo John Modern’s work on the metaphysics of secularism in the mid-19th century. See John Lardas Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America: With Reference to Ghosts, Protestant Subcultures, Machines, and Their Metaphors: Feature Discussions of Mass Media, Moby-Dick, Spirituality, Phrenology, Anthropology, Sing Sing Penitentiary and Sex with the New Motive Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 7.

and heroes falsely dying in novels like *Leucippe and Clitophon*. These other texts and traditions provide frequent comparands among scholarship on the resurrected Jesus, but I argue that this material cannot be laid out in simple typological and genealogical relationships. Because of this, haunting provides an alternative model for framing the relationships among these diverse texts and traditions. I see spectrality operating within all of these various textual phenomena.

Haunting ultimately attunes me to larger unacknowledged discourses and cultural dynamics at play that affected all of these stories. This approach will offer a new way forward in discussions of (Jesus') resurrection in particular, and ancient afterlives more broadly. In this project I will show how stories like the resurrection of Jesus explored and exploited the overlapping open questions of life and death, past and present and future, and absence and presence. I begin here by exploring some alternative ancient notions of humans returning from death, and the ways they defy modern categorizations. I will show how the categorical impulses of scholarship likewise restrict studies of (Jesus') resurrection, and offer theories of haunting as an alternative approach. I then tie these threads together to trace the unarticulated, but present and active, questions and metaphysics that these texts engage, rely on, and play with.⁷ In this way, my study

⁷ Modern, citing Hancock, explains how the term “*meta ta physika* is of Greek origin (‘after the things of nature’). In the more general sense, metaphysics refers to the first principles of things: being, substance, essence, time, space, cause, identity, etc.” Roger Hancock, “History of Metaphysics,” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, vol. 5 (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1967), 289–300; Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 10–11.

situates (the) resurrection (of Jesus) within the broader felt reality of the early Roman imperial era.⁸

Categorizing in the Catacombs

Ancient stories of ghosts and the undead are a productive entry point for rethinking the complex dynamics at play in stories of (Jesus') resurrection. At various points in the canonical gospels, Jesus' disciples fear that he is in fact a "spirit" (πνεῦμα) or a "phantom [φάντασμα]" (e.g., Mark 6:49, Matthew 14:26; Luke 24:37-39), a concern that continues for centuries. These ghostly denials signal how stories of Jesus—both pre- and post-resurrection—are haunted by other appearances of the dead from antiquity.⁹ The topic of ancient ghosts has received a handful of exhaustive surveys over the last decade and a half.¹⁰ A number of biblical scholars use work done in classics on ancient specters for some more robust comparative work concerning Jesus and ghosts.¹¹ This work has been concerned with separating stories and beliefs about appearances of the dead into discrete categories, a tendency endemic to scholarship on afterlives in general. They

⁸ Again, I follow the lead of John Modern's driving question in his study of mid-19th century America, namely, "what does it feel like to live in a secular age?" Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 1.

⁹ Denise Kimber Buell, *This Is Not a Ghost Story: Rethinking Resurrection*, Online Video, Williams Thinking, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpKr2vn1oRQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

¹⁰ D. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome: Ghost Stories from Classical Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999); Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹¹ e.g., Deborah Thomson Prince, "The 'Ghost' of Jesus: Luke 24 in Light of Ancient Narratives of Post-Mortem Apparitions," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29 (2007): 287–301; Jake O'Connell, "Did Greco-Roman Apparitional Models Influence Luke's Resurrection Narrative? A Response to Deborah Thompson Prince," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 5 (2008): 190–99; Daniel A. Smith, "Seeing a Pneuma(tic Body): The Apologetic Interests of Luke 24:36-43," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72 (2010): 752–72.

helpfully highlight the importance of vision and time in these postmortem appearances, issues that will appear in my later analyses of the resurrection stories. Despite their initial helpfulness, these categories prove problematic both in their ability to properly assess historical materials as well as the distracting effects they have on historiography.

In the early second century CE, Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to Lucius Licinius Sura, a wealthy patron of the arts and courtier of the Roman Emperor Trajan. In this letter, Pliny asks Sura if he thinks that “ghosts” (Latin, *phantasmata*) exist and have their own forms, or if they simply arise from people’s imaginations (7.27.1). He goes on to tell a number of strange stories that were related to him by supposedly trustworthy people. Pliny reports that these tales incline him toward believing that they are real (7.26.2-3, 12-13). The most striking of these stories is that of a haunted house in the city of Athens.

At night, the sound of clashing metal and clanking chains filled this house. Its residents claimed that they received regular visits from the “ghost” (*idolon*) of an old, dirty, and emaciated man with shackles and chains around his ankles and wrists. These constant visitations affected them so deeply that they were terrified even when the “ghost” (*imago*) was gone. They eventually abandon the house to the “ghost” (*monstro*). A philosopher named Athenodorus heard these stories and rented the house for himself on account of the low price. In order to make sure that he did not simply imagine the “ghost” (*simulacra*), he would sit beside a lamp at night and concentrate on writing. However, Athenodorus heard the same metallic noises, and eventually saw the “ghost” (*effigiem*) beckoning him to follow it with its finger. Athenodorus follows the ghost to a spot in the house’s courtyard where it vanishes. He marked the spot and returned there

the next day to excavate, discovering decayed human remains. After gathering the bones and giving them a proper burial, the house became “devoid of ghosts” (*minibus caruit*). Pliny, prefacing that he heard this report from reliable sources, closes his letter by begging Sura to help him properly understand this harrowing tale (7.27.7-11).

I have highlighted the variety of terms that Pliny employs to describe the spectral inhabitant of the Athenian house. The vocabulary used for appearances of the dead in antiquity was diverse, and Pliny is no doubt doing some artful showing off here. The words he uses—*manes* (ghost), *idolon* (apparition, image), *imago* (image), *monstrum* (monster, portent), *simulacrum* (likeness), and *effigies* (effigy)—are part of the larger semantic possibilities for talking about the dead. Other terms include *lemurs* (ghost), *larvae* (spirit), or *umbra* (shade). This Latin vocabulary intersects with that used in Greek. Most common are φάσμα, and its alternative φάντασμα, which Pliny uses in Latinized form at the beginning of his letter. Other common terms include εἶδωλον (“image,” like the Latin *idolon*), σκιά (shade, shadow), ψυχή (soul), and δαίμων (demon, divinity, or spirit).¹² Many of these terms relate to sight, vision, and appearance, a fact that will arise again throughout this project. Even so, there is no true systematic way in which this vocabulary holds together.

When scholars find a lack of cohesion, they typically make some. D. Felton’s work in *Haunted Greece and Rome* is illustrative in this regard. Her study of ghost stories, primarily focused on the Roman imperial era, operates with a set of four distinct categories: “revenants,” “crisis apparitions,” “poltergeists,” and “continual apparitions.”

¹² For this vocabulary list, I have been aided by the work in Jack Winkler, “Lollianos and the Desperadoes,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980): 155–81; Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 23–25; Johnston, *Restless Dead*, xvii–xix; Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, xxxi–xxxii.

Revenants are “embodied ghosts,” where either an actual body or a corporeal figure returns from the dead.¹³ A crisis apparition is a ghost who appears in intense moments, especially to redress an unjust death.¹⁴ Poltergeist, from the German word meaning “noisy ghost,” refers to a spirit who inhabits places and makes frightening noises or strange sights.¹⁵ The final category, continual apparitions, refers to specters who repeatedly haunt a specific place, often replicating actions for eternity.¹⁶ Felton places Pliny’s story of Athenodorus and the Athenian haunted house in this last category.¹⁷ This folkloric categorization facilitates comparisons with similar haunted house tales found in Plautus’s *Mostellaria* and Lucian’s *Philopseudes*. Felton finds a common core to these stories and observes the ways in which each writer innovates on it. This aspect of her comparative work helps provide cohesion, especially since it is one of the first attempts to survey this body of material in such a thorough manner.¹⁸

While Felton’s categories organize a large amount of material, they can efface differences among the materials they gather. Pliny’s story does fit the “continual apparition” type, but it also contains elements of the “poltergeist” type considering the noises that the ghost makes. Likewise, Pliny’s tale looks like a “crisis apparition” when the ghost attempts to attain a proper burial. It could even be seen as an “embodied ghost” due to its corporeal appearance and its beckoning the living with its “finger” (*digito*; Pliny 7.27.9). In fact, one of Felton’s primary examples of the “revenant” category is a

¹³ Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 25–29.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29–34.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34–35.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35–37.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 65–73.

¹⁸ Sarah Johnston’s work also appeared in 1999, though it focused primarily on earlier periods in Classical Greece. See Johnston, *Restless Dead*, 107–199.

story by the Roman Emperor Hadrian's freedman courtier Phlegon of Tralles. In Phlegon's *Mirabilia*, he tells the story of Philinnion, a girl who was believed to be dead and yet returns to her parents' home nightly (Phlegon, *Mirabilia* 1). Her reanimated body continues to do this until her empty tomb is discovered. When the secret of her post-mortem existence is unveiled, she immediately drops dead again. The text's vocabulary emphasizes Philinnion's embodied undead state, employing words like νεκρά (corpse) and σῶμα (body). Yet, Felton notes that at the end of the story, Phlegon calls her a φάσμα, a term that in most other cases refers to less than physical entities like "apparitions" or "phantoms."¹⁹ Not only does the material/non-material binary not hold up here, the category Felton uses does not adequately capture the events of Phlegon's story. If these categories were somehow self-evident or actively employed in antiquity, then the manner in which the story deviates from them could make for a fruitful analysis. Unfortunately, this is simply not the case.

In fact, the few attempts to categorize different kinds of ghouls and ghosts in antiquity should inspire caution in doing so today. The North African writer Apuleius composed a treatise on *daemones* in the mid-to-late second century CE entitled *De Deo Socratis* to illustrate his proper comprehension of Socrates' philosophy. Apuleius distinguishes between certain kinds of *daemones*, one of which is the "human soul" (*animus humanus*) after it has left the body. He calls this a *lemur* in Latin. This then breaks down into several categories. Ghosts who stay in specific locations or houses are called *lar familiaris*, while those who wander without a proper habitation are called *larvae*. These latter ghosts are evil, bringing ill effects to the living. Finally, ghosts who

¹⁹ Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 25–26.

do not immediately conform to these categories are called *manes* (Apuleius, *De Deo Socratis* 14). There are multiple problems with this mapping, as D. Felton notes. Aside from the fact that *lar familiaris* does not appear to be a term used by any other known Latin writer, in general Apuleius's descriptions do not match up with how other ancient texts employ these terms.²⁰

The vocabulary that Apuleius uses does not even coincide with his other texts. In the *Metamorphoses*, a band of robbers run about the countryside disguised as “*lemures*” to scare and rob passers-by (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.22). By the definitions in *De Deo Socratis*, the mobile and evil *larvae* certainly would have been the more appropriate term. Likewise, Apuleius uses additional terms to describe the ghost of Tlepolemus, such as “*spiritus*,” which are not included in *De Deo Socratis* (*Metamorphoses* 8.12, 14-15).²¹ Tertullian, another North African writing shortly after Apuleius, discusses similar terms and concepts in his *De Testimonio Animae*. This appendix to Tertullian's *Apology* compares and contrasts beliefs about the soul between various philosophies and Christianity. Felton notes that terminological and categorical mismatches occur here as well.²² Both of these ancient writers have their own rhetorical goals, which suffuse their terminological and categorical moves. These ancient categories concerning ghosts are thus always already rhetorical, which should raise cautions about the categories that historians import.

²⁰ Ibid., 24.

²¹ For more on this story, see Donald Lateiner, “Tlepolemus the Spectral Spouse,” in *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis, Maaïke Zimmerman, and Wytse Hette Keulen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 219–38.

²² Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 23.

A major issue with these classifications is the notion that “ghosts” can be discussed apart from larger conversations about death, the soul, and the afterlife in the ancient world. Scholarship on ancient Greco-Roman concepts such as the immortal soul forms an extensive, albeit separate, conversation. While there was debate and difference within this material, generally the “soul” (Greek ψυχή, Latin *animae*) was the invisible true self of a person that lived on after the death of the body. Scholars often hunt for the origins of these ideas in Pythagoreanism or Orphism, and how such concepts get developed in the writings of Plato and later the Neoplatonists.²³ Topics like hero cults,²⁴ ascension and assumption,²⁵ necromancy,²⁶ and apotheosis also receive attention, but the transmigration of the soul takes up the lion’s share of the conversations. Greeks and Romans are the focus of these discussions, as “Pagans” and “Jews” were supposedly quite different in this regard. The occasional reference to a “Hellenistic” Jew like Philo of Alexandria pops up as an exception that proves the rule.²⁷ In this way, such cultural distinctions play a determinative role in scholarly discussions of materials concerning life and death from antiquity. Categories like “ghosts,” “immortal soul,” and “resurrection” thus too easily become ciphers for socio-cultural categories of a different sort.

²³ e.g., Gregory John Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 23–58; Jon Davies, *Death, Burial, and Rebirth in the Religions of Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 127–186; Jan Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife: The 1995 Read-Tuckwell Lectures at the University of Bristol* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 11–26; Nicholas Thomas Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 32–84; Alan F. Segal, *Life After Death: A History of the Afterlife in the Religions of the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 204–207.

²⁴ e.g., Segal, *Life After Death*, 218–219.

²⁵ e.g., Daniel A. Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 47–61.

²⁶ e.g., Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*.

²⁷ As Alan Segal says in his discussion of this topic, “It is hard to say that Philo was typical of anyone but himself.” Segal, *Life After Death*, 368–375.

“Once a man has died, and the dust has soaked up his blood, there is no resurrection [οὐτις ἔστ’ ἀνάστασις]” (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 647f). Thus says Apollo in the third play of Aeschylus’s *Oresteia* trilogy. N.T. Wright employs this quote to argue that neither Greeks nor Romans believed in a notion of the resurrection of the dead.²⁸ For scholars like Wright, resurrection was an exclusively Jewish (and then Christian) concept in antiquity. Greeks and Romans might believe in an “immortal soul,” but not resurrection of the body (and/or flesh). Many historians agree with this cultural mapping.²⁹ Others do not.³⁰ Indeed, there is considerable debate about how to situate Jews and “Judaism” within their larger Mediterranean milieu.³¹ Such debates raise the

²⁸ The effectiveness of Wright's quotation in this regard can be seen in the fact that *Newsweek Magazine* pulls this exact quote along with Wright's basic argument for an article on Jesus. See Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 32; Jon Meacham, “From Jesus to Christ,” *Newsweek Magazine*, March 28, 2005, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2005/03/27/from-jesus-to-christ.html>.

²⁹ e.g., Oscar Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?: The Witness of the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1958); Bremmer, *Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*; Segal, *Life After Death*.

³⁰ e.g., George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 1972); Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Doctrine, Community, and Self-Definition* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), esp. 1–20.

³¹ e.g., Martin Hengel, *Judentum Und Hellenismus: Studien Zu Ihrer Begegnung Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas Bis Zur Mitte Des 2. Jh.s v. Chr.*, 3rd ed., *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988); Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, vol. 30, *Hellenistic Culture and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, *Hellenistic Culture and Society* 31 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society?: Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

question of if there is, between “Jewish” and “Hellenistic” cultures, an opposition that holds up.³²

The practice of using a text from an ancient Greek tragedian as indicative of all Greco-Roman beliefs many centuries later is problematic at best. There is a certain absurdity to a statement such as “there is no resurrection.” Apollo’s utterance appears predicated on some notion of “resurrection” existing. This denial in fact attests to the very thing that it denies. If no one expected a resurrection of the dead, then why deny it? If it was unthinkable to a Greek writer like Aeschylus, why would it be denied? This is a complex and ultimately self-deconstructing statement, which makes for a poor proof-text indicative of the entire Greco-Roman world. The same is true for the smattering of quotations or inscriptions scholars point to in order to bolster a bifurcation of the ancient Mediterranean world into “Jewish” and “Greco-Roman.”³³ Such a flat reading of these passages is a disservice that furthers larger ideological aims. Rather, the ambiguity inherent in this statement is better understood as a single convoluted voice in a larger cultural discussion about life and death.

There is a prevalent hesitancy among scholars to peek out from behind the comfort of categories, especially on topics such as the afterlife. In Daniel Ogden’s study

³² This is an altered echo of Derrida that will reverberate throughout this project. “Is there *there*, between the thing itself and its simulacrum, an opposition that holds up?” It helps illustrate arguments made by scholars like Daniel Boyarin concerning some of the significant continuities among Jews and Greeks in the ancient world. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, The Work of Mourning & the New International*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10; Daniel Boyarin, *Socrates and the Fat Rabbis* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2009).

³³ e.g., Edward Pillar who follows Wright’s impulse to highlight a few statements like this to prove that no Greeks or Romans believed in “resurrection.” Edward Pillar, *Resurrection as Anti-Imperial Gospel: 1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10 in Context*, Emerging Scholars (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), esp. 12–17.

of ancient Greco-Roman necromancy, he steps to the edge of a larger cultural moment only to pause. “One might be tempted to think that the ancients’ interest in communicating with their dead through necromancy should lead to informative and distinctive conclusions about the nature of their society,” he says. “But this is not necessarily true.” He goes on:

Again, the centrality of death to ancient society and its universal representation must be borne in mind. Death, the dead, and eschatology were subject of infinite interest and reflection and, consequently, subjects of many contradictory attitudes. In such a context, it was inevitable that necromancy or something like it should thrive, and that it should itself in turn be a topic of much thought and of much contradiction. Accordingly, necromancy does not help us in the generation of simplistic or reductive conclusions about the nature of ancient society.³⁴

Ogden’s last sentence is most telling. He observes the wide interest by diverse peoples in the ancient Greco-Roman world in death, the afterlife, and the dead. However, there is a fear that any statements or suggestions about the broader cultural implications drawn from this large swathe of material would be “simplistic or reductive conclusions about the nature of ancient society.” This is no doubt a valid concern for many scholars who are hesitant to repeat past problematic grand pronouncements about antiquity at large.

Ogden brings a great deal of material under the category of “necromancy,” which he effectively defines as the living communicating with the dead.³⁵ The wealth of material this offers him does lead to some tentative conclusions about “the relationship between the surface world of the living and the underworld.” Ogden explains that for “the living and the dead to be able to communicate, the barriers between them had to be

³⁴ Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, xvi.

³⁵ An abstraction which led to some excoriation from Fritz Graf, who claims that Ogden’s use of the term “necromancy” is far too broad and does not fit this ancient context as an emic term. Fritz Graf, “Review: Greek and Roman Necromancy by Daniel Ogden,” *The Classical World* 99, no. 4 (2006): 459–60.

dissolved. Necromancy could accordingly be conceived of as taking place in a space located indeterminately between the world above and that below.”³⁶ Necromancy, the practice of communicating with the dead, is predicated on the boundaries and distances between life and death being rendered indeterminate. That such a boundary *can* be indeterminate seems significant in and of itself. Ogden sets the stage for seeing resurrection as one among a panoply of indeterminacies between life and death in the early Roman imperial era.

Restricting Resurrection

“Resurrection of the dead is the faith of Christians,” says Tertullian, “by believing it, we are so” (Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis* 1).³⁷ Writing in the first decades of the third century CE, Tertullian tied belief in resurrection to Christian identity. For Tertullian, this belief separates Christians from others in the ancient Mediterranean world. Additionally, it distinguishes true Christians from others who simply call themselves Christians. These latter people, according to Tertullian, are not Christians at all. He draws exclusive lines: those who believe in what Tertullian says are insiders, while all others are outsiders. In this way, “resurrection” functions as a term of art in Tertullian’s rhetorical strategies of differentiation. It is part and parcel of his heresiological project and one of his contributions to Christian heresiological discourses.³⁸ Such claims should thus not be taken at face value. There are good reasons

³⁶ Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, xvii.

³⁷ Translation my own, from the Latin text in Ernest Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise on the Resurrection* (London: S.P.C.K., 1960).

³⁸ Indeed, heresiology emerged in early Christianity as its own kind of discourse. For more on this development in its lead up to Tertullian’s works, see Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Gerhard Krodel, trans. Robert A. Kraft (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), esp. xxi–xxv, 130–146; Alain Le Boulluec, *La*

to be suspicious of such exclusive claims so closely tied to identity politics. As Elaine Pagels argued over thirty years ago, “the doctrine of the bodily resurrection also serves an essential *political* function.”³⁹ The fact that many scholars disregard Pagels’s arguments suggests that these politics are alive and well today.⁴⁰ In this section I outline some of the standard approaches to (the) resurrection (of Jesus) along with their methodological and ideological problems. The concerns I raised above about postmortem categories carry through into the specifics of resurrection as well.

A great deal of scholarship on resurrection in Judaism and Early Christianity concerns itself with the “origins” of this belief or doctrine.⁴¹ These debates typically center on when the doctrine came into being, and when it appeared in Judaism. If such a timetable can be determined, the origin of the idea can then be locked down.⁴² Scholars frequently note the paucity of references to an afterlife of any sort from Israelite texts

Notion D'hérésie Dans La Littérature Grecque IIe-IIIe Siècles, vol. 2 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), 547–555; Geoffrey S. Smith, *Guilt by Association: Heresy Catalogues in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), esp. 76.

³⁹ Emphasis is Pagels’s. Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), 6.

⁴⁰ Claudia Setzer’s study of the role resurrection plays in strategies of community formation is one of few notable outliers who integrates Pagels’s work in this regard. Outi Lehtipuu, though less explicitly connected to Pagels in this way, likewise explores resurrections roles in identity conflicts among Christians. See Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, esp. 73, 125–126; Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁴¹ This concern is so prevalent that it appears in the title (and several of the articles contained therein) of a relatively recent edited volume on the topic. James H. Charlesworth et al., eds., *Resurrection: The Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine*, Faith and Scholarship Colloquies Series (New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

⁴² It is worth noting that I will not engage here with apologetic/theological work that attempts to prove that the resurrection of Jesus was an actual historical event. The textual, hermeneutical, theological, and historiographical problems with such approaches are far too numerous to be dealt with in this study. This project explores how such an approach would miss innumerable far more interesting aspects of these stories.

from before the Second Temple period.⁴³ The few examples available, like Saul's visit to the medium of Endor to raise Samuel (1 Samuel 28:3-25), are typically seen as the exceptions. The Hebrew Bible is notoriously reticent about the afterlife in this way, and the topic is usually raised in a negative or pessimistic manner. "The dead do not praise the Lord," says the Psalmist, "nor do any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17). Yet, there is a flurry of material by the late second temple period that evidences robust beliefs about resurrection and the activities of the dead. Daniel 12 and 2 Maccabees are touchstones in this regard, along with a plethora of pseudepigraphal and apocalyptic texts. Israel's God will raise up the dead for judgment at the day of the Lord (e.g., Daniel 12:1-3), or God will raise the faithful and courageous martyrs of Israel's history (e.g., 2 Maccabees 7).

This timeline does not prove satisfactory for many, as this only accounts for when the ideas occurred within ancient Judaism. Where did it come from before *that*? Further, why did these changes take place? The standard answers are twofold. First, that Jewish belief in resurrection came from interactions with Iranian religion during the exile and Second Temple period. Persian Zoroastrianism included in some form of the resurrection of the body in its anthropology and eschatology. Jewish beliefs in the resurrection thus no doubt came from colonial contact with this other ancient culture.⁴⁴ Second, the experience of persecution in general—and martyrdom in particular—spurred belief in the

⁴³ e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 85–99; Segal, *Life After Death*, 120–170.

⁴⁴ e.g., Davies, *Death, Burial, and Rebirth*, 40–46; Segal, *Life After Death*, 173–203.

resurrection of the dead.⁴⁵ Daniel and 2 Maccabees, with their stories of imperial contact and persecution, lend themselves to these interpretations.

These popular answers prove flawed in their own ways. First, the dating of Zoroastrian texts, traditions, and beliefs is endlessly problematic. As Jan Bremmer argues, one can easily date this material to well after the ideas are known to appear in Jewish materials.⁴⁶ The matter, then, of who influences whom in this instance is impossible to say. Second, the argument that resurrection beliefs arise from persecution is both reductive and circular. Persecution and martyrdom are of major importance to the memories and social formation of Jews under various empires. As I explore in chapter two, texts like 2 Maccabees, Daniel, and many others make this clear. However, just because notions of resurrection of the dead prove helpful for addressing circumstances of injustice, that does not necessitate that such circumstances actually spawned these ideas. Seth Schwartz argues that a belief like resurrection of the dead can address a broad range of questions concerning the afterlife or the problem of evil. It is thus unnecessary to postulate such specific circumstances or events that sparked beliefs like the resurrection of the dead.⁴⁷ As I explore throughout this project, resurrection participates in numerous culture-wide conversations about life, time, and bodily presence. Thus, efforts to provide

⁴⁵ e.g., Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 92–11; Davies, *Death, Burial, and Rebirth*, 110–124.

⁴⁶ Bremmer, *Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*, 47–50.

⁴⁷ As Schwartz states with regard to the origins of apocalypticism in Judaism, “Jews were unhappy long before Antiochus IV or Pompey march into Jerusalem.” Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 77.

a source for resurrection in Judaism (and later Christianity) prove insufficient or distracting at best.⁴⁸

There is reason for skepticism that a timeline for resurrection can be clearly demarcated. Kevin Madigan and Jon Levenson have re-mined the Hebrew Bible to see significant variety concerning the afterlife along with multiple precursors to ideas like resurrection. For instance, Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel contains the line, "The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up" (1 Samuel 2:6). Likewise, the Psalmist exclaims, "God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me" (Psalm 49:15). In verses like these, Madigan and Levenson see a recurring theme of Israel's God as a rescuer who saves the people from calamity. The power to save and restore Israel is extended even to death.⁴⁹ Claudia Setzer joins others who express skepticism about drawing resurrection's conceptual and temporal lines with Daniel and 2 Maccabees. Whether it is the resuscitation stories of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4; 2 Kings 13:20-21) or the dry bones springing back to life in Ezekiel 37:1-15, there is ample material from earlier periods that complicates the standard timeline.⁵⁰ Overall, pinpointing the "origins" of something like resurrection of the dead proves impossible. As E.R. Dodds famously said, "Strictly speaking, there are no periods in history, only historians...and even when hindsight enables us to cut it through at a

⁴⁸ A related argument by Judith Perkins compares the *Scheintod* of the ancient novels and resurrection as seen in the Christian Apocryphal Acts. She postulates that different social classes explain the differences between these two bodies of literature. I will critically build upon her arguments below and in the second chapter. Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 45–61.

⁴⁹ Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), esp. 5–9.

⁵⁰ Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, 7–8.

critical point, there is always a time-lag and an overlap.”⁵¹ No matter where one draws the line, the materials in question will disrupt a linear timeline.

The problems with pinpointing the origins of resurrection exceed the cultural models that scholars employ. As observed above, scholarship on (the) resurrection (of Jesus) frequently relies on the cultural binary of “Greco-Roman” on the one hand, and “Jewish” on the other. If they had expectations about the afterlife, Greeks and Romans only believed in an immortal soul, while Jews only believed in resurrection of the dead. Or, so the story goes. This cultural bifurcation is tenuous, and homogenizes diverse people groups around specific beliefs. However, the Jewish materials that survive from antiquity, for instance, suggest a great deal of diversity. While the differences among different Jewish sectarian groups have been overblown in the past,⁵² a lot of variety appears on issues of death and the afterlife.⁵³ The synoptic gospels along with Josephus note that the Pharisees believed in resurrection (e.g., Acts of the Apostles 23:8; Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.163; *Jewish Antiquities* 11.12-15), while the Sadducees did not (e.g., Mark 12:18-17; Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.16.4). Likewise, evidence for groups like the Essenes is ambiguous, and the same goes for whoever was responsible for the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁵⁴

⁵¹ E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*, Reprint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3; Denise Kimber Buell, “God’s Own People: Specters of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in Early Christian Studies,” in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christianity*, ed. Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 177.

⁵² Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.*, 8–10, 91–99; Jacob Neusner, *The Systemic Analysis of Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

⁵³ Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, 21.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Bremmer, *Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*, 43–47.

These portrayals are rhetorically charged, and fraught with identity politics of various sorts.⁵⁵

Resurrection was thus a contested manner through which some Jews explored the open questions of life and death. The differences, similarities, conflicts, and confluences are too complicated to say “the Jews believed X” while “the Greeks and Romans believed Y.” I will highlight this complexity throughout this project in my readings of ancient texts like the stories of Jesus’ resurrection. These confluences show how many of these peoples, and the materials they left behind, participated in broad conversations about the nature of life and death. Resurrection was an open question for Jews (and Christians), and it was one way that they explored the open questions of the relationships between life and death, or the living and the dead. I do not necessarily quibble with some scholars on the content of the various traditions and texts under question, namely that some espouse notions of an immortal soul and others resurrection of the dead. However, I do object to the hardening of these categories, constructions of strict linear genealogies, and the exclusions that follow.

Karen King makes similar arguments her analysis of scholarship on Gnosticism. She notes how scholarship on “Gnosticism” has been “tied to methods concerned with determining origins, purity, and essence.”⁵⁶ King explains how a “fixation on origins has tended to distort the actual social and historical processes of literary production because the purpose of determining the origin of Gnosticism is less historical than rhetorical: it is

⁵⁵ Steve Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* (Peabody, MA: Baker Academic, 2008), 185–238.

⁵⁶ Karen L King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 228.

aimed at delimiting the normative boundaries and definition of Christianity.”⁵⁷

Delimiting and defining a term like “Gnosticism” thus produces a problematic history.⁵⁸

This work rhetorically sections off various groups and texts from one another that may have in fact been in a great deal of interaction. This is true both of ancient heresiologists and modern historians, as the ancient and modern projects of defining Gnosticism are intimately interwoven. Such work replicates ancient polemical caricatures, which often had little basis in the actual beliefs or practices of various Christians from antiquity.⁵⁹

The same holds true, I argue, for resurrection. The search for the “origins” of the doctrine of resurrection fixes it in time and place, assigns it some essential character, and separates it from anything that might appear to be like it (or, make it appear to be the same as everything else). These efforts prove problematic at the level of historical data, which proves too complex to fit such models. Ideologically this work hardens categories that were always already rhetorical and polemical.

A back and forth between Peter Bolt and Richard Miller helps illustrate how these concerns about purity and origins shape modern scholarship. Bolt argues that the resurrection scene of Mark’s Gospel was utterly unlike other empty tomb scenes from the Greco-Roman world. Based on philology and typologies, he argues that the resurrected Jesus was not a Greek-style Hero or one who was “translated.”⁶⁰ Jesus’ resurrection is

⁵⁷ Ibid., 189.

⁵⁸ See a similar work more focused on the primary materials in question in Michael Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁵⁹ See the recent work by Geoffrey Smith explaining the role of heresy catalogues in these kinds of polemical distortions. Smith, *Guilt by Association: Heresy Catalogues in Early Christianity*, esp. 49–86, 173–176.

⁶⁰ In his article, Bolt is arguing primarily against the work of Hamilton and Bickerman respectively on these topics. See Peter G. Bolt, “Mark 16:1-8: The Empty Tomb of a

thus a Jewish/Christian story unsullied by its larger Mediterranean context. More recently, Richard Miller argued against Bolt by asserting the exact opposite point. For Miller, the empty tomb story of Mark 16:1-8 fits within the Greco-Roman “translation fable” tradition.⁶¹ In the midst of his arguments, Miller quotes the second century Christian apologist Justin Martyr to great effect. It is worth reproducing here in full:

And when we affirm that the Logos, who was God’s first-born, was begotten without a sexual union, i.e. Jesus Christ, our teacher who, after he was crucified, died, and rose, ascended into the sky, we are conveying nothing new with respect to those whom you call the sons of Jupiter. Mercury, the interpreting word and teacher of all; Aesculapius, who, though he was a great physician, was struck by a thunderbolt, and so ascended to heaven; and Bacchus too, after he had been torn limb from limb; and Hercules, when he had committed himself to the flames to escape his toils; and the sons of Leda, and Dioscuri; and Perseus, son of Danae; and Bellerophon, who, though sprung from mortals, rose to heaven on the horse Pegasus. For what shall I say of Ariadne, and those who, like her, have been declared to be set among the stars? And what about the emperors who die among you, whom you deem worthy to be forever immortalized and for whom you bring forward someone who swears that he had seen Caesar, as he is being consumed by fire, ascend into heaven from the funeral pyre. (Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 21).⁶²

Perhaps no one more effectively argues against modern scholarly interest in hermetically sealing off the resurrected Jesus from his larger ancient Mediterranean context than Justin Martyr. Jesus is just like Jupiter, or Aesclepius, or Bellerophon.

Yet, it is folly to read a passage like this uncritically. This is an apologetic text, and the easy comparisons made by Justin reflect his own rhetorical goals. While modern apologetic interests emphasize difference in this regard, someone like Justin Martyr

Hero?,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 47, no. 1 (1996): 27–37; N. Q. Hamilton, “Resurrection Tradition and the Composition of Mark,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1965): 415–21; Elias Bickermann, “Das Leere Grab,” *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 23 (1924): 281–91.

⁶¹ Richard C. Miller, “Mark’s Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 759–76.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 775.

strategically emphasized sameness. Miller's own argument of sameness is thus trapped in the apologetic game. Justin illustrates well that sharp divisions between the resurrected Jesus and comparable ancient figures cannot hold up to close scrutiny. However, to completely erase cultural and textual differences is also to replicate ancient rhetorical strategies of identity formation. Models of "hybridity" as offered by Rebecca Lyman may prove to be better approaches to these sorts of issues.⁶³ Indeed, I will outline below and show throughout this project how haunting provides an alternative way to conceive of these relationships.

While haunting can be a way to explore the complex ways in which the past shapes the present, it is important to not erase difference across different time periods. Some scholars employ articulations of resurrection among later so-called "orthodox" Christians as interpretive lenses for reading the canonical resurrection stories. N. T. Wright, for instance, connects Tertullian's discussions of "flesh" with the language of "flesh and bones" that appears in Luke's resurrection story. "For him [Luke]," Wright explains, "as later for Tertullian and others, this was simply a way of saying what we today say when we use the word 'physical.'"⁶⁴ This collapses a great deal of time and difference in one fell swoop. Such maneuvers rely on notions of "proto-orthodoxy," where a single continuous strand of theology connects Christians from the earliest beginnings to the eventual "orthodoxy" of Nicea and later. Thus, beliefs and doctrines can be traced backward and then forward across time. Wright's enormous book *The*

⁶³ Lyman argues that the postcolonial concept of "hybridity" is a much better way to approach the types of argumentation found in the writings of someone like Justin. I delve into this a bit more below. Rebecca Lyman, "2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11, no. 2 (2003): 209–22.

⁶⁴ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 658.

Resurrection of the Son of God in fact situates the “Apostolic Fathers,” “The Apologists,” and “The Great Early Theologians” *before* the canonical gospels.⁶⁵

As David Brakke argues, this way of organizing historical data cannot account for the diversity with-in the material.

There was no single and uniform proto-orthodoxy, but multiple modes of piety, authority, and theology that later orthodoxy represents as its forerunners. The Church and critical scholarship depict as ‘proto-orthodoxy’ people and groups who might well have initiated trajectories that would not have culminated in Nicene orthodoxy and who might be surprised to find themselves as ‘the same.’⁶⁶

Just because Tertullian reads Luke’s gospel when making his own arguments does not mean that they are the same or even in direct continuity. To read teleologically in this way with regard to (Jesus’) resurrection distorts both sets of materials. Categories like Gnosticism or proto-orthodoxy are just as flawed in ways similar to the typologies used to divide ancient conceptions of the afterlife above. As Brakke puts it, “such categories fail to capture the complexity” of the figures under discussion.⁶⁷ Haunting, which resists linear-progressive conceptions of time, is a more productive approach to understanding how texts can relate across cultures and time(s).

This study’s use of concepts of haunting leads me to be less concerned than others in plotting out every possible historical precedent and comparand for ancient ideas of the resurrection of the dead and other afterlives. This is the case for several reasons. On the one hand, this type of work has been done with great frequency,⁶⁸ so a rehearsal of these

⁶⁵ Ibid., 480–552.

⁶⁶ David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 10.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 111.

⁶⁸ As noted well by Claudia Setzer in her work on this subject. Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, 3.

catalogues hardly seems necessary.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the examples above show the shortcomings of such comprehensive categorizing work. These catalogues inevitably concern themselves with constructing narratives of origins, gathering “like” materials with “like” to produce essentialized entities and tell a particular history. In this way, philology and typology all too easily become ciphers for orthodoxy. Jonathan Z. Smith observed similar problems in scholarship on early Christianity and Greco-Roman mystery cults, where a focus on origins and genealogies ultimately recapitulated older Christian polemics.⁷⁰ He has long argued for a methodological shift to analogies, where comparisons occur in the mind of the scholar with select exemplary texts to explore key issues in our understanding(s) of religion(s).⁷¹ This project offers haunting as a way to frame these kinds of “analogies” in a manner sensitive to the complex representations and contestations of life/death and absence/presence in the materials in question, while also troubling the distance Smith places between scholars and the objects of their study.

An Alternative: Haunting

⁶⁹ For examples in the past ten years alone see, e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 32–206; Segal, *Life After Death*, 27–352; Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, 1–52; Kevin L. Anderson, *But God Raised Him from the Dead: The Theology of Jesus’ Resurrection in Luke-Acts* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 48–117; Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, 13–21, 47–62; Pillar, *Resurrection as Anti-Imperial Gospel: 1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10 in Context*, 11–46; Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity*, 23–66.

⁷⁰ Protestant anti-Catholic polemics, in particular. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (University Of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁷¹ The work of scholars like William Arnal and Russell McCutcheon continues to develop these themes. See, e.g., William Arnal and Russell T. McCutcheon, *The Sacred Is the Profane: The Political Nature of “Religion”* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Much of the present-day academic conversation on ghosts and haunting arises from the work of Avery Gordon and Jacques Derrida.⁷² Broadly, haunting is a way of thinking about the indeterminacies of life and death, of absent and present, of visible and invisible, and of past, present, and future. Joshua Gunn describes haunting in the work of these thinkers as an “idiom,” because “it is more than a vocabulary and cannot be understood in relation to a singular concept, e.g., the figure of the ghost; rather, as an idiom haunting refers to the way in which a theoretical perspective is lived and ‘owned.’”⁷³ This is a helpful framing, for while haunting can be abstracted into a kind of theoretical approach to texts or historiography, it is more amorphous than this. Orienting oneself toward haunting is a radical commitment to both uncertainty and accountability. In this way Denise Kimber Buell describes the “goals and values of haunting as an orientation that challenges the notion of the coherency, transparency, certainty, and autonomy of the human subject while still being an ethical orientation presuming that even contingent constructed subjects are accountable for our interpretive frameworks and actions.”⁷⁴ In this way, haunting is not a method or a “theory.” It is an idiom that I employ to explore the complexities of stories of Jesus’ resurrection and their interconnections with other phenomena in the ancient world.⁷⁵

⁷² Indeed Colin Davis describes Jacques Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* as having “spawned a minor academic industry.” Colin Davis, *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 10.

⁷³ Joshua Gunn, “Review Essay: Mourning Humanism, Or, the Idiom of Haunting,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 1 (February 2006): 78.

⁷⁴ Denise Kimber Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” in *The Bible and Posthumanism*, Semeia Studies 74 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 35.

⁷⁵ In this way, I join a small but growing number of scholars of New Testament and Early Christianity who employ this idiom of haunting. Denise Kimber Buell has been a pioneer in this regard within New Testament and Early Christian studies. See, e.g. Buell, “God’s

Gordon's and Derrida's Ghosts

In *Specters of Marx* Derrida coined the term “hauntology” to capture the (non-)existence of a ghost, a (non-)being whose (non-)presence calls into question any conception of linear time.⁷⁶ For Derrida, a specter upsets all attempts to know it, to contain it, or to place it into a category or typology. The Derridean specter is a figure that calls into question the valuation of presence over absence, of life over death, and any specific ordering of past, present, and future.⁷⁷ In this way it coincides with larger themes within posthumanism that challenge the elevated and bounded human subject. Gunn

Own People”; Denise Kimber Buell, “The Afterlife Is Not Dead: Spiritualism, Postcolonial Theory, and Early Christian Studies,” *Church History* 78, no. 4 (2009): 862–72; Denise Kimber Buell, “Cyborg Memories: An Impure History of Jesus,” *Biblical Interpretation* 18, no. 4–5 (2010): 313–41; Buell, Denise Kimber, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” in *The Bible and Posthumanism*, Semeia Studies 74 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 29–56; Denise Kimber Buell, “Challenges and Strategies for Speaking about Ethnicity in the New Testament and New Testament Studies,” *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 79 (2014): esp. 45–51. Others who have preceded and followed Buell within and beyond Biblical Studies include David Jobling, *I Samuel*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, Minnesota: A Michael Glazier Book published by The Liturgical Press, 1998), esp. 273–281; Laura E. Donaldson, “Gospel Hauntings: The Postcolonial Demons of New Testament Criticism,” in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Stephen D. Moore (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005); Benjamin H. Dunning, *Specters of Paul: Sexual Difference in Early Christian Thought*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Cavan W. Concannon, “When You Were Gentiles”: *Specters of Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence*, Synkrisis: Comparative Approaches to Early Christianity in Greco-Roman Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

⁷⁶ “Repetition *and* first time: this is perhaps the question of the event as question of the ghost...Repetition *and* first time, but also repetition *and* last time, since the singularity of any *first time* makes it also a *last time*. Each time it is the event itself, a first time is a last time. Altogether other. Staging for the end of history. Let us call it *hauntology*.” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

⁷⁷ As Derrida says of the specter, “one does not know what it *is*, what it is presently...One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer to that which one thinks one knows by the name of knowledge. One does not know if it is living or if it is dead.” *Ibid.*, 6.

characterizes haunting as a “willed embrace of indeterminacy in that it reframes the self/other relation so central to our fantasy of communication as an ethical relation between a decentered or uncertain self and something that confounds our sense of place in time, our sense of control.”⁷⁸ The solidity of the human subject itself is called into question when facing the ghost, for in this encounter the boundedness of self and other are called into question.

The concomitant term of “spectrality” arrives to expose how standard mappings of identity and reality are far more contingent than we may ever truly know. Fredric Jameson notes that spectrality expresses how “the living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be; that we would do well not to count on its density and solidity, which might under exceptional circumstance betray us.”⁷⁹ Buell explains that posthuman figures like specters highlight “the exclusionary effects and blindspots of the practices of modernity...practices that cannot fail to fail to ensure stable boundaries between past, present, and future, between life and death, organic and inorganic, things and people, human and non-human.”⁸⁰ Modernity and humanism are invested in securing the boundaries between these metaphysical concepts. However, these are not strictly modern concerns. The ancient materials explored in this project are likewise bound up with these same questions. “The question of the specter is the question of life,” says Derrida, “the

⁷⁸ “In *Specters* the other arrives as a ghost, as a figure that cannot otherwise be fixed or reduced as a being or as a non-being.” Gunn, “Review Essay: Mourning Humanism, Or, the Idiom of Haunting,” 81.

⁷⁹ Jameson prefaces this quote, saying, “Spectrality does not involve the conviction that ghosts exist or that the past (and maybe even the future they offer to prophesy) is still very much alive and at work, within the living present.” Fredric Jameson, “Marx’s Purloined Letter,” in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida’s Specters of Marx* (New York: Verso, 1999), 39.

⁸⁰ Buell, “Cyborg Memories,” 332.

boundary between the living and the dead, wherever it arises.”⁸¹ Thinking with haunting and spectrality will help me explore the limits and boundaries of life and death or absence and presence in various ancient texts, and how the workings of these limits operate within them.

Haunting also calls into question Post-Enlightenment epistemologies that hold to a strict empiricism valuing the visible over the invisible.⁸² Avery Gordon explains in a simple way that haunting is “a paradigmatic way in which life is more complicated than those of us who study it have usually granted.”⁸³ For Gordon, haunting “describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities.”⁸⁴ To be attuned to haunting is to be aware of the often unacknowledged and unseen forces or agencies that impact peoples’ material lived experiences. My work explores some of the unseen but felt forces that shape the ancient figures in view. Moreover, haunting calls into question the categorical and typological separations used to distinguish metaphysical or sociological groups and concepts. A significant implication of this coincides with Gordon’s unique notion of

⁸¹ Translation my own from the French, “La question des spectres est donc la question de la vie, de la limite entre le vivant et le mort, partout où elle se pose.” Jacques Derrida, Marc Guillaume, and Jean-Pierre Vincent, *Marx En Jeu* (Paris: Descartes & Cie, 1997), 23.

⁸² As Denise Buell explains on a related topic, “Historical Jesus studies emerged through those practices that get labeled with the shorthand of the Enlightenment, that is practices of ontological and epistemological disenchantment. Thus, it is no surprise that ghosts have been banished from these scholarly discourses except when treated as objects of study explicable in other terms (e.g., disturbed psychological or physiological states, natural phenomena mistaken for supernatural) or as objects of belief (which renders them an internalized matter rather than granting them any ontological status).” Buell, “Cyborg Memories,” 338.

⁸³ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

“complex personhood.”⁸⁵ Buell explains complex personhood as a “way of articulating the imbrication of the social with the individual,” and that every “individual’s complex personhood is specific, yes, but more specifically the result of the entangled systems and relationships into which each of us comes into being and continues to be shaped.”⁸⁶

Building on this I will show how life is complicated in an array of ancient materials, and that which haunts these texts also constitutes them in ways that are uncontrollable and often ineffable.

While seemingly human-focused, haunting decenters the sovereign human subject. It attunes us to the invisible yet impactful structures, pasts, and forces that push and prod (non-)human agents in complex and contradictory ways.⁸⁷ Buell finds a resonance here with larger feminist posthumanist work, specifically in opening space for taking non-human agencies seriously. The ancient Mediterranean milieu was filled with gods, spirits, demons, and other forces beyond the human. I agree with Buell, then, that these posthumanist feminist frameworks can help us “rethink the textual and social

⁸⁵ It is important to note that Gordon and Derrida do not develop and deploy the idiom of haunting in the same ways. Gordon is a sociologist, and uses haunting to counter the strict materialist orientations of her field. Derrida is a philosopher, and building his work on readings of Karl Marx and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. There are significant confluences in their work, and for these reasons I will use it somewhat interchangeably throughout this project and abstract it in my own ways. However, on issues of epistemology, ontology, and futurity their work has subtle but important differences. In particular, Gordon (and Buell) pushes back against Derrida’s apparent evading of any real existence for future utopian hopes. While I might question an opposition of “epistemology” vs. “ontology” (especially in *Specters of Marx*), I think the concerns over futurity are important. For more on these differences, see Avery F. Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” *Borderlands* 10, no. 2 (2011): esp. 5–7; Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” esp. 25–38.

⁸⁶ Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” 37–38.

⁸⁷ As Gordon explains, “In haunting, organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life in a way that confounds our analytic separations and confounds the social separations themselves.” Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 19.

worlds of Roman period texts with their presumptions of non-human agencies and interactions that produce and transform bodies in socially significant patterns, including relations among humans.”⁸⁸ In this way I will attune myself to the ways that the characters and figures within a text are in constant interaction with non-human agencies, and how the boundaries between visible and invisible actors may not be clear. Haunting as a way of accounting for the presence of the absent, of the invisible forces that shape human interactions, is thus well suited for reckoning with the Judeo-Greco-Roman world.

For both Gordon and Derrida, haunting is about relating justly with the other. “It is a case of the difference it makes to start with the marginal,” argues Gordon, “with what we normally exclude or banish, or, more commonly, with what we never even notice.”⁸⁹ Ethical commitments, such as attending to the marginalized, are a significant element of this project. “Spectrality,” argues Carla Freccero, is “a way of thinking ethics in relation to the project of historiography.”⁹⁰ The historian has an obligation to the ghostly presences of past peoples, especially those silenced by dominant narratives. In her paradigm-shifting presidential address to the Society of Biblical Literature in 1987, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza called biblical scholars to (among other things) an “ethics of accountability.” This ethical stance makes scholars

responsible not only for the choice of theoretical interpretive models but also for the ethical consequences of the biblical text and its meanings. If scriptural texts have served not only noble causes but also to legitimate war, to nurture anti-Judaism and misogyny, to justify the exploitation of slavery, and to promote colonial dehumanization, then biblical scholarship must take the responsibility not only to interpret biblical texts in their

⁸⁸ Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” 42.

⁸⁹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 24–25.

⁹⁰ Carla Freccero, “Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past,” in *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies*, ed. George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 196.

historical contexts but also to evaluate the construction of their historical worlds and symbolic universes in terms of a religious scale of values. If the Bible has become a classic of Western culture because of its normativity, then the responsibility of the biblical scholar cannot be restricted to giving "the readers of our time clear access to the original intentions" of the biblical writers. It must also include the elucidation of the ethical consequences and political functions of biblical texts in their historical as well as in their contemporary sociopolitical contexts.⁹¹

The Bible's incontrovertible role in shaping Western history must be reckoned with. The texts contained within the Bible have a varied legacy, part of which is complicity in violence in all kinds: war, slavery, misogyny, and more. The preeminence of the biblical texts in Western culture in this way make them important sites for interrogating these exact issues and legacies. While the figure of Jesus is not a "marginal" figure, many conceptions of him have been marginalized along with their concomitant notions of life, presence, and time. It is these marginal specters of Jesus, crushed by the violence of orthodoxy's vice-grip upon history, in view in this project.

This project explores the ways that the resurrection stories of the New Testament gospels organize, blur, traverse, and control metaphysical ideas like "life" and "death." I heed the call of Stephen Moore and Yvonne Sherwood to see texts like the Bible as resources for thinking "beyond the limits of empiricism, ontology, and metaphysics."⁹² In this way, the Bible itself becomes a place for probing and troubling the foundations of the modern Western world. My use of haunting and spectrality participates in Jacques Derrida's project of disrupting the violent hierarchical binary oppositions that constitute the Western metaphysical tradition. With these oppositions, Derrida explains, "we are not

⁹¹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: Decentering Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107, no. 1 (1988): 15.

⁹² Stephen D. Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar: A Critical Manifesto* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 129.

dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather a violent hierarchy.”⁹³ The naturalized valuation of presence over absence or life over death operates within the same spheres that naturalize male over female⁹⁴ or human over animal.⁹⁵ These metaphysical foundations are thus in many ways the seed-bed for material violence perpetuated throughout Western history. It is an ethical necessity then to recognize these oppositions, and to attend to their deconstruction.⁹⁶ My exploration of the metaphysical messiness within the New Testament resurrection stories is my own way of enacting Schüssler Fiorenza’s call for Biblical scholars to elucidate the “ethical consequences and political functions of biblical texts in their historical as well as in their contemporary sociopolitical contexts.”⁹⁷

Specters and Resurrection

The idiom of haunting in this project serves to unsettle the standard mappings of (Jesus’) resurrection. Resurrection, among both historians and theologians, is typically

⁹³ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 41.

⁹⁴ For some intersections of deconstruction and feminism, see the work of figures like Barbara Johnson and Gayatri Spivak. Barbara Johnson, *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Barbara Johnson, *A World of Difference* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), esp. 32–48, 68–88; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays In Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁹⁵ Derrida makes explicit the connections between the violence inherent to the Western metaphysical tradition and violence against physical bodies when he describes the modern “unprecedented proportions of this subjection of the animal.” Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), esp. 24–29; quote from 25.

⁹⁶ Derrida, *Positions*, esp. 39–47.

⁹⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: Decentering Biblical Scholarship,” 15.

understood as life's victory over death.⁹⁸ Christian theology early and often framed Jesus' death and resurrection as his victory over death itself. Jesus Christ "abolished death" and "brought life and immortality" according to 2 Timothy 1:10. As I show in more detail in chapter three, the Gospel of John makes the most concerted effort to argue the same. "I am the resurrection and the life," says the Johannine Jesus, "everyone living and believing in me never dies" (John 11:25-26). These Christological maneuvers use Jesus to naturalize the hierarchical binary relationship between life and death. Much as ancient (and modern) writers use resurrection to organize cultural groupings like Jews and Greeks or Christians and Pagans, they also use it to discipline and control the metaphysical order of things. However, as Buell noted above, such efforts cannot fail to fail to ensure this sort of stability.⁹⁹ Throughout this project I will show how the resurrection stories of Jesus and similar ancient materials are interwoven with complex and contradictory dynamics concerning life, presence, and time. The rhetorical posture that employs Jesus to assert life over death, or Christian over non-Christian, proves to be a kind of mystification. Critical scholarship should push hardest on a text's logic when its rhetoric is at its most assertive. The ways these ancient texts play on dynamics of life and death invites the idiom of haunting to help examine the messiness of their representations.

⁹⁸ A common assertion by historians and theologians alike. See, e.g., Marie-Emile Boismard, *Our Victory Over Death: Resurrection?* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1998); Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*; Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Matthew Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death: Resurrection, Afterlife, and the Fate of the Christian* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012).

⁹⁹ Buell, "Cyborg Memories," 332.

Haunting and spectrality work in this project in multiple ways. In particular I use spectrality to explore the ways in which figures like Jesus, Jewish Martyrs, Novelistic Heroes, and the Roman Emperors transgress secure notions of life and death, presence and absence, and past, present, and future. The texts, monuments, and other materials that represent these figures do not provide a picture of stable metaphysical hierarchies, but instead paint a portrait of complex personhood. Spectrality names the ways that the resurrected Jesus and others are represented amid metaphysical relationships that are always already open questions.¹⁰⁰ These diverse figures are rendered spectral, “at the limits of determination” and “beyond the terminal.”¹⁰¹ As such, I will explore how the different figures in view are situated at the unstable limits of life and death or presence and absence, flouting any particular ordering of their relationships. This is despite attempts by the text and subsequent readers to assert otherwise. Spectrality thus helps show the contingent ways that these figures appear in the midst of numerous undecidable open questions.

Haunting also helps me reframe how all of these materials relate to one another. Indeed, efforts by apologists and scholars to distance the resurrected Jesus from similar figures shows just how much he is already haunted by them. The compare and contrast approach typical of studies of (Jesus’) resurrection and other comparable phenomena thus

¹⁰⁰ As Derrida explains, “If there is something like spectrality, there are reasons to doubt this reassuring order of presents and, especially, the border between the present, the actual or present reality of the present, and everything that can be opposed to absence, non-presence, non-effectivity, inactuality, virtuality, or even the simulacrum in general, and so forth.” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 48.

¹⁰¹ Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), x.

relies on over-determined categories that reproduce ancient polemical identity politics.¹⁰² Postcolonial concepts like “hybridity” suggest that such cultural divisions are always already arbitrary (colonial) impositions.¹⁰³ With this in mind, the idiom of haunting helps me name the kinds of uncontrolled and ephemeral relationships among these diverse materials. I will use haunting to explain how, for instance, the resurrected Jesus and the apotheosized emperors relate to one another in ways both more subtle and fundamental than scholarship typically allows. Fixed origins or genealogical models of influence cannot capture the complex cultural circumstances involved in how these various undead (or undying) figures relate to one another. “Spectrality,” explains Carla Freccero, and “reminds us that the past and the present are neither discrete nor sequential.”¹⁰⁴ Periodization and categorization thus do not account for the relationships among the resurrected Jesus and other spectral subjects from antiquity. This use of haunting is not merely an effort to avoid “semantic precision,” as Helen Sword has cautioned around scholarship thinking with ghosts and haunting.¹⁰⁵ Rather, I used haunting and spectrality to counter the exclusionary practices involved in the many attempts at “semantic precision” explored above.

Moreover, I argue that haunting helps envision how these various figurations and representations are themselves formed by larger discourses and questions. As Avery

¹⁰² As Carla Freccero wonders, “Using spectrality as our hypothesis, then, we might wonder what we would see and hear were we to resist identitarian foreclosures and remain open to ghostly returns.” Freccero, “Queer Spectrality,” 197.

¹⁰³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2005), esp. 121–131, 145–174.

¹⁰⁴ In this way, Freccero notes how spectrality “counters the teleological drive of heteroproductive futurity.” Freccero, “Queer Spectrality,” 196.

¹⁰⁵ Helen Sword, *Ghostwriting Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 165.

Gordon explains, “the ghost is just the sign, or the empirical evidence if you like, that tells you a haunting is taking place”¹⁰⁶ The spectral representations of figures like Jesus, Jewish Martyrs, the Emperors, and novelistic heroes together signal that there is more going on.¹⁰⁷ As Avery Gordon explains, “In haunting, organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life in a way that confounds our analytic separations and confounds the social separations themselves.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, these myriad figures who transcend death are not only haunted by one another. Rather, there are larger systemic and discursive issues at play. The texts and materials in view reflect a world filled with invisible agents like demons, spirits, and gods. “Gospel texts presuppose the existence of spiritual agencies that may work through human instruments” explains Buell, “and they also presuppose communal and often contested human assessments about the kinds of spiritual forces at work and about how one ought to act and live in a world as a consequence.”¹⁰⁹ The complex personhood inherent in haunting and spectrality helps take better account of ancient worldviews.

Specters of Globalization

Haunting calls into question any hard break between then and now, reorienting our relationship with the past. In this way, I argue that there are certain ephemeral

¹⁰⁶ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 8.

¹⁰⁷ It is often the case that the unspoken, the unacknowledged, and the invisible are some of the most pressing matters in a given situation. So go the arguments by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok concerning “transgenerational haunting.” See e.g., Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Esther Rashkin, *Unspeakable Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 19.

¹⁰⁹ Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” 44.

connections between our present moment and the historical era in which the resurrected Jesus arose. As Buell points out, this model of haunting resonates with postcolonial approaches to historiography.¹¹⁰ Modern Western historians “will grant the supernatural a place in somebody’s belief system or ritual places,” argues Dipesh Chakrabarty, “but to ascribe it any real agency in historical events will...go against the rules.”¹¹¹ Post-enlightenment, modernist, and humanist historiographical discourses give us “the demand of rationality and critical distance in our own practices,” yet “postcolonial theory (as well as quite a few others, including feminist theory) has helped articulate some of its costs and challenges.”¹¹² The modernist typological and genealogical approaches to resurrection and other afterlives outlined above are coeval with the colonial practices of modern Europe. The subsequent disenchanting of the biblical texts and other ancient materials is but one of many problematic legacies such methodologies have produced.¹¹³ “What gives us a point of entry into the times of gods and spirits,” says Chakrabarty, “—times that are seemingly very different from the empty, secular, and homogeneous times of history—is that they are never completely alien; we inhabit them to begin with.”¹¹⁴ This project explores how the biblical stories of Jesus’ resurrection are haunted by the

¹¹⁰ e.g., Buell, “The Afterlife Is Not Dead,” esp. 863, 866–67, 869–72; Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” 47.

¹¹¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 104.

¹¹² Buell, “The Afterlife Is Not Dead,” 872.

¹¹³ For more on the resonances of disenchantment and colonialism, see e.g., Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 17; Buell, “Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies,” esp. 866–69. In certain ways then, this project and its employment of the language of haunting is an effort to re-enchant biblical texts and other ancient materials.

¹¹⁴ Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 113.

other texts and discourses from the ancient world. The central place of the Bible within the Western canon is one way among many in which these ancient worlds haunt our own. The distance between then and now is never as great as we might think. I suggest that while the ancient figures in view in this project are themselves haunted, they likewise haunt us now.

Globalizing Affects, Past and Present

Both historical moments, then and now, are marked by a proliferation of figures inhabiting the interstices of life and death. The resurrection of Jesus occurs alongside numerous other figures appearing to overcome death. The haunting specters of Derrida and Gordon, as well as many others who engage their work,¹¹⁵ likewise hover among other explorations of the limits of the category of the human in recent decades. Whether it is the cyborg's challenge to human-machine relationships,¹¹⁶ or the breakdown of the human-animal divide,¹¹⁷ aging enlightenment and humanist categories are shifting all

¹¹⁵ Many of whom I have already cited above. See, Slavoj Žižek, "Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology," in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 1994), 1–33; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Ghostwriting," *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 64–84; Michael Sprinker, ed., *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's "Specters of Marx"* (New York: Verso, 1999); Nancy Holland, "The Death of the Other/Father: A Feminist Reading of Derrida's Hauntology," *Hypatia* 16 (2001): 64–71; Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*; Sword, *Ghostwriting Modernism*; Davis, *Haunted Subjects*; Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Freccero, "Queer Spectrality"; Christine Berthin, *Gothic Hauntings: Melancholy Crypts and Textual Ghosts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹¹⁶ e.g., Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth-Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*; Bruce Boehrer, "Animal Studies and the Deconstruction of Character," *PMLA* 124, no. 2 (March 2009): 542–47; Laurie

around us. The construction of the sovereign human subject in the Western philosophical tradition has not been a neutral or benign process. It has had countless effects ranging from mass slaughter of humans, non-human animals,¹¹⁸ to the destruction of the environment.¹¹⁹ Rethinking the status of the human and probing its histories is thus a necessary endeavor. The recent intense interest in resurrection no doubt reflects this as well.¹²⁰ This project presupposes, as some others do as well, that haunting and spectrality are productive tools to go about this work.

This contemporary exploration of the limits of the human, especially around life and death, coincides with a recent explosion of popular interest in the undead. Zombies, vampires, and others are truly ubiquitous in today's popular fiction, film, and television.

Shannon, "The Eight Animals in Shakespeare; Or, Before the Human," *PMLA* 124, no. 2 (March 2009): 472–79.

¹¹⁸ e.g., Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, esp. 37.

¹¹⁹ See e.g., Chakrabarty's exploration of the history of the "Anthropocene." Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Winter 2009): 197–222.

¹²⁰ Many of which I have already engaged above. See, e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*; Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*; Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*; Charlesworth et al., *Resurrection*; Paul M. Fullmer, *Resurrection in Mark's Literary-Historical Perspective* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007); Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*; Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life*; Tobias Nicklas, Friedrich Reiterer, and Joseph Verheyden, eds., *The Human Body in Death and Resurrection*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature, Yearbook 2009 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); Dag Øistein Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010); Bernard Brandon Scott, *The Trouble with Resurrection: From Paul to the Fourth Gospel* (Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2010); Markus Vinzent, *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity and the Making of the New Testament* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011); Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death: Resurrection, Afterlife, and the Fate of the Christian*; Pillar, *Resurrection as Anti-Imperial Gospel: 1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10 in Context*; Richard C. Miller, *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity*, Routledge Studies in Religion 44 (New York: Routledge, 2015); Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity*.

The large followings of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* or *Twilight* are now eclipsed by the record-setting *The Walking Dead*. Our present infection with vampirism and zombieism no doubt represents larger discursive dynamics at play. Kelly J. Baker explains how “zombies become the perfect monsters to communicate cultural demise and apocalyptic longing.” “While they moan, shamle, and run,” she says, “they also signify.”¹²¹ Baker argues that zombies manifest troubling, violent, and fantastical cultural urges to eradicate the other. Sarah Juliet Lauro and Karen Embry have argued that the zombie epitomizes late capitalist cultural reasoning. The zombie is the end result of capitalism’s logic: the eternal consumer. This consumptive character also represents capitalism’s undoing with the eradication of production and the human itself.¹²² The inhuman and imperial operations of modern globalized capitalism have produced a particular destabilization of the human subject, and the recent explosion of undead figures is one of many figurations of this process.

While our own moment is haunted by the specter of globalized capitalism, the Roman Empire likewise brought about its own kind of globalization. I join others who see resonances between globalization occurring today and the processes of Roman imperialism in antiquity. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri trace a genealogy from ancient Roman imperialism the present state of globalized capitalism, which constitutes its own kind of Empire.¹²³ The Roman Empire of the first and second centuries CE

¹²¹ Kelly J. Baker, *The Zombies Are Coming! The Realities of the Zombie Apocalypse in American Culture* (New York: Bondfire Books, 2013).

¹²² Sarah Juliet Lauro and Karen Embry, “A Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism,” *Boundary 2* 35, no. 1 (March 20, 2008): 85–108.

¹²³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), esp. 1–21.

covered a vast area, uniting the Mediterranean world under a single power. While conquering at times through violence, Mary Boatwright notes how “norms of law, religion, politics, economy, community interest, and cultural values consolidated the Roman empire.”¹²⁴

Richard Hingley argues that older top-down models of “Romanization” have numerous problems.¹²⁵ He suggests that modern models of globalization better articulate the cohesion of the disparate cities and provinces that made up the Roman Empire.¹²⁶

Judith Perkins traces these similarities, noting that despite

the many differences, the early centuries CE seem to offer a moment comparable to our contemporary situation. As we find ourselves attempting to adjust to new universalizing schemes of culture and power, to ‘globalization,’ we share the position of Roman subjects as they learned to accommodate themselves to a new, larger world of empire. They also had to adjust to larger frames of reference and more extensive networks of relationships, and hone new identities and self-understandings suitable for a more expansive social, cultural, and political world.¹²⁷

The stability and expansiveness of Rome’s empire in the first centuries CE was novel.

Tat-siong Benny Liew builds on Hardt and Negri’s work to argue that modern and ancient empires are both marked by a “‘horizontal’ or dispersed and decentered character.”¹²⁸ Hardt and Negri’s theorized Empire is “characterized fundamentally by a

¹²⁴ “[A]t least until the second third of the third century,” she specifies. Mary T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 4.

¹²⁵ “Romanization theory is over-simplistic, focusing attention on the elite of the empire, and conceiving of identity and social change in terms that are both too crude and too concrete.” Richard Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity, and Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 14.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, esp. 118.

¹²⁷ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 1.

¹²⁸ Tat-Siong Benny Liew, “Postcolonial Criticism: Echoes of a Subaltern’s Contribution and Exclusion,” in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 223.

lack of boundaries: Empire's rule has no limits."¹²⁹ David Mattingly notes that this rule without limits in fact has "strong Roman pedigree," perhaps most notably in "Virgil's '*imperium sine fine*' that Jupiter ordained was to be without physical or temporal constraints" (*Aeneid* 1.278–79).¹³⁰ Rome fashioned itself as an Empire without end, both geospatially and temporally.¹³¹ This was of course rhetoric, but rhetoric that reflected the new circumstances of the unified Mediterranean world.

One of the framing questions of this project then is: what does it feel like to live under (the Roman) empire?¹³² Namely, I seek to explore how (Jesus') resurrection and other traversals of life and death evidence the felt experience of living in this ancient globalized context. Hardt and Negri argue that Empire "not only regulates human interactions but also seeks directly to rule over human nature."¹³³ The empires of modern globalization and ancient Romanization each shape the human in their own ways. One of the affects of the Empire of global capitalism is a kind of "corporeal transformation," where "[c]onventional norms of corporeal and sexual relations between and within genders are increasingly open to challenge and transformation. Bodies themselves

¹²⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 117.

¹³⁰ David J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing Power in the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 15.

¹³¹ As I explore more in the next chapter, multiple coins produced under the reigns of Augustus and subsequent emperors portrayed the Caesar with their foot on a globe. Holding a palm frond of victory, this symbolized the emperor's singular rule over the entirety of the inhabited world (*oikoumene*). This symbolism is compounded by the symbolism of a coin itself, which represents the empire's economic place and power as well. These coins, locally produced in varying provinces, regulated economic activity on a grand scale. For More on this see, eg., Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 40–41; Peter Sloterdijk, "Geometry in the Colossal: The Project of Metaphysical Globalization," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27 (2009): 29–40.

¹³² Here again I echo John Modern's question, "what does it feel like to live in a secular age?" Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 1.

¹³³ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, xv.

transform and mutate to create new posthuman bodies.”¹³⁴ In other words, present explorations of the limits of the human are part and parcel of the affective experiences of this globalized Empire. I proceed with the assumption that the same holds true for the ancient Mediterranean under Rome, that the contemporary “posthuman is...tied to the premodern.”¹³⁵ As I will explore in the next chapter, Stephen Moore has suggested that there is a certain crisis in the category of the human at this time.¹³⁶ The dramatic peace and prosperity (as well as violence and upheaval) brought on by Rome’s rule, on such a grand scale, shook the metaphysical foundations on which the culture rested. This raised problems and questions, though often unacknowledged, which haunted all textual and material productions during this period.

As Peter Sloterdijk argues, the Roman Empire affected its own kind of “metaphysical globalization.”¹³⁷ This project assumes that the lived experiences under the Rome’s globalization brought with it certain ruptures in various metaphysical concepts in the Mediterranean world of the first centuries CE. “[A] shift in cultural perspective was occurring,” explains Perkins, “that would sharply realign traditional notions for human and social being.”¹³⁸ I suggest that this meant foundational orderings of life/death or presence/absence were felt as open questions, inspiring opportunities for exploring their

¹³⁴ Ibid., 215.

¹³⁵ Myra Seaman specifies that this “premodern” is “the time before the ‘discovery’ of the human that thus might be labeled ‘prehuman.’” Myra J. Seaman, “Becoming More (than) Human: Affective Posthumanisms, Past and Future,” *Journal of Narrative Theory* 37, no. 2 (2007): 250.

¹³⁶ Stephen D. Moore, “Why There Are No Humans or Animals in the Gospel of Mark,” in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

¹³⁷ Sloterdijk, “Geometry in the Colossal: The Project of Metaphysical Globalization,” 29–40.

¹³⁸ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 10.

limits. These explorations pop up in various kinds of literature and material culture from the period.

Basil Duffalo argues that the transition to the principate, and concomitant instantiation of Rome as Empire, brought with it shifts in the relationships between the living and the dead. In this transition, Latin “literature does not so much depict the dead’s ‘imitation’ of the living” as it once did. Instead it depicts “the living’s imitation of the dead: not the emulation of illustrious ancestors valued so highly in all periods of Roman history, but mimesis of the dead *as* the dead, an unsettling fantasy tied to growing anxieties over the imperial abuse of power.”¹³⁹ He shows how Cicero represents the dead as performing oratory (e.g., *Pro Caelio*; *Pro Milane*) while ghosts in Propertius (Elegies 4.7; 4.11) and Vergil (*Aeneid* esp. 6) re-enact social activities of the living. However, a post-Augustan writer like Seneca portrays the descendants of Tantalus mimicking the crimes committed by his ghost (*Thyestes* 1-121), while Statius’ Oedipus curses his son exactly as the ghost of his father Laius cursed his grandchildren (*Thebaid* 1.56-87; 2.102-24). Duffalo describes this transition as showing a “a ruinous collapse of the distance between past and present.”¹⁴⁰ These transitions signal the kinds of ways that Rome’s Empire (re)shaped the living and the dead, and the past and present.

Rome’s empire also reshaped the cosmological landscape. Judith Perkins describes these radical changes under Roman rule as a “discursive rupture, an epistemic break.”¹⁴¹ I see these ruptures particularly around how the dead and the living interacted.

¹³⁹ Basil Duffalo, *The Ghosts of the Past: Latin Literature, the Dead, and Rome’s Transition to a Principate* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 11.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁴¹ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 7.

The material culture of the ancient Mediterranean involved widespread representations of the dead. Valerie Hope explains that in

the Roman World, the dead were everywhere and memories of the past were integrated into daily life. Statues in the Forum, commemorative arches, building dedications, tombs and foundations were some of the many public ways of remembering the dead. There were also more private and personal mementos of the dead...these included jewelry, portraits and presumably other keepsakes and heirlooms. Remembering the dead was a public duty but also a private one. Rome's present was underpinned, justified and dependent on the past. To look forward was also to look back.¹⁴²

The dead were always already everywhere among the living, and the prosperity under Rome magnified these representations on a grand scale. As Daniel Ogden explained above, the barriers between the living and the dead and the above and the below were traversable at this time.¹⁴³ Resurrection of the dead in Jewish and Christian literature participates in these ruptures, as do representations of the emperors and portrayals of the protagonists of the novels. This is a global view of these issues, as the primary texts under view appear in a broad context.¹⁴⁴ Such an approach is necessary as the gospels, novels like *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and pseudepigraphal texts like 2 Maccabees cannot be fixed in place or time. However, they did exist in this particular cosmological landscape with its complex and contradictory relationships between the living and the dead.

Phantom Terrains

¹⁴² Valerie M. Hope, *Roman Death: Dying and the Dead in Ancient Rome* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 180–181.

¹⁴³ Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, xvii.

¹⁴⁴ It is also a rather “elite” focus, given the literary-cultural nature of this investigation. Even so, the Roman Empire had some unifying effects (and affects) that transcended class hierarchies. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, 205.

As noted above, many scholars now resist the temptation to paint with broad strokes. Speaking about a culture at large, or producing a grand metanarrative, is a frequently avoided taboo. With good reason! The metanarratives of scholarly pasts reproduced dominant ideologies, excluded a great deal, and instantiated the power concerns of a narrow elite. These dominant narratives have been deconstructed in the service of better appreciating the debate and diversity that characterize ancient materials. However, it is not necessary to throw out the cultural baby with the unhelpful bathwater. Using the texts and material culture from the ancient Mediterranean to paint a larger and more complicated tableau is at times worthwhile.¹⁴⁵ “Cultures” and “societies” are not material things that can be touched. But, they do have a kind of spectral density that can be felt. To disregard this would reflect a kind of hardened empiricism with a host of its own problematic implications. It is this sort of materialist approach to data and materials that Avery Gordon criticizes directly in *Ghostly Matters*.¹⁴⁶ “The epistemology of haunting,” explains Aimee Van Wagenen, “is about following marks and traces to tell the story of absences felt as presences.”¹⁴⁷ Of course, it is important to remain careful and

¹⁴⁵ Elizabeth A. Castelli and Hal Taussig, “Drawing Large and Startling Figures: Reimagining Christian Origins by Painting like Picasso,” in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 3–20.

¹⁴⁶ In describing her project and the role of haunting, Gordon explains, “It seemed to me that radical scholars and intellectuals knew a great deal about the world capitalist system and repressive states and yet insisted on distinctions--between subject and object of knowledge, between fact and fiction, between presence and absence, between past and present, between present and future, between knowing and non-knowing--whose tenuousness and manipulation seemed precisely to me in need of comprehension and articulation, being themselves modalities of the exercise of unwanted power.” Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, xvii.

¹⁴⁷ Aimee Van Wagenen, “An Epistemology of Haunting,” in *Culture, Power and History: Studies in Critical Sociology*, ed. Stephen Pfohl et al., *Studies in Critical Social Sciences* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 179.

vigilant when speaking broadly about such a diverse context as the ancient Mediterranean. I do not want to harden cultural identities or exclude difference. I hope that readers will judge that I have been careful, if provocative, in this regard.

The questions of life and death or presence and absence are always already open. Despite efforts by cultures and individuals to order them hierarchically, such orderings necessarily deconstructs themselves. The relationships between life/death, absence/presence, and past/present/future are fraught with uncertainties. This deconstruction, and the openness of these questions, haunts every anxious attempt to control the metaphysical order of things. Constructions of the human, and its concomitant situatedness in the cosmos, are thus fraught with these questions. However, certain cultural and historical moments can make these questions more pressing. Our present global circumstances, economic situation, and cultural moment finds the (non-)human to be radically rethought. The relationships between life and death are stretched as the limits of the category of the human are explored anew. While not vital, Tat-siong Benny Liew suggests that “a corresponding context does facilitate a critic’s interpretive endeavor.”¹⁴⁸ The mid-19th century saw a similar pooling up of these questions and anxieties. Spiritualism arose amid many other complex technological and geo-spatial phenomena that stretched the enfolded boundaries between life and death or presence and absence.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Liew, “Postcolonial Criticism: Echoes of a Subaltern’s Contribution and Exclusion,” 223.

¹⁴⁹ As Hellen Sword asks, “How can we explain the extraordinary proliferation of spiritualist tropes—ghosts, haunting, mediumship, automatic writing—in recent criticism and theory? What is it about our own cultural moment, in other words—the end of the twentieth century, the dawn of a new millennium—that inspires literary critics to see ghosts everywhere?” Numerous others have explored some of these issues in a similar manner. See Sword, *Ghostwriting Modernism*, 162; Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women’s Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington,

This study of the resurrection stories of Jesus suggests (and partly assumes) that the first and second centuries CE of the Roman imperial era saw its own gathering of these questions, that the historical and cultural circumstances facilitated a rethinking of the limits of the human.

This is the closest I get to a notion of “origins.” Jesus’ resurrection occurs alongside many other transgressions of the spaces between life and death. This is true both within the texts that tell these stories, as well as elsewhere in imperial propaganda or novelistic literature. I am not saying that resurrections, apotheoses, appearances of the dead, and false deaths were all the same phenomenon. However, I do maintain that these phenomena were always already haunting one another in mutually constitutive ways. The spectrality of these figures suggests that there is more happening. I thus argue that these phenomena were themselves haunted by a certain metaphysical indeterminacies that were especially felt by the denizens of the early Roman imperial Mediterranean. The spectral effects of these open questions of life and death became all the more pressing, and the questions of presence and absence became more open as the relationships between the past and the present were consistently refigured.

By exploring that which haunts, this project in some ways decenters the figures under examination. The Jesus of the Gospel of Mark for instance is not a sovereign individual genius, but is in fact constituted by many other agencies, forces, and discourses. The same holds true for the texts and “authors” of the gospels themselves. By focusing intently on the spectral figures represented in various primary texts, I see in their

IN: Indiana University Press, 2001); Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*; Buell, “The Afterlife Is Not Dead”; McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past; Modern, Secularism in Antebellum America*.

hazy (non)corporeal forms the messy debates and conversations that construct them. In that sense, these stories are not strictly *about* Jesus, nor are they the product of an ivory tower (male) individual. There are countless others, both human and non-human, always already involved.¹⁵⁰ Attending to these issues “enables us to think about how ancient texts have variously helped produce, resist, and transform contingent, modern forms of human classification.”¹⁵¹ To better understand our present and build toward a more just future, it is necessary to wrestle with these legacies and the problems and opportunities they offer.

Spectral Trajectories

This project will perform strategic conjurings in order to illustrate the unsettled boundaries between life and death in this period, and explore how this intersects with additional questions of bodily “absence” and “presence” and how the past, present, and future are figured. “Conjuring is a particular form of calling up and calling out the forces that make things what they are,” explains Gordon. “As a mode of apprehension and reformation, conjuring merges the analytical, the procedural, the imaginative, and the effervescent”¹⁵² To conjure is to try to bring the hidden into view, however imperfectly. It is to allow the past and the present to mingle in ways that they always already do. This is

¹⁵⁰ In this manner, I hope to make a modest contribution to the larger feminist historiographical project of decentering in whatever way I can. For more on this, see e.g., Melanie Johnson-Debaufre, *Jesus Among Her Children: Q, Eschatology, and the Construction of Christian Origins*, Harvard Theological Studies 55 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Melanie Johnson-Debaufre, “‘That One’ Takes a Village: The Uniqueness of Jesus and the Beelzebul Controversy (Q 11:14-26),” *The Fourth R* 22, no. 5 (2009): 3–7, 10, 22, 28; Melanie Johnson-Debaufre and Laura Nasrallah, “Beyond the Heroic Paul: Toward a Feminist and Decolonizing Approach to the Letters of Paul,” in *The Colonized Apostle: Paul in Postcolonial Eyes*, Paul in Critical Contexts (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 161–74.

¹⁵¹ Buell, “God’s Own People,” 139.

¹⁵² Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 22.

not a “conjuring away” to tame and dismiss the specters from the past that haunt us. Rather, it is a calling forth, a positive conjuration that beckons the ghost to appear and speak in its own uncontrollable manner.¹⁵³ These apparitions will be selective but illustrative; they are texts with spectral characters and narrative dynamics. This indicates that they are haunted. These texts may well haunt us still. My conjurations will take the form of close readings of the key texts outlined below, seeking to find common hauntological issues across these disparate stories and materials. These readings will be at times provocative, idiosyncratic, and always provisional. I resist my own trajectories toward comprehensive interpretive closure, hoping that others will offer additional insights in the future.¹⁵⁴

The first chapter calls forth the Jesus of the Gospel of Mark alongside the figure of the Roman Emperor. This will build on the points made above regarding Rome’s Empire. Scenes like the disciples fearing that Jesus is a “ghost” when walking on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 6:49) and the ambiguous presence of the (not so) resurrected Jesus in

¹⁵³ On the “positive conjuration” and the anxiety it causes, Derrida explains after reading Marx, “It is indeed a matter of convoking or conjuring (*beschwören*) the spirits as specters in a gesture of positive conjuration, the one that swears in order to call up and not to drive away. But can one uphold this distinction? For if such a conjuration seems welcoming and hospitable, since it calls forth the dead, makes or lets them come, it is never free of anxiety. And thus of a movement of repulsion or restriction. Not only is the conjuration characterized by a certain anxiety, it does not let itself be determined merely in addition by this anxiety (as the word *ängstlich* suggests), is destined to the anxiety that it is. The conjuration is anxiety from the moment it calls upon death to invent the quick and to enliven the new, to summon the presence of what is not yet there (*noch nicht Dagewesenes*). This anxiety in the face of the ghost is properly revolutionary. If death weighs on the living brain of the living, and still more on the brains of revolutionaries. it must then have some spectral density.” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 135–136.

¹⁵⁴ To a certain extent then, this project aims to be akin to the “radically unfinished scholarly inquiry for which the reader’s own intelligence can alone provide the unwritten chapters” that William Germano calls for. William Germano, “Do We Dare Write for Readers?,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 22, 2013, sec. The Chronicle Review, <http://chronicle.com/article/Do-We-Dare-Write-for-Readers-/138581/is>.

the text's final verses (16:1-8) render Jesus spectral. The transfiguration enfolds past, present, and future upon one another as it stretches Jesus' status as a human being (9:1-9). The Roman Emperor, another spectral figure regularly situated at the interstices of human/divine and life/death, haunts the pages of Mark's text. While the emperor is literally evoked, there are many spectral marks he leaves upon the text. The many recent commentators comparing Jesus and Caesar signal the ways they may be in a haunting relationship. Indeed, I employ the language of haunting to displace the frequent pro- vs. anti-empire arguments in this regard. Stories of the emperors frequently show them practicing necromancy, haunted by their slain enemies, and haunting others. The diverse practices of the imperial cult across the empire suffused the emperor's (living-dead and absent-)presence throughout the shifting cosmological landscape of the ancient Mediterranean. Indeed, while Caesar haunts the figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, I suggest that they are both haunted by these larger cultural dynamics.

I will then beckon Luke-Acts as well as *2 Maccabees*. With the odd detail that the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus "in bodily form" at his baptism (Luke 3:22), Luke-Acts sets up a blurry body-spirit dichotomy that renders Jesus and others spectrally present throughout the narratives. Jesus' resurrection relies on this traversable bifurcation, and it is far from the only transgression of life/death or absence/presence in the text(s). Moreover, Jesus' resurrection appearance and ascension to heaven occur in a strange collapsing of time (Luke 24:51, Acts 1:3). The heroic martyrdom of Jesus in the Gospel of Jesus has resonances with the Jewish martyrs of *2 Maccabees*, a text frequently cited as one of the first explicit expressions of the Jewish doctrine of resurrection. Indeed, the difficult-to-date *2 Maccabees* and its spectral conceptions of resurrection haunts Luke-

Acts in this way both in history and scholarship. Yet, the martyrs expecting resurrection are not the only figures traversing life and death in this text (*2 Maccabees* 4:24; 12:43-44; 15:11-12). Together these texts display that (Jesus') resurrection pops up amid many other disruptions of life/death, presence/absence, and past/present/future. The spectrality within these texts is further evidence of the larger haunting questions that affect all of the materials in view in this project.

Finally, I will conjure up the Gospel of John as well as the ancient novel *Leucippe and Clitophon* to further explore these themes. Ancient gospels and novels share numerous genre and narrative tropes, haunting one another in ways that scholars are continually trying to parse out. In the Gospel of John, Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead proves to be the cause of his own arrest and death (11:1-57). Resurrection is a unifying concern here, and John is as anxious as Luke concerning the resurrected body of Jesus (20:24-31). Indeed, these stories also occur in a time warp as the gospel ends multiple times (20:30-21:25) and Jesus' absence or presences is called into question (20:30; 21:25). The female protagonist of Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon* is similarly rendered ambiguously (omni-)present and at the edge of life and death. Leucippe's repeated false deaths occur in concert with repeated misrecognition, including being mistaken for a ghost (Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 5.16). Her absence drives characters and the plot, while her presence is frequently confounding. The text's framing narrative, and lack of resolution, disrupts linear time as well. In this way, *Leucippe and Clitophon* resonates with the so-called Second Sophistic's complex framing of past and present in cultural identity. Both the Gospel of John and *Leucippe and Clitophon* draw their readers' focus intently on their protagonists, but their spectral

figurations makes them elusive. Their representations via resurrection or false death call into question the boundaries between life and death, between resurrection and false death. Truth and identity become unknowable in these stories. The spectrality of these texts engages with imperial power dynamics in distinct ways, and they too are haunted by the metaphysical reordering of their day.

“What kind of case is a case of a ghost?” asks Avery Gordon. “It is a case of haunting, a story about what happens when we admit the ghost—that special instance of the merging of the visible and the invisible, the dead and the living, the past and the present--into the making of worldly relations and into the making of our accounts of the world.”¹⁵⁵ The Roman Empire produced countless ghosts in the expansion and maintenance of its borders. The empire and its emperors relied on the ensuing unsettling of life/death, absence/presence, and past/present/future. So too did representations of Jesus and countless other figures. These questions flit about, hovering just beyond view yet affecting a diverse array of phenomena. This project acknowledges and engages with these hidden yet impactful agencies and discourses. The resurrection of Jesus is but one among many haunting and haunted stories from this period, and looking at these stories anew may open new unpredictable futures.

¹⁵⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 24–25.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EMPEROR HAUNTS BACK:

A SPECTRAL (GOSPEL OF) MARK AMONG THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

If every specter, as we have amply seen, is distinguished from spirit by an incorporation, by the phenomenal form of quasi-incarnation, then Christ is the most spectral of specters. He tells us something about absolute spectrality.

– Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*

I sometimes wonder whether Mark isn't a kind of ghost story – after all, there were few things Romans feared more than ghosts.

–Arthur Droge, “Ghostlier Demarcations”

The Gospel of Mark may appear to be an odd choice to conjure up at the beginning of a study of the resurrection of Jesus. The “original” text of Mark’s gospel contains no narrative of Jesus’ resurrection appearance(s). Three women visit Jesus’ tomb, arriving to find an unknown young man there. Jesus is nowhere to be seen, and the women’s terrified response questions whether anyone ever sees this supposedly risen man. This resurrectional absence is an excellent entry point to explore how spectrality can suffuse resurrection of the dead. Some scholars see similarities between Jesus’ empty tomb and other empty tombs from antiquity, raising doubts about whether the end of the Gospel of Mark manifests a “resurrection” at all.¹ Others find possible post-resurrection appearance stories to be inserted earlier in the text.² The time is thus out of joint for

¹ e.g., Fullmer, *Resurrection in Mark’s Literary-Historical Perspective*; Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, esp. 83–98; Miller, *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity*.

² e.g., John E. Alsup, *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition: A History-of-Tradition Analysis with Text-Synopsis*, Calwer Theologische Monographien. Bibelwissenschaft 5 (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1975), esp. 139–144; Patrick J. Madden, *Jesus’ Walking on the Sea: An Investigation of the Origin of the Narrative Account*, Beihefte Zue Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Alte Kirche 81 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997).

Mark's gospel, as the missing resurrected Jesus in fact haunts previous events of the narrative. I suggest that these dynamics are best accounted for by spectrality, that Mark's representation of Jesus blurs the categorical impulses of standard scholarly approaches to resurrection.

Jesus' death via crucifixion, a distinctly Roman method of execution at the order of the local Roman prefect, is an obvious evocation of imperial presence in Mark's gospel. Remaining mostly out of sight in the pages of this text, Rome makes itself felt in ways both subtle and indelicate. The spatial folding in the machinations of the Roman Empire are on full display at the end of the Gospel of Mark: imperial violence authorized by the capital in Italy inflicts wounds upon a Galilean Jewish body in Judea. This is part of the globalizing logic uniting the ancient Mediterranean that I explored in the introduction. The Roman Empire possessed a singular power over life and death on a scale never before seen. Like the demons collectively named "Legion" possessing the man in Gerasa (Mark 5:9), the spectrality of Rome's imperial presence relied on a porous boundary between visible and invisible. All of this combined to increase a felt undecideability of the relationships between life and death, absence and presence, and past, present and future. No single entity embodied these broad cultural discourses more than the figure of the Roman Emperor.

I am not the first person to beckon Jesus and the Roman Emperor to stand beside one another. The recent proliferation of "X and Empire" approaches to New Testament materials³ has been met with both skepticism⁴ and methodological querying.⁵ Mark's

³ e.g., Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001); Richard A Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God*

gospel is no stranger to empire-attentive scholarship. Adela Yarbro Collins objects that “[t]here is [...] no theme of opposition to Rome in Mark,”⁶ but that has not impeded explorations of this exact theme.⁷ Stories like the Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-13)⁸ among others become touchstones for determining Mark’s stance toward the Roman Empire.⁹ This focus on obvious evocations of “empire” reflects the pro- vs. anti-empire

and the New World Disorder (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008).

⁴ For instance, the recent essays in *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not* show that “empire critical” work in Biblical Studies repeats several problematic patterns. This work tends to be etymological in its orientation, ferreting out Roman imperial buzzwords in the gospels. Wherever one of these terms pops up, anti-imperial sentiment is quickly assumed. This vocabulary-based exegetical strategy also becomes interwoven with efforts to discover the biblical author’s “intention” with regard to the Roman Empire. Yet, the essays in McKnight and Modica’s edited volume are often simply arguing the opposite points compared to liberationist-leaning empire-critical scholarship. The “New Testament writers affirm that Jesus is Lord,” conclude McKnight and Modica, “not with the sole intent of debunking Caesar and his empire, but to offer a stark contrast between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.” Their work is not a methodological or theoretical shift, but in fact largely a theologically based counter-argument. Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, eds., *Jesus Is Lord, Caesar Is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2013), 212.

⁵ For a more theoretically robust engagement with this style of scholarship, see Stephen D Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), esp. 14–23.

⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 269.

⁷ For some of the earlier touchstones in this regard, see Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008); Richard A Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark’s Gospel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

⁸ Stephen Moore has shown how the Gerasene Demoniac in Mark 5:1-13 often functions as a “hermeneutical key” for empire-critical studies of the Gospel of Mark. e.g, Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 192–194; Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story*, 146–148; Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 2006, 24–27.

⁹ For instance, Jesus’ famous call to “give to the Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:17) has raised questions about whether such a dominical declaration supports the emperor or undermines him. Charles Homer Giblin, “‘The Things of God’ In the Question Concerning Tribute to Caesar : (Lk 20:25; Mk 12:17; Mt 22:21),” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1971): 510–27; Arthur B. Ogle, “What Is Left for Caesar: A Look at Mark 12:13-17 and Romans 13:1-7,” *Theology Today* 35, no. 3 (1978): 254–64; William R. Herzog, “Disassembling, a Weapon of the

gridlock of such New Testament work. Collins's statement above reinforces this binary despite her attempts to distance herself from the conversation altogether.¹⁰ These argumentative standstills have paved the way for scholars like Tat-siong Benny Liew to employ postcolonial theories to explore Mark's ambivalence about Roman imperial power, and how the text engages in forms of mimicry¹¹ (a la Homi Bhabha).¹² Hybridity helps break down the cumbersome cultural and typological categories explored in the introduction. Likewise, these efforts to displace the stark pro- vs. anti- binary by probing the messy spaces in between are a helpful corrective step in the right direction.

This chapter explores the role of spectrality in representations of the figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, and the figure of the Roman Emperor in an array of materials. These figures are both in their own ways rendered spectral through complex negotiations of life and death, absence and presence, and past, present, and future. Spectrality and ghostliness, as I explained in the introduction, suggest that there is some form of haunting taking place. My conjuration here consists of a detailed reading of three key scenes in the Gospel of Mark's story of Jesus. First, however, I call forth the figure of the Roman Emperor who was constructed in an ideologically and metaphysically similar manner. These similarities hint at the ways in which Mark's gospel and the figure of the

Weak: The Case of Christ and Caesar in Mark 12:13-17 and Romans 13:1-7," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 21, no. 4 (1994): 339–60; Alan H. Cadwallader, "In Go(l)d We Trust: Literary and Economic Currency Exchange in the Debate Over Caesar's Coin (Mark 12:13-17)," *Biblical Interpretation* 14, no. 5 (2006): 486–507.

¹⁰ See the exploration of this exact tension in Arthur J. Droge, "Ghostlier Demarcations: The 'Gospels' of Augustus and Mark," *Early Christianity* 2, no. 3 (2011): 336.

¹¹ Tat-Siong Benny Liew, *Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(Con)Textually* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Tyranny, Boundary and Might : Colonial Mimicry in Mark's Gospel," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, no. 73 (1999): 7–31; Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 2006, 24–44; Droge, "Ghostlier Demarcations."

¹² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, esp. 121–131.

emperor are both haunted by similar affects of Rome's globalizing presence, further complicating any understanding of Mark's relationship with the broad cultural contexts of the Roman Empire. This spectral relationship provides the murky grounds for exploring the larger haunting foundations of the ancient Mediterranean.

There is during this moment a certain pooling up of the open questions concerning life, presence, time. The uncertain nature of these questions creeps up on these texts and figures in a multitude of ways, spectrally shaping them while creating new openings and opportunities along the way. The figures of Jesus and the Roman Emperor are always already in a mutually haunting relationship in modern scholarship. Both are situated at the limits of life and death, indeed at the very limits of human existence in the ancient Mediterranean. Jesus' repeated assertion that he is a "son of humanity" (*υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*) suggests how the category of the "human" was in a certain state of flux at this moment. Attending to these dynamics both ancient and modern can bring larger haunting discourses into view. With such specters upon specters in view, it seems fitting to begin with some ghost stories that involve the Roman Emperors themselves.

Emperors, Living and Dead

One cannot be an emperor, or create an empire, without also creating a few ghosts. "Historical and discursive colonization depend on the creation of ghosts," explains Laura Donaldson. "Indeed, the layering of one society upon another only occurs through physical and symbolic violence requiring either the deaths of conquered peoples or their social suppression and assimilation. Colonization transforms them, in other words, into ghosts."¹³ Top-down models of Romanization are now out of fashion,¹⁴ as I

¹³ Donaldson, "Gospel Hauntings," 110.

explored in the introduction. Mary Boatwright explains that the “history of the Roman Empire is marked by the interplay of persuasion and force.”¹⁵ Even so, Rome and the society over which it ruled was fundamentally kyriarchal.¹⁶ Indeed, the violent martial power of the Roman Empire is always a spectral possibility that haunts even the most peaceful provincial relationships. The events portrayed in the Gospel of Mark show the sort of indiscriminate bodily harm that the imperial apparatus could inflict upon its occupants.¹⁷ In this way the globalizing presence of Rome’s empire over diverse peoples and places created countless ghosts, some of whom I attempt to see in this chapter.

Building on Donaldson’s arguments I suggest that Roman Empire also created ghostly and spectral figures, and the emperor himself was among them. I see spectrality operating in the literature, rhetoric, and cultic activities that rendered the emperor present in the ancient Mediterranean.¹⁸ The emperor is ghostly in this material sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively. As I will explore below, the emperor’s absent-presence in the form of images and statues relied on a spectral logic that permeated the ancient Mediterranean. This disrupts any hierarchical mapping of absence and presence, while these apotheosizing emperors called the boundaries between life and death into question.

¹⁴ For more on this see, e.g., Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity, and Empire*.

¹⁵ Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, 4.

¹⁶ Kyriarchy is the neologism Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza uses to describe “domination by the emperor, lord, master, father, husband, elite propertied male.” As a feminist term of art, it helps “underscore the complex inter-structuring of dominations.” Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 14.

¹⁷ See the arguments regarding the new experiences of bodily violence under the Roman Empire in, e.g., Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, esp 1–16.

¹⁸ Given the focus of this project, the materials in this chapter remain confined to the early Roman imperial era, roughly mid-first century BCE to second century CE.

Even when absent, the emperor could be felt as a “seething presence.”¹⁹ The emperor becomes the embodiment of the violent powers and spatial contradictions fundamental to Rome’s globalizing empire. Past and present likewise swirl around this figure placed at the precipices of life and death. Spectrality helps explain how representations of the Roman Emperor are engaged in complex explorations of absence and presence, and life and death.

This spectral logic suffusing Rome’s empire and its emperor indicates that haunting is occurring in several ways. The haunting affective presence of Rome and its emperor left indelible marks upon the textual products of that milieu. Basil Dufallo has already signaled some of the subtle ways that Rome reshaped representations of the living and the dead in literature from this period.²⁰ The spectral marks of empire likewise affected bodies and peoples a grand scale. One aspect of haunting as Avery Gordon explains it, “is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely.”²¹ The contradictions inherent in the Roman Empire’s expansive rule over geography and individuals thus manifest themselves in ways both more subtle and even more sinister than the overt violence seen in Jesus’ crucifixion. This kind of state power “involves controlling the imagination, controlling the meaning of death... involves haunting the population into submission to its will.”²² Spectrality and haunting are thus essential features of the Roman Empire. The ghosts created by Rome’s empire are not limited to

¹⁹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 8.

²⁰ e.g., Dufallo, *Ghosts of the Past*, esp. 1–12, 123–128.

²¹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, xvii.

²² *Ibid.*, 124.

the bodies crushed under its foot, however, as the globalizing reach of the Roman Empire shook the very metaphysical foundations of the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean.

Emperors and their Ghosts

Narratives about the Roman emperors slide into ghost stories with some regularity in antiquity. The Roman historian Suetonius tells of the strained relationship between the emperor Nero and his mother Agrippina. Her criticisms offended the emperor, leading him to exile her from his palace. Agrippina's "violence and threats" (*minis eius ac violentia territus*) eventually "terrified" Nero. He thus tried to have his mother killed. Nero employed poisonings, a sabotaged ship, and other "accidents" in failed attempts to be rid of her. Eventually he had her executed on trumped up assassination charges. Despite this supposed success, Nero was not free of his mother's presence. Suetonius reports that Nero confessed that the "ghost of his mother" (*materna specie*) frequently harassed him along with "the whips and torches of the Furies [*verberibusque Furiarum ac taedis ardentibus*]" (Suetonius, *Nero* 34).²³

Agrippina's post-mortem harassment of Nero drives him mad, as his imperial violence does not silence her. For Felton, this illustrates the manner in which "the living cannot break their emotional links to the dead."²⁴ This is a felt presence of those dead and gone. Nero enlists Magi to call forth her "shade" (*manes*) to obtain its forgiveness (*Nero*

²³ For the Latin of Suetonius' works, I rely on the Loeb editions. See Suetonius, *Suetonius, Vol. I: The Lives of the Caesars. Julius. Augustus. Tiberius. Gaius. Caligula*, trans. J. C. Rolfe, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914); Suetonius, *Suetonius Vol. II Claudius. Nero. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Vespasian. Titus, Domitian. Lives of Illustrious Men: Grammarians and Rhetoricians. Poets (Terence. Virgil. Horace. Tibullus. Persius. Lucan). Lives of Pliny the Elder and Passienus Crispus*, trans. J. C. Rolfe, Revised edition, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914).

²⁴ Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 11.

34).²⁵ This strangeness gravitates toward an emperor like Nero, “to whom the most elaborate traditions of necromancy attach.”²⁶ Tacitus and Cassius Dio tell variations on these tales of Nero haunted by his mother, reflecting their popularity and power (Tacitus *Annals* 14.5, 9-10; Cassius Dio 61.14). The shade of Agrippina also rises from Tartarus to deliver a haunting soliloquy in the play *Octavia*, later attributed to Seneca (*Octavia* 593-645). These spectral apparitions that haunt an emperor like Nero, unwilling to be mere a victim of imperial violence, “reminds us that the past and the present are neither discrete nor sequential.”²⁷

Suetonius also tells a tale of another much-maligned emperor, Caligula, who was assassinated for his monstrous deeds (Suetonius, *Caligula* 58). After his murder, the dead emperor’s “body” (*cadaver*) was only “half burned on a hastily made pyre” (*tumultuario rogo semiambustum*) and then “buried under a light covering of ground” (*levi caespite obrutum est*). This was done in “secret” (*clam*), out of sight in a private garden. However, Suetonius says that it was “well known” that the caretakers of this garden were “harassed by ghosts” (*umbris inquietatos*) and the house “in which he died” (*in qua occubuerit*) did not go a single night without being visited by “terror” (*terrore*). The spectral presence of the improperly buried emperor wreaked havoc on the living until Caligula’s sisters dug up his body, cremated it, and put it in a tomb (*Caligula* 59). The “need for a proper burial,” notes Felton, constitutes “the majority of cases in antiquity where the

²⁵ The Persian Magi’s presence in this story highlights the cosmopolitan undoing of center and periphery in the Roman imperial Mediterranean, an undoing in which the emperor participated. Even so, a dead woman haunting her killer surpasses the strange foreignness of these Magi. For more on this, see Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 128–148.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁷ Freccero, “Queer Spectrality,” 196.

disembodied dead return to haunt the living.”²⁸ Yet, Ogden also sees in this story that “a ghost did have the ability to haunt at once both the place in which its body lay and the place of its death.”²⁹ The ancient (imperial) dead thus cannot be confined in space or time. As I explore below, the chaotic manner in which this unquiet spirit of Caligula haunts multiple spaces at once proves constitutive for emperors both living and dead.

Suetonius also relates a different kind of story about Otho, who usurped the principate by having his predecessor Galba killed (Suetonius, *Otho* 6). Suetonius draws direct parallels with Nero, describing how the crowds hailed Otho as a new Nero, and that he even had Nero’s busts erected again. This replication of the dead Nero signals the observations of Dufallo regarding how the living mimic the dead in this period. As with Nero before him, Otho was haunted by those whom he killed to obtain his power. The “ghost of Galba” (*manes Galbae*) visited him at night, disturbing his sleep. Otho too undertook “every kind of expiatory rite” (*omnia piaculorum genera*) to try to propitiate this specter (*Otho* 7). This is yet another instance of an emperor gaining and consolidating their power through murder, only to find the murdered victim continuing to haunt them. This is also another instance of an emperor engaging in necromancy in order to be rid of the haunting reminders of their violence.³⁰ Stories like this likewise illustrate how apparitions of the ancient dead most commonly “appear in the dead of night.” Indeed, Galba’s nighttime visits to Otho show the “connection between night and dreams.”³¹ The liminal darkness of night and dreams, betwixt the days and between

²⁸ Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 9.

²⁹ Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 101.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 153; Hope, *Roman Death*, 118.

³¹ Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 7.

wakeful moments, prove to be the perfect moments for the arrival of ghosts hovering between life and death.

Many of these stories show how the figure of the emperor is portrayed not only as haunted by ghosts, but also *as* a ghost. This evidences the spectral logic that shapes these emperors, for as Avery Gordon explains, “even those who haunt... are haunted too.”³²

Cassius Dio tells of the reign of emperor Caracalla. One of the sons of Septimius Severus, Caracalla obtained his position as sole ruler by having his brother Geta killed. Dio relates that Caracalla then had “distressing apparitions” (πικροῖς τιςὶ φαντάσμασι) of his father and slain brother. He was so affected by their return that he called up spirits (ψυχαγώγησε) to solve his dilemma. Caracalla summoned the ghosts of his father as well as Commodus (τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ τε Κομμόδου ψυχὴν). Commodus’s spirit offers no help, uttering only vague statements that further terrified the haunted emperor. Severus was silent, but Geta accompanied him despite being “unsummoned” (ἄκλητος). Caracalla continued to beseech gods of all sorts for assistance, to no avail (Cassius Dio 78.15).³³ This emperor’s violent actions render his brother a ghost who haunts him alongside the specter of their father Septimius Severus. When Caracalla tries to control the spirits from the past through necromancy, they confound him. Indeed, the ghost of Geta appears during these mantic rituals despite Caracalla’s attempts to avoid him. These spectral emperors evoke their own past reigns as haunting alternatives to that of Caracalla. The irony of Caracalla’s story is that his interests in “calling up the dead” (νεκυία χρησαμένω)

³² Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 5.

³³ For the Greek text, I rely on that provided the Loeb editions. Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, trans. Earnest Cary and Herbert B. Foster, vol. I–IX, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914).

lead directly to his own death (Cassius Dio 79.4-7; Herodian 4.12-14).³⁴ The Roman emperors were thus frequently associated with transgressions of life and death of all sorts.³⁵

There are several intersecting themes here that involve the Roman Emperors interacting with death and the dead. These emperors create innumerable ghosts, some of whom are family members. These familial ghosts accompany the emperors along their ascension to power. “The ghost or the apparition,” explains Avery Gordon, “is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent.”³⁶ In the above stories, the people killed by Roman power do not remain dead and in the past. They come back, disrupting the status quo. These disruptions inspire some Roman emperors to resort to necromancy, as in the stories about Nero and Caracalla.³⁷ Moreover, the emperors themselves were often depicted as ghosts, haunting their literal and literary assassins. The lines between the living and the dead, or absent and present bodies, becomes hazy around the figure of the emperor. “The ghost makes itself know to us through haunting and pulls us affectively into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience as a recognition,” argues

³⁴ Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 154–155.

³⁵ Our old friend Pliny the Younger also relays a tale of a deceased emperor visiting the living comes from a letter by Pliny the Younger. Pliny tells of Caius Fannius who, while writing a series of books on the crimes of Nero, imagined that the emperor visited him. Nero sat and read through the books Fannius had been writing, finishing book three. Fannius interpreted this portent to mean that he would die after finishing that third book, and his interpretation came true (Pliny the Younger, 5.5.5-7). For more on this story, see Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 74–75.

³⁶ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 8.

³⁷ Ogden defines necromancy as the practice of the living communicating with the dead in the hope of obtaining special knowledge or placating angry spirits. As explored briefly in the introduction. For more, see Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, xvi–xvii.

Gordon.³⁸ These ghosts of the emperors and the ghosts haunting them draw us into the felt experience of the Roman Empire. It is the feeling of a world overseen by the exceptional figure of the Roman Emperor, whose power emanates outward through (in)visible marks upon bodies and the cosmos.

These works by Roman historians are of course rhetorical. I do not take such stories as the actual events of these emperors' lives. Rather, their rhetorical nature is itself suggestive. Valerie Hope acknowledges that such stories "are extreme and fanciful tales told as clear indications of wicked, corrupt and even seriously disturbed minds." Even so, they "suggest a thought world that imagined fluid boundaries between the living and the dead."³⁹ Few modern historians believe that Hadrian sacrificed Antinous, as Cassius Dio reports, because he needed a willing victim for a necromantic ritual (Cassius Dio 69.11). Associating the emperors with stories like this reflected and produced their complex and at times contradictory status in the ancient world. As Ogden remarks,

Necromancy's strangeness also made it an appropriate attribute for Roman emperors, as we have seen. It constituted a convenient way of expressing their exceptional status, their distracted insanity, their anxiety about their own position, their attachment to bizarre un-Roman customs, their preparedness to abuse their wealth and power, their homicidal cruelty and ensuing guilt, and their desire to compete with the gods.⁴⁰

The rhetorical association of the emperors with ghosts and necromancy thus functions within the spectrality of their representations.

The Roman Emperor was an exceptional figure, acting and existing at the limits of human existence. Many of them are remembered in monstrous terms, and such

³⁸ She goes on, saying, "Haunting recognition is a special way of knowing what has happened or is happening." Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 63.

³⁹ Hope, *Roman Death*, 118.

⁴⁰ Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 264.

monsters are precisely the sorts of locations where the limits of the human are explored.⁴¹ The emperor is thus a ripe site for seeing the reworking of the category of the human taking place in this period. This entails all sorts of moribund details, with life and death overlapping and bleeding into one another. The spectrality within the literary-rhetorical formation of these emperors colludes with the ideological workings of the imperial apparatus itself. As I show below, this ambiguity around life and death or absence and presence that becomes associated with the emperors weaves into the very fabric of the ancient Mediterranean.

Divine Specters

On his deathbed, the emperor Vespasian is said to have quipped, “Alas, I think I am becoming a god [*Vae...puto deus fio*]” (Suetonius, *Vespasian* 23.4). While some scholars in New Testament and Early Christianity have read this statement humorlessly,⁴² Suetonius in fact portrays Vespasian as punning on a quite popular understanding of the relationship between the emperors and the gods. The diverse practices and beliefs arising from what scholars call the “imperial cult” had integrated reverence for the emperors as divine figures into the civic and religious life of the Greco-Roman world. This was not a new development necessarily, as centuries earlier Alexander the Great represented himself as the son of Zeus and expected apotheosis after his death (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.2.2; 4.10.6; 7.29.3; Aelion, *Veria Historia* 2.19). Many studies have sought to unearth the origins of these cult practices and ideologies, but regardless of where they came from,

⁴¹ For more on understandings of monsters and the monstrous like this, see Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods, and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁴² e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 55.

they were very much a part of life in the early Roman Empire.⁴³ The diverse phenomena that make up the so-called imperial cult reflect and participate in the construction of the Roman Emperor as a being traversing the borders between human and divine, absence and presence, and between life and death.

Apotheosis is one of the common ways that the emperors were represented in a spectral negotiation with life and death. Cassius Dio tells of when he attended the funeral for the emperor Pertinax in the late second century CE. There he witnessed the fallen ruler's supposed apotheosis. After a great procession and a variety of offerings, the funeral pyre for Pertinax was lit on fire and an eagle flew aloft from it. "Thus," says Dio, "Pertinax was made immortal [ὁ μὲν Περτίναξ οὕτως ἠθανατίσθη]" (Cassius Dio 74.5). This is but one of many reports of the emperors joining the gods in the heavens to become divine upon their deaths. Apotheosis is thus a common way in which emperors are constructed as figures traversing life and death, as well as ascending to new spatial heights.

Several writers commented upon the apotheosis of Julius Caesar himself. Pliny the Elder reports that after Caesar's death, games were held in honor of Mother Venus. During these games a comet appeared in the sky for a week. Many people believed that Julius Caesar's soul (*anima*) had joined the spirits (*numina*) of the immortal gods. (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 2.23).⁴⁴ Suetonius says that on the night before he died, Caesar

⁴³ See, e.g., S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*; Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23–132; Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan L. Reed, eds., *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

⁴⁴ Collins, *Mark*, 792.

dreamed that flew above the clouds and clasped “the hand of Jupiter” (Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 81.3). The dream world again becomes a place where the future and the past mix within the present, particularly around transgressions of life and death. Suetonius then tells the same story about a comet appearing during the games, noting that Julius Caesar was “numbered among the gods” (*in deorum numerum relatus est*) both by decree and conviction of the people. The text specifies that Augustus gave these games in honor of Caesar’s “deification” (*consecrato*), further linking death with divinity (*Julius Caesar* 88). The spectral logic of Julius Caesar’s apotheosis after his death becomes a kind of model for the future emperors.

The first Roman Emperor, Augustus himself, likewise experiences the same treatment in stories of his death. Suetonius reports that an ex-praetor swore an oath that he saw the “form” (*effigiem*) of the emperor “on its way to heaven” (*euntem in caelum*) after Augustus’ cremation (Suetonius, *Augustus* 100.4). As seen in the introduction, the Latin word *effigiem* is one of the many words employed for ghosts of all sorts. These emperors exist in some fashion despite their deaths and absences. Dio describes how after Augustus’ death that he was declared to be “immortal” (*ἀθανατίσαντες*). Afterward, the now immortal emperor was granted “priests and sacred rites” (*θιασώτας οἱ καὶ ἱερά*), signaling the establishment of his cult (Cassius Dio 56.46).⁴⁵ These cultic activities, explored more below, participated in these understandings of the emperor’s spectrality.

Stories about Romulus’ translation to the realm of the gods function as a kind of foundation myth for these ideas. Livy, in his *History of Rome*, relates stories of the death Rome’s founder. One of these stories involves Romulus being “snatched away to heaven

⁴⁵ Collins connects this text and others with Jesus’ empty tomb/resurrection in the Gospel of Mark. See *Ibid.*, 792–794.

by a whirlwind” so that he was “invisible” to the surrounding crowd (*ut conspectum eius contioni abstulerit*). This event took place among the senators, who thus hailed Romulus “a god, the son of a god [*deum deo natum*], the King and Father of the City of Rome.” These events were prefaced by the deeds of the living Romulus being described as “immortal” (*immortalibus*), showing how the transcendence of death creeps into the living. Livy composed this text during the heights of Augustus’s rule, and is likely linking Julius Caesar (and Augustus too) with Romulus here.⁴⁶

This apotheosis of Romulus is similar to that ascribed to Julius Caesar, Augustus, and countless subsequent emperors. Livy continues the story by telling of a certain Proculus Julius receiving a visit from Romulus. Proculus reports that at the “beginning of the day,” Romulus “suddenly descended from heaven” (*caelo repente delapsus*) and “he appeared to me” (*se mihi obvium dedit*). “Tell the Romans,” says Romulus, “that it is the will of heaven [*caelestes ita velle*] that my Rome should be head of all the world [*mea Roma caput orbis terrarum sit*]” (Livy, *History of Rome* 1.16). The text blurs a past founding figure with a more recent one, simultaneously ascribing divine attributes to them. Romulus then comes back to visit the living, in what Felton describes as a “crisis apparition,”⁴⁷ to presage the future and assert Roman identity and superiority. These stories are a glimpse of the increasing indeterminacies of past and present and life and death following Rome’s transition to empire.⁴⁸

Plutarch tells the same story, recounting that Romulus “disappeared” (*ἠφανίσθη*) on the Nones of July. He was “transferred suddenly” (*ἄφνω μεταλλάξαντος*) and “no

⁴⁶ Segal, *Life After Death*, 241.

⁴⁷ Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 30.

⁴⁸ Mario Erasmio, *Reading Death in Ancient Rome* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008); Dufallo, *Ghosts of the Past*.

remnant of his body or his clothing remained to be seen” (οὔτε μέρος ὤφθη σώματος οὔτε λείψανον ἐσθῆτος). Plutarch relays that Romulus was “caught up to the gods” (ἀνηρπασμένον εἰς θεοὺς), and regarded as “a benevolent god” (θεὸν εὐμενῆ) instead of a “good king” (χρηστοῦ βασιλέως) by the populace. Plutarch’s accounts drip with disdain (Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 27.3-7), not because he thought transference between human and divine realms was mere superstition.⁴⁹ Rather, his philosophical commitments negated the possibility of material bodies ascending to the heavens.⁵⁰ The post-mortem apparition to Julius Proculus also appears in Plutarch’s text (*Life of Romulus* 28.1-3).

Richard Miller argues that with these retellings of the Romulus story, “the translated ‘appearance’ tradition...became a prominent feature in Roman apotheosis accounts.”⁵¹ “The expectation of divination,” explains Wright, “and the normal process by which it was accorded, were well established in the early empire.”⁵² Miller calls this the “translation fable,” when a human being is translated to the divine realm of (the) god(s).⁵³ These ideas were widespread,⁵⁴ as an empty tomb would evoke the possibility of someone rising to the heavens.⁵⁵ These traditions of the translation and reappearance

⁴⁹ Simon Price cautions strongly against such anachronistic readings of so-called “elite” authors concerning ruler cults and the like. Price, *Rituals and Power*, esp. 117.

⁵⁰ Collins, *Mark*, 792.

⁵¹ Though it is still “optional component of the larger ‘translation fable’ topos.” Miller, “Mark’s Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity,” 774.

⁵² Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 57.

⁵³ Miller, *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity*, esp. 26–90, 150–200.

⁵⁴ I will discuss some of these categorical issues more below in my reading of Mark’s Empty Tomb story. For more, see Fullmer, *Resurrection in Mark’s Literary-Historical Perspective*, esp. 58–135.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, 49–60.

of Romulus suffused imperial propaganda,⁵⁶ causing apotheosized expectations to swirl most intensely around the Roman Emperors.

Spectral Appearances

These deified emperors appeared throughout the empire as statues and images, which further illustrate their spectrality. There were temples and buildings dedicated to the living and dead imperial families in every city of the empire. The seemingly dead and gone emperors were in fact omnipresent throughout the Roman world. In his lifetime, a bronze statue of Augustus was raised with his foot placed on a globe that represented the entire *οἰκουμένη*, or “inhabited world.” The inscription accompanying the statue read, “because he is a demigod” (*ὅτι ἡμίθεός ἐστι*) prematurely signaling his pending apotheosis (Cassius Dio 43.14.6). Divine immortality casts a shade in upon mortal life, and yet this immortality is only attained at death. These representations show how future expectations haunt present moments, with time bending around figures like emperors.

These spectral representations of the emperors likewise represented Rome’s globalizing presence in the Mediterranean. At least one coin was issued with an image similar to the above statue, depicting the globe under the emperor’s foot. The words printed on this side of the coin are the common imperial title *CAESAR DIVI F*, meaning “Caesar, son of (a) god.”⁵⁷ This title for the Roman emperors and Jesus Christ is a frequent keystone of empire-critical analyses of early Christian materials. While this etymological connection is provocative, the ideological resonance is even more fundamental. It is precisely images like this that evoke what Peter Sloterdijk calls Rome’s

⁵⁶ Miller, “Mark’s Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity,” 768.

⁵⁷ Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, 40–41.

“metaphysical globalization.”⁵⁸ This image of the sphere “under the sandals of the ruler became a common conceit of the pictorial language of power” explains Sloterdijk. The image

is stamped on objects which themselves are already agents and media of something of a relative globalization in the economic sense—Roman coins were, in their time, in circulation in the entire inhabited world. The imago of the cosmos on the coin is part of a pictorial history that flows not into art, but into the political and technical seizure of power.⁵⁹

Thus, a Roman coin is already a kind of metonymy for Rome’s globalizing power, as it too could circulate Rome’s globe. The Roman emperors, modeling themselves on Augustus as they often did, were figures situated at the very limits of human existences. To represent one’s self as placing a foot upon the globe was significant claim of power,⁶⁰ only outmatched by the widespread feats of the Roman Emperors themselves.⁶¹ These emperors, seen in death (and sometimes in life) as (among the) gods, possessed an unparalleled spatial presence.

The diverse activities of the imperial cult likewise participated in the spectral and spatial reasoning of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire’s subjects were spread

⁵⁸ “Even if the coins of Hellenic antiquity only circulated in the Roman ecumene, the same dynamic was already at work in their movement.” Sloterdijk, “Geometry in the Colossal: The Project of Metaphysical Globalization.”

⁵⁹ Ibid., 32–33.

⁶⁰ “[T]he phrase *orbis Romanus* did more than substitute for *imperium Romanum*. The latter indicated the sphere of Roman political power. *Orbis Romanus* did, too, by labeling that sphere the world.” Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 327.

⁶¹ Richard Hingley explains how the globe “became one of the recurring representations of Augustan and later imperialism, used to project Rome’s claim to a universal hegemony. The city of Rome, with its immense and diverse population, was often linked to the idea of ‘the world’, while the extension of the Roman empire was felt by some classical authors to project Roman identity across its territories, leading to the equation of *urbs* with *orbis* – the city with the world.” Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity, and Empire*, 1.

throughout the Mediterranean basin, but the emperor and the ruling family resided at the imperial center: the city of Rome. Caesar was rarely, if ever, physically present to his subjects. Rather, he was absent. Within the spaces between presence and absence, or center and periphery, existed the so-called imperial cult. This complex set of cultic practices and ideologies integrated reverence for the emperors and imperial family into civic religious life throughout the Roman Empire. Cassius Dio above described the establishment of priests and cultic rites to honor the dead and deified Augustus (Cassius Dio 56.46). Images of these divinized emperors appeared in cities throughout the empire, receiving pious devotion and sacrifices. Simon Price notes that “honors paid to the image and to the emperor in person were interchangeable,”⁶² showing the correlation between the emperor and his image. These statues and images of the emperor thus stood as his direct substitutes, making the absent emperor a present reality. A personal connection between each inhabitant of the empire and the emperor could be formed in this way.⁶³

It was the cities and rich citizens on the periphery who were erecting these statues of, and temples to, the emperors. It was not a top-down affair. Instead, people throughout the empire built these structures and performed these actions on their own. This created what Clifford Ando describes as a “culture of loyalism,” which “allowed the Mediterranean world to share a deity for the first time.”⁶⁴ That deity was the apotheosized

⁶² Price, *Rituals and Power*, 202–205.

⁶³ As Boatwright explains regarding Hadrian’s rule as emperor, “Every time a man took a political position in a ‘new’ Hadrianic colony or municipality, worshipped at a civic temple or tomb Hadrian had restored or built, or participated in a city’s ‘Hadrianeia’ games (or others with his name, even ones not sponsored by Hadrian himself), another personal tie was created. The authority and glory of the all-powerful emperor reflected on those associated with him.” Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, 205.

⁶⁴ Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, 131, 407.

emperor. By the time of the Nerva-Antonine Dynasty of the late first and second centuries, the emperor himself could be non-Roman. An imperial statue of a Spaniard like Hadrian, while rendering the absent figure present to the viewer, embodied the ways that proximity and distance folded around the emperor.

The logic that manifests itself in the activities of the Roman imperial cult as seen in cities like Ephesus resonates with the spectral logic of representations of the emperors. Ephesus was made and remade by benefactions and building projects all stamped with the imperial seal. The city ultimately had four imperial temples, an imperial portico, multiple gymnasia connected to the emperors, and a hundreds of imperial statues in places ranging from private homes to public streets and buildings.⁶⁵ The array of activities now called the “imperial cult” negotiated power relations between cities and the larger empire. At the end of the first century, Ephesus “measured and advertised its preeminence by the tokens of Roman favor.”⁶⁶ Denizens of the city erected statues and buildings dedicated to their imperial rulers in a mutual relationship of patronage and benefaction. Sacrifices to the emperors and their families took place on the altars of temples of the Sebastoi. Steven Friesen describes these activities as “a cosmological event” that shaped the appearance of the city and the daily lives of its inhabitants.⁶⁷

A city like Ephesus was thus transformed by imperial (omni)presence. As Price explains, “the emperor, whose name or image met the eye at every turn, received a striking position in this process of transformation.”⁶⁸ Images of the living and dead emperors were everywhere. Indeed, images of the imperial family joined the procession

⁶⁵ Price, *Rituals and Power*, 135.

⁶⁶ Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, 132.

⁶⁷ Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 47.

⁶⁸ Price, *Rituals and Power*, 136.

honoring the Ephesian Artemis, the city's divine founder. Rome's rulers thus appeared in the cosmological and mythological makeup of the city.⁶⁹ Temples like the one dedicated to the Flavian imperial family represented the living and dead emperors in the heart of the city of Ephesus. Such "provincial temples served as crucial symbols of the cosmology that supported imperial rule."⁷⁰ The images therein did likewise. The cult statue of Domitian in Ephesus' Flavian temple was colossal in size, conveying the enormity of the emperor and his superhuman status. He was very much like a god, while also very much alive.⁷¹ Yet when Domitian was assassinated and his memory condemned, the dedicatory inscription to this statue in Ephesus was edited to refer to his long-deceased father Emperor Vespasian.⁷² Time regularly warped around these living-dead god-men Emperors, and it did so on a grand imperial stage across a vast arena. This is but a sampling of how the haunting presence of the emperor and his empire shaped the very fiber of the cities of the ancient Mediterranean.

Laura Donaldson remarked above that the processes of colonialism create ghosts. The conquests of the Romans created countless ghosts, some of whom (more than we will ever know) pestered their conquerors. The Emperors often found themselves haunted by those they killed in order to consolidate their power. Practices of necromancy gravitated to them, as they attempted to appease the pestering pasts. These same emperors could likewise appear as ghosts, arising to gesture toward historical alternatives to the present moment. This mimics the apotheosizing logic that renders the emperors

⁶⁹ Elizabeth R. Gebhard, "The Theater and the City," in *Roman Theater and Society*, ed. William J. Slater (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 119–122.

⁷⁰ Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 55.

⁷¹ Price, *Rituals and Power*, 187–188.

⁷² Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*, 46.

divine upon their deaths, disappearing to be present with the Gods. This same spectral logic rendered such living-dead emperors omnipresent throughout the cities of the empire. This is spectrality in action, questioning the opposition between presence and absence, or past and present.⁷³

Indeed, the Roman Emperor was a figure situated at the interstices between life and death. Their spectrality signals the kinds of haunting taking place. Rome's ascent and transition to empire brought about an era of metaphysical globalization. This raised new questions about the limits of the human itself and its relationships with the divine. Such questions spill over likewise into the messy relationship between the past and the present. The past does not disappear forever. Alternative (and sometimes future) social orders always haunt the present one, and such historical alternatives leave their traces in the texts surveyed in this project.⁷⁴ These open questions will arise in other places, "in the gray shades of an everyday life charged with a phantom reality,"⁷⁵ bearing the spectral marks of Rome's empire. Such specters manifest the larger felt reality of this time and place, but signal their own alternatives as well.

Mark(s of Empire)

Despite protestations of Collins and others noted above, it is impossible to deny that the Gospel of Mark's portrayal of Jesus is engaged with and reflective of the Roman

⁷³ As Derrida says of spectrality, "Before knowing whether one can differentiate between the specter of the past and the specter of the future, of the past present and the future present, one must perhaps ask oneself whether the *spectrality effect* does not consist in undoing this opposition, or even this dialectic, between actual, effective presence and its other." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 46.

⁷⁴ These alternatives will raise their phantom calls in texts like the Gospel of Mark, 2 Maccabees, Luke-Acts, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and the Gospel of John. There is never a single answer to open questions. Indeed, sometimes the strongest answers are a refusal to answer at all.

⁷⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 124.

imperial ideologies of its time. Regardless of the “intent” of the Mark’s author, the gospel’s vocabulary (“gospel,” “lord,” “son of god,” “king,” etc.) does evoke standard imperial vocabulary. As A.J. Droge puts it, Mark’s “story is built out of the very stuff of Augustan myth.”⁷⁶ Moreover, the emperor as explored above was such a pervasive, powerful, and provocative figure that his affective presence would be unavoidable. The spectral figure of the emperor signaled the open questions of life, presence, and time felt during this period, sometimes violently. These are likewise questions about the status of the human amid this shifting metaphysical landscape, questions that spanned the empire.

The Jesus of the Gospel of Mark repeatedly refers to himself as *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, or “the son of humanity” (Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62). While the NRSV and other translations typically render this phrase as “son of man,” that does not capture the etymological or categorical force of the expression. The Greek word *ἄνθρωπος* (“human”) can carry a more gender-neutral force than *ἄνθρωπος* (“man”), so “man” does not seem to be the most obvious word to use here. Moreover, Jesus’ seemingly esoteric self-appellation evokes the “one like a human being” (*ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου*) from Daniel 7:13. In the Book of Daniel, the title distinguishes a new creature who looks like a human from the background of the chaotic menagerie of creatures described earlier (Daniel 7:3-12). Stephen Moore, observing this correlation, says that readers should not “take the Markan Jesus’ repeated assertions that he is ‘the

⁷⁶ He goes on, “However sharply critical of Rome we may judge Mark’s myth-making to be – or not to be – it is a testament to the success of the Augustan “gospel” that Mark cannot think outside the imperial box. [...] from its use of the term “gospel” itself, to the honorific “Son of God” bestowed upon its hero, to the episodes invented for him to display his remarkable wisdom and thaumaturgical talent, all the way up to the master plot, in which past, present, and future are placed under the command of another man(-)made god at its imperial epicenter.” Droge, “Ghostlier Demarcations,” 343.

son of humanity’—that is, ‘the human being’—at face value.” Instead, Moore suggests that “one might read them instead as signaling a certain crisis in the category of the human.”⁷⁷ The globalizing extent of Rome’s empire, and the figure of its emperor, intensified questions regarding the nature of “the human.” Such questions have their own hauntological presence in a text like the Gospel of Mark.

The Gospel of Mark’s representation of Jesus occurs in complex negotiations of life and death, absence and presence, and past, present, and future. What follows is an exploration of three key scenes in Mark’s gospel: Jesus walking on water, Jesus’ transfiguration, and the story of the empty tomb. These three scenes are helpful windows into Mark’s characterization of Jesus, as well as themes that cut across the gospel as a whole. Other scholars have read these scenes together, with source- and form-critical conclusions regarding their connections to Jesus’s resurrection. I suggest that spectrality better accounts for how these scenes function in Mark’s representation of Jesus. The spectrality of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark signals that this text is haunted. Like the emperor, it is haunted in its own ways by the violence of Rome’s empire, and the ways that Rome’s globalizing presence shaped the metaphysical landscape of the known world.

Ghost on the Water

After serving a miraculous seafood dinner to five thousand people, Jesus orders his disciples to sail to the other side of the sea without him (Mark 6:45). He goes to pray at a nearby mountain, while the disciples set sail for Bethsaida across the Sea of Galilee. It is “evening” (ὄψιας), the transition from day to night, when the disciples’ boat is “in the middle of the sea” (ἐν μέσῳ τῆς θαλάσσης) (6:47). The scene is thus framed by transitional

⁷⁷ Moore, “Why There Are No Humans or Animals in the Gospel of Mark,” 89.

and liminal terminology at its outset. Jesus looks out from his perch to see the disciples torturously straining (*βασανιζόμενος*) against their oars due to a wind rising against them (6:48a).⁷⁸

Upon witnessing his disciples' struggles, Jesus himself sets out to walk across the sea to them. The text specifies that his sea-strolling takes place at the "fourth watch of the night" (*περὶ τατάρην φυλακὴν τῆς νυκτὸς*),⁷⁹ or when the darkness of night would have been giving way to the very first rays of the morning.⁸⁰ As with Julius Proclus's post-mortem encounter with Romulus, the narrative takes abnormal pains to plot the timing of these events. Yet, these betwixt and between times paint a scene as unsettled as the sea upon which it takes place. One might expect Jesus to perform this miraculous sea walking in order to come to his disciples' aid, but he actually wanted to walk past them (*ἦλθεν παρελθεῖν αὐτούς*), a curious detail (6:48b). As it turns out, a human being walking across the sea at twilight is not exactly inconspicuous. The disciples see him walking on the sea and "cry out" (*ἀνέκραξαν*) in terror, for they thought that Jesus was a "ghost" (*φάντασμα*). The text specifies that "everyone" (*πάντες*) saw him, collectively thinking that they were seeing a ghost (6:49). Like Galba's nocturnal hauntings of Otho, this specter of Jesus visits his disciples at night.

⁷⁸ LSJ notes that the verb used here is also used in situations of torture. H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Liddell and Scott Greek English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 127–28.

⁷⁹ Collins explains that this "reflects the Roman custom of dividing the night, roughly the period between 6:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M., into four equal periods of time or watches, in which different people would be responsible for security... The fourth watch would then be a period of time extending more or less from 3:00 A.M. to 6:00 A.M." Collins, *Mark*, 333.

⁸⁰ Jason Robert Combs, "A Ghost on the Water? Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49-50," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 2 (2008): 345–58.

Jesus responds, saying, “Have courage. I am. Do not be afraid” (Mark 6:50). The beginning and ending of the statement targets the anxiety swirling in the boat. The middle statement, “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι), is more enigmatic. The NRSV’s pedestrian translation of these two Greek words as “it is I” does not do justice to the oddness or the significance of the statement. This phrase resonates with God’s self-identification in the Exodus narrative. In Exodus 3:13, Moses asks God what name he should use to refer to the deity. God responds, saying, “I am the one who is [ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν]” (Exodus 3:14 LXX). The echoes of Exodus are more obvious later in Mark’s gospel, when the high priest asks Jesus if he is the “Messiah,” the “son of the blessed one” (Mark 14:61). Jesus responds by saying, “I am [ἐγώ εἰμι]” (Mark 14:62). A little earlier in the narrative, Jesus warns his disciples that during the end times, some will come in his name saying, “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) to lead many astray (Mark 13:4-5). In both Mark’s gospel and the Exodus story, the “I am” phrase is uttered in moments where identity is in question. In this way, the phrase functions as a marker of identity affirmation. In a scene that is very transient and border-crossing already, it appears that the line between human and divine in the figure of Jesus is also in question.⁸¹

One of the earliest available interpretations of this story in fact heightens these divinizing details. The Gospel of Matthew’s retelling of Jesus’ walk on the sea transports the ghost from the disciples’ vision into their speech. “It is a ghost!” (Φάντασμα ἐστίν) the disciples cry out “in fear [ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου]” (Matthew 14:26). Jesus immediately

⁸¹ Collins also notes resonances in texts like Deuteronomy 32:39 and Isaiah 41:4. “Those in the audience who had grasped the assimilation of Jesus to God in this passage and who were familiar with the passages cited here from Deuteronomy and Isaiah in which “It is I” or “I am”...functions as a divine name or quality may have understood the expression of Jesus in similar terms.” Collins, *Mark*, 335.

speaks to the disciples, uttering the same words he does in Mark. However, the starkness of Mark's tale is expanded upon as Peter saunters out onto the watery walkway with Jesus. This is an opportunity to elevate Jesus' identity, and divinity, when Peter begins to sink. "Lord, save me!" (Κύριε, σῶσόν με) Peter cries out (Matt. 14:30). Indeed, the disciples are not confused (a la Mark) when Jesus enters the boat. Instead, they "worshipped" (προσεκύνησαν) him, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33). Matthew has effectively "de-fantasized" the text,⁸² ironing out the ambiguities to elevate Jesus ontologically and christologically as "Son of God." As with the Roman Emperors, their spectral configurations overlapped significantly with their divinity.

Modern scholars have followed this lead, and often categorize Mark's sea-walking story as an "epiphany." These categorizing efforts revolve around Jesus' identity, looking straight through the *φάντασμα* to other details. Martin Dibelius labels the story as a "tale"/"Novelle," which has the character of "epiphanies."⁸³ Bultmann called the story a "nature miracle," which emphasized the miracle worker's power over nature and connected him with God.⁸⁴ Gerd Theissen called the story a "soteriological epiphany," a rather self-explanatory title that emphasizes the saving nature of the revealed protagonist. Of these titans of New Testament criticism, Theissen alone gives any heed to Jesus appearing as a ghost, but only insofar as it points toward the epiphany of Jesus' divinity.⁸⁵

⁸² George Aichele, *Phantom Messiah: Postmodern Fantasy And the Gospel of Mark* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2006), 149.

⁸³ Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1935), 71.

⁸⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 215–216.

⁸⁵ Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 97.

The salty seawater in the story remains the dominant flavor of the text for many interpreters.⁸⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins states that “the most distinctive and characteristic theme of the story is the extraordinary deed of walking on the sea.”⁸⁷ She performs a thorough survey of ancient comparative material in this regard, finding important Jewish, Greek, and Roman corollaries. God’s power over the sea in the Hebrew Bible, with various primal allusions, is significant (Psalm 74:12-17; Job 38:16; etc.). Likewise, the Greek Poseiden (e.g., Homer, *Iliad* 13.26) and Roman Neptune (e.g., Virgil *Aeneid* 5.1057-1059) regularly display their power over the sea by riding their chariots across its waves. “Jewish, Greek, and Roman tradition shared the notion of a deity controlling the wind and sea and the image of that deity making a path in the sea.”⁸⁸ These superhuman powers cast a shade of divinity in multiple registers over the seemingly human Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. This story thus indicates the cultural hybridity occurring in the ancient Mediterranean under Rome’s rule, rendering cultural divisions imposed by scholars problematic.⁸⁹

When a story like this blurs the line between the human and the divine, modern readers tend to focus on parsing out just *how* divine the text portrays Jesus. The “I am” phrase uttered by Jesus has sparked a good deal of this research. Readers have honed in on several key Hebrew Bible passages (e.g., Exodus 3:13; Isaiah 41:4; 43:10-11; etc.)

⁸⁶ Though it is worth noting that Mark’s use of the term *θάλασσα* for a freshwater lake only heightens the fantastical elements of this story.

⁸⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Rulers, Divine Men, and Walking on the Water (Mark 6: 45-52),” in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi*, ed. Lukas Bormann, Kelly Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 74 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 211.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁸⁹ Hybridity “displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination.” Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 112.

where “I am” appears to refer to the holy name of God. Some read this title as specifically associated with “God’s saving presence.”⁹⁰ Even Jesus’ intent to “pass by” the disciples (Mark 6:48) can point toward a divine identity. William McInerny states that “passing by [...] is the way in which God manifests God’s self to humans in the Hebrew Scriptures.”⁹¹ Indeed, numerous references support this passing theophany: Exodus 33:19, 22; 34:6; 2 Samuel 23:4; 1 Kings 19:11; Amos 7:8; 8:2; Job 9:11. Moreover, Jesus’ urging his disciples to not be afraid is standard language in divine epiphanies (i.e., Daniel 10:12 LXX).⁹² The traces of these other texts and traditions leave their marks on Jesus’ sea-sauntering, effectively calling into question the very human-divine distinction in the process.

But what of the ghost? Scholars tend to focus on the disciples’ confusion and their hard hearts. For instance, Jason Robert Combs argues that the disciples’ belief that Jesus was a ghost was an “absurdity,” which ancient readers would have recognized. Combs surveys ancient texts and materials on ghosts, finding no evidence of post-mortem entities walking on water.⁹³ Quite the contrary in fact, as he argues that in the ancient world ghosts were not capable of such a feat.⁹⁴ Thus, for the disciples to believe such a thing further portrays them as not understanding Jesus. “Mark’s insertion of this absurdity,” says Combs, “emphasizes in dramatic fashion the disciples’ misconstrual of

⁹⁰ e.g., John R. Donahue, S.J. and Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *The Gospel of Mark*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 213.

⁹¹ William F. McInerny, “An Unresolved Question in the Gospel Called Mark: ‘Who Is This Whom Even Wind and Sea Obey? (4:41),’” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 259.

⁹² Collins, *Mark*, 334–335.

⁹³ Combs, “A Ghost on the Water? Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49-50.”

⁹⁴ Combs’s argument proves so persuasive that Adella Collins follows it in her commentary. Collins, *Mark*, 334.

Jesus' messiahship."⁹⁵ Here Combs follows William Wrede, who read the disciples' regular misunderstanding as part of the "messianic secret."⁹⁶ This now-popular reading of Mark has a tendency ignore some of the more provocative aspects of Jesus' characterization.⁹⁷ However, Combs makes what amounts to an argument from silence. Since he cannot find evidence that suggests that ghosts could walk on water in antiquity, then they could not do so. Thus, the disciples don their dunce caps again as the inept followers of Jesus.

However, in Achilles Tatius's novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the male protagonist saw what he thought was the death of his betrothed at sea. While sailing later in the story he remarks, "I am still sailing over Leukippe's grave [Λευκίππης τὸν τάφον]. Perhaps her ghost [εἶδωλον] is circling about the ship even now. They say that souls [ψυχάς] who die in the sea never descend to Hades but wander over the water [μηδὲ εἰς ἄδου καταβαίνειν ὄλως]" (Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 5.16).⁹⁸ I will explore the irony of this moment in the third chapter of this project. Even so, there is no hint that his reasoning is somehow askew here. While the vocabulary is different from that used in Mark's gospel, it seems clear from this text that ghosts could indeed walk on water in the ancient Greco-Roman world.

⁹⁵ Combs, "A Ghost on the Water? Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49-50," 358.

⁹⁶ William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, trans. J.C.G. Greig (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1971), esp. 101–114.

⁹⁷ "Biblical scholars have tried to negate the phantasmic quality of Jesus in the gospel of Mark through the theory of the 'messianic secret.' This theory holds that Mark's gospel presents Jesus as deliberately keeping secret the truth that he is really the Christ until an appropriate time to reveal this information." Aichele, *Phantom Messiah*, 139.

⁹⁸ Bryan P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 241.

Furthermore, a closer look at the details of the story raise questions about such a negative characterization of the disciples. In verse 49, they “thought” (ἔδοξαν) they saw a “ghost” (φάντασμα). However, verse 50 explains and confirms their fear: for (γάρ) they all (πάντες) saw it/him (i.e., the ghost/Jesus). As George Young notes, they were afraid precisely because they *all* saw this ghost.⁹⁹ Their lack of understanding comes later in the scene, when they are “amazed” (ἐξίσταντο) by Jesus’ calming of the wind (6:51). Verse 52 explains their amazement, saying that it was because (γάρ again, the same transition used before) “they did not understand concerning the loaves.” The disciples’ confusion is not linked to them seeing a ghost. Of this they were all apparently quite certain. Rather, it is linked to their amazement over Jesus’s miraculous deed of calming the wind. So, not only was it possible generally for ghosts to walk on water in the ancient world, but the text is ambiguous enough to suggest that the disciples *actually* saw a ghost.

In the revised edition of his *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, Rudolf Bultmann suggested that this story could in fact originally be a resurrection story that was inserted into the life-narrative of Jesus by Mark.¹⁰⁰ This is no doubt due to details ranging from Jesus’ extraordinary feat of walking on water, to the odd fact that the disciples thought they saw a “ghost.” Indeed, the “epiphany” readings of the tale, complete with the standard assurances not to be afraid, highlight the shades of divinity cast over Jesus’ characterization. All of this could coincide with an elevated post-resurrection figuration as well. Patrick Madden argues that all of these features point to this story being a

⁹⁹ George W. Young, *Subversive Symmetry: Exploring the Fantastic in Mark 6:45-56* (Brill, 1999), 127.

¹⁰⁰ Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 230.

“displaced resurrection narrative.”¹⁰¹ Comparative readings of this story in the Gospel of Mark with parallel versions in Matthew 14:22-33 and John 6:16-21 frequently suggest the same.¹⁰² The narrative details themselves suggest a great deal of troubling around time, presence, and the boundaries between life and death. The possibility of this story in fact being an out of joint resurrection tale, to which I will return at the end, renders broader notions of time within the Gospel of Mark as decidedly “out of joint.”¹⁰³

This story is ultimately about the crossing of many intersecting boundaries. When Jesus walks across the sea, he is traversing boundaries. It is the middle of the sea, precisely between here and there. It is the transition from night to day. Jesus’ intent to pass by his disciples, and his power over the sea, call into question the boundaries between human and divine. Indeed, Jesus’ power over the seas here and elsewhere grant him a superhuman strength that emperors could only dream of having.¹⁰⁴ As with the emperors, these shades of divinity are accompanied by death. Jesus’s disciples think that they see a ghost upon those unsettling waves, as this messianic sea-walker phases in and out of sight. The many varying evocations this pericope inspires underscore the cultural hybridity at play. This is all evocative of the hauntological effects of this globalizing moment in the Roman Empire, as the limits of the human are stretched and. This tempest

¹⁰¹ Madden, *Jesus’ Walking on the Sea: An Investigation of the Origin of the Narrative Account*, 138.

¹⁰² e.g., Alsup, *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition: A History-of-Tradition Analysis with Text-Synopsis*, 140–141.

¹⁰³ This study is not form-critical or source-critical in its orientation, and there are reasons to be suspicious of these sorts of claims. Even so, that such a reading is possible is still provocative, and it further highlights the prevalence of these themes of life and death, absence and presence, and the messiness of transitions in time.

¹⁰⁴ Rick Strelan, “A Greater Than Caesar : Storm Stories in Lucan and Mark,” *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 91, no. 3–4 (2000): 166–79.

of a tale ultimately raises the very specter of Jesus' own forthcoming resurrection, which is predicated by his death via Roman execution. The resurrected Jesus thus haunts the living Jesus, leaving ineffable marks on his characterization and any attempt at interpretation.

Transfigurations

Several chapters after the sea-walking scene, the text continues to express Jesus' liminal characterization through his very body. "On the way" (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ) to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus predicts his (the "Son of Man's") suffering, death, and rising after three days (Mark 8:31). He also tells his disciples that they must "take up their cross" if they want to truly follow him (8:34), further presaging the events of the end of the gospel. Then, Jesus claims that "there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God having come in power" (Mark 9:1). These statements about life and death, uttered in between places, set the stage for Jesus' transfiguration. The next words of the text state that after six days (μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ), Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to a high mountain to be by themselves.

The Gospel of Mark describes the next fantastical moment rather plainly: "And he was transfigured [μεταμορφώθη] before them" (Mark 9:2). This sentence, bursting with potential meanings, gets qualified with the ensuing words. Jesus' "garments" (ἱμάτια) become "exceedingly shining white" (στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν), more white than any bleacher "on earth" (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) could accomplish (9:3). Scholars often note how only Jesus' clothes actually change in Mark's version of this pericope, while in Matthew and

Luke his actual physical appearance alters (Matthew 17:2; Luke 9:29).¹⁰⁵ While this might make Mark's scene more mundane by comparison, the unique detail about no bleacher "on earth" being capable of making such a color resists such a diagnosis. By highlighting the unearthly hue of Jesus' clothing, the text implies that this dazzling color change has a heavenly origin. Playing on the heaven-earth binary in this way, the text effectively muddles the divine-human binary as well.

Candida Moss and others have shown how this scene provokes comparison with numerous stories of disguised Greek and Roman deities appearing to humans.¹⁰⁶ Stories of Apollo or Athena going incognito as mortals in Homer's epics were not uncommon (e.g., *Illiad* 20.81-82, 131; *Odyssey* 13.222-223, 288-289). "The gods do, in the guise of strangers from afar, put on all manner of shapes," the bard declares, "and visit the cities, beholding the violence and righteousness of men" (*Odyssey* 17.485-487).¹⁰⁷ Toward the end of this scene in Mark's gospel, a voice speaks from a cloud that envelopes the scene, saying, "This is my beloved son, listen to him." (Mark 9:7). This phrase, uttered to Jesus at his baptism earlier, is now directed at the disciples. As Moss notes, details like this would resonate with divine expectations of both Jewish and non-Jewish readers.¹⁰⁸

Again, these scenes signal the haunted hybridity of their cultural moment.

¹⁰⁵ "Thus, the two later synoptic accounts either independently or under the influence of oral embellishments to the story, place emphasis on the physical transformation of the face." Paul Foster, "Polymorphic Christology: Its Origins and Development in Early Christianity," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58, no. 1 (2007): 68–69.

¹⁰⁶ Candida Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," *Biblical Interpretation* 12 (2004): 74–85.

¹⁰⁷ References and translation from Collins, *Mark*, 418–419.

¹⁰⁸ "The transfiguration in Mark is a collage of religious motifs that draws upon both Jewish and Greek religious thought." Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," 88.

The story also links also itself with the phantasmal sea-walking Jesus when it introduces Elijah and Moses, saying that they “appeared” (ᾤφθη) to the disciples. This language of vision and appearance echoes the φάντασμα (coming from φαίνω) that the disciples thought they saw walking on water in chapter 6. While ὁράω and φαίνω are not etymologically connected, the concepts of sight, vision, and appearance cut across both terms. Such apparitional language resides at the very limits of finitude, between something and nothing. “The Thing is still invisible, it is *nothing* visible,” explains Derrida when describing the specter, “at the moment one speaks of it and in order to ask oneself if it has reappeared. It is still nothing that can be seen when one speaks of it.”¹⁰⁹ Both of these scenes are likewise framed by movement, and being “in between” locations. Whether it is the disciples being “in the middle” of the Sea of Galilee, or Jesus presaging the transfiguration scene “on the way” from one place to another, both stories are transient.

The scene is not just transitory in terms of space, but also in terms of time. After Jesus’ prophetic statements to his disciples as seen above, the text states that he takes them up the transformative mountain “after six days” (μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ). Joel Marcus notes that “time indications in Mark are rare,” and most often vague.¹¹⁰ Yet, this scene is prefaced by a specific indication of time, much like the scene of Jesus walking on the sea or Romulus appearing to an ex-praetor. When transgressions of life and death occur, time itself becomes all the more important. Scholars are divided (as always) over what exactly (if anything) is meant by this particular reference to “six days.” Some have suggested that

¹⁰⁹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 6.

¹¹⁰ “e.g., ‘in those days’ in 1:9; 8:1; etc. “that day” in 4:35; or “several days later” in 2:1.” Joel Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 27A, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 631.

this could be a reference to the Sabbath,¹¹¹ though that has met some strong resistance.¹¹² The most common reading is that this “six days” evokes Moses’ ascent of Mount Sinai six days after the cloud appears on the mountain (Exodus 24:16).¹¹³ The Mosaic allusion certainly fits with the apparition that takes place on this mountaintop.

Indeed, the text does more than just bolster Jesus’ identity by putting him on equal footing with the appearances of Elijah and Moses. Jesus in effect stands between two dead men from Israel’s past. Rather, Elijah and Moses are perhaps better understood as being merely “mostly dead.” There were several traditions that both Moses (e.g., Philo of Alexandria, *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1.86; *Life of Moses* 2.288; Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.48) and Elijah (e.g., 2 Kings 2; Josephus, *Antiquities* 9.2.2) were taken up to the heavens instead of dying normally.¹¹⁴ Placing Jesus in the midst of these two ascending figures at the top of a high mountain foreshadows a similar fate for Jesus. Jesus’ future glorification through resurrection thus further incorporates itself into this scene. The details of the story in fact place Jesus in a superior position related to these titans of Israel’s past.¹¹⁵ Joseph Fitzmyer argues that the heavenly voice in this scene signifies that “Jesus is not just Moses *redivivus* or Elijah *redivivus*; he is God’s Son and Chosen One.”¹¹⁶ Past and present meet, with encroachments from the future amid the

¹¹¹ e.g., Margaret Eleanor Thrall, “Elijah and Moses in Mark’s Account of the Transfiguration,” *New Testament Studies* 16, no. 4 (1970): 310–311.

¹¹² Collins, *Mark*, 420.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 27A:631.

¹¹⁴ Collins, *Mark*, 422; Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, 49–53.

¹¹⁵ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 27A:640.

¹¹⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, vol. 1 & 2 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 793.

living and the dead. All of this serves to stretch the limits of human and divine in the figuration of Jesus. Shades of imperial apotheosis appear here, but before Jesus has died.

Indeed, the order and grammar with which Mark introduces Elijah and Moses further shows just how “out of joint” time is in this story. The text specifies that “Elijah with Moses” (Ἠλίας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ) appear (ᾤφθη) on the mountain beside Jesus (Mark 9:4). Marcus observes that this ordering is “unexpected.”¹¹⁷ Moses lived far earlier than Elijah, and was a much more prominent figure in general. Dale Allison has shown how Elijah was often considered to be a throwback to Moses.¹¹⁸ The strangeness of placing Elijah before Moses appears to be confirmed in the next verse, when Peter says that they should build three tents: one for Jesus, “one for Moses, and one for Elijah [Μωϋσεῖ μίαν καὶ Ἠλίαν μίαν]” (9:5). Both Matthew and Luke, in their versions of the transfiguration story, correct this ordering as well. The disciples see “Moses and Elijah” (“Μωϋσεῖ καὶ Ἠλίαν” and “Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίαν” respectively) with Jesus on the mountain (Matt 17:3; Luke 9:30). All of these details point to the oddness of “Elijah with Moses” in Mark 9:4, and highlight the oddness of the scene in general. This is a clear disruption in any sort of linear time. Past, present, and future collide and collapse on this mountaintop. Apparitions of living-dead figures from the past stand alongside predictions of the death and return to life of Jesus, further complicating the scene.

The odd timing of this scene has contributed to speculations that the transfiguration was originally a post-resurrection story inserted into the life-narrative of

¹¹⁷ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 27A:637.

¹¹⁸ Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 39–45.”

Jesus. This has been a popular reading among scholars for some time.¹¹⁹ Julius Wellhausen was one of the first to make this argument, suggesting that the mountain in this scene was the same as the mountain where the resurrected Jesus appears in Matthew 28:16. He also suggested that the “six days” at the beginning of the narrative indicates six days after Jesus’ death and resurrection.¹²⁰ Wilhelm Bousset saw this as a possibility as well,¹²¹ while Bultmann took it as a well-established fact that this was originally a resurrection story.¹²² This has been heavily critiqued, however. For instance, the fact that a divine voice speaks instead of Jesus contrasts with the events typical of a resurrection story.¹²³ Also, Jesus tends to appear alone in resurrection stories.¹²⁴ However, even these points are not without their detractors.¹²⁵ Indeed, those against such an interpretation frequently grant many of the arguments of Bousset and others.¹²⁶ As with the scene of Jesus walking on the sea, the fact that so many scholars have been able to read the transfiguration in this way is telling in and of itself. The themes, images, and ideology at play resonate with that of the resurrection. The resurrected Jesus continues to haunt the Gospel of Mark before he has even died in the narrative.

¹¹⁹ Robert H. Stein, “Is the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8) a Misplaced Resurrection-Account?,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95, no. 1 (1976): 79–96.

¹²⁰ Julius Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Marci übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1903).

¹²¹ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus.*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

¹²² Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 259–261.

¹²³ Moss, “The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation,” 71–72.

¹²⁴ Morton Smith, “The Origin and History of the Transfiguration Story,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 36, no. 1 (Fall 1980): 41; Moss, “The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation,” 70–72.

¹²⁵ Charles E. Carlston, “Transfiguration and Resurrection,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80, no. 3 (1961): 233–40.

¹²⁶ Alsup, *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition: A History-of-Tradition Analysis with Text-Synopsis*, 141–144.

The traversal of life and death that occurs with the inclusion of Elijah and Moses only becomes amplified at the end of the scene. As Jesus and his disciples are descending the mountain, he issues a stern warning. He orders them to tell no one what they saw, “except when the son of man [ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου] should raise from the dead [ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι]” (Mark 9:9). The text reiterates Jesus’ words, saying that the disciples puzzled over what “to rise from the dead” (ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι) could mean (9:10). The Markan Jesus thus emphasizes his humanity just before predicting his personal resurrection from the dead, and does so immediately after his time-warping transfiguration. While many scholars are skeptical that the transfiguration scene is a story of the resurrected Jesus inserted into his life, the story is clearly demarcated by references to the resurrection.¹²⁷ Moss suggests that Jesus’ instructions to his disciples provide “a glimpse of the future resurrection and glorification of Christ,”¹²⁸ while Marcus acknowledges that this detail strengthens a “resurrectional interpretation of the transfiguration.”¹²⁹ Even if this pericope was not originally a post-resurrection story, its appearance here is shot through with resurrectional expectations.

Both the phantom Jesus walking on the sea of Galilee and the metamorphosing Jesus on a mountain signal the spectrality of Jesus in Mark’s gospel. Within the text, this spectrality signals how the resurrected Jesus haunts the stories of his earthly ministry. Much like Shakespeare’s King Hamlet, this specter of Jesus is a “*re*-apparition, but a

¹²⁷ By no means am I directly arguing that the transfiguration is in fact a “misplaced” resurrection story here. That sort of argument is far beyond the purview of this project. The resonances and readerly possibilities are, however, of interest.

¹²⁸ Moss, “The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation,” 73.

¹²⁹ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 27A:637.

reapparition of the specter as apparition *for the first time in the play*.¹³⁰ Every ghostly apparition, by its nature, is a “re-apparition.” It is the reappearance of someone who had formally appeared as alive and present, despite their supposed death and absence.

However in this instance, the reappearance occurs outside of linear time. A denizen of the Roman Empire would often see images of a deceased and deified emperor as their first (and likely only) encounters. This absent-present emperor, authorized routine violence from elsewhere and elsewhen. These are the same figures haunted by their violent pasts, and haunting their predecessors. Shades of the resurrected Jesus likewise make themselves felt earlier in Mark’s narrative, deconstructing the boundaries between appearance and reappearance. The unresolved violent rupture of Jesus’ death via Roman execution makes itself felt before it happens. Linear time folds in upon itself, while life and death appear to bleed together. These problematics lead the reader to the resurrected Jesus’ empty tomb at the end of Mark’s gospel.

Empty Tombs

As noted above, both Jesus’ sea-walking and transfiguration scenes in the Gospel of Mark have been linked with his resurrection in some fashion. Thematically and philologically, these stories resonate with the resurrection of Jesus. Such resonances have suggested to many scholars that these stories were in fact post-resurrection narratives, originally taking place after the empty tomb event explored below. Mark, for these scholars, has misplaced these post-resurrection stories into the life of Jesus. Such scholarly wonderings reveals how thematically and ideologically linked these periscopes are. Time is out of joint for these stories, just as life itself is out of joint. Jesus’

¹³⁰ Emphasis from original. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 4.

resurrection is necessitated by his execution at the hands of the Roman authorities. These resurrectional appearances are thus imbued with imperial presence, and the apparitional logic visible in these stories is likewise reliant upon the culture's shifting metaphysical foundations. It is thus appropriate to complete this exegetical exploration of Mark by probing the nooks and crannies of Jesus' empty tomb.

This conclusion to Mark's gospel is yet another story foregrounded by binaries and boundary-crossings. The text specifies that the Sabbath has ended, and that a new day is beginning (Mark 16:1). It was "very early" (*λίαν πρωΐ*) when the son was rising [*ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου*] (16:2). The reference to the sun "rising" (*ἀνατείλαντος*), while not the words used for resurrection in Mark's gospel (*ἐγείρω* and *ἀνάστασις*), certainly already evokes the expected event. Likewise, the description of the time of this scene evokes the time setting of Jesus' saunter upon the sea of Galilee. This is a transitional moment, when night is giving way to the day. As with other ancient texts narrating encounters with the undead, the text becomes specific with regard to time. Some commentators regard these initial verses as "overloaded" with "temporal indicators."¹³¹ On their way to the tomb, the women ask themselves who will be able to roll away the stone that is blocking the entrance (16:3). They were concerned about the presence of this stone, impeding their path to the dead body of Jesus. And yet, "having looked up, they see" (*ἀναβλέψασαι θεωροῦσιν*) that this "very large" stone had been rolled away (16:4). From the outset then, the expectations of these women visiting Jesus' tomb are

¹³¹ Collins, *Mark*, 795.

confounded. Limits and boundaries expected to exist do not. The *différance* between presence and absence is deferred and illusive.¹³²

The women look into and enter the tomb, and they are amazed by what they see. A young man sits inside the tomb, clothed in a white robe (16:5). Just as Jesus calmed the fears of his disciples on the sea, so does this young man when he speaks with the women. “Do not be amazed,” he says, for this Jesus “the Nazarene” that they seek “is not here” (οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε). In this way the epiphanic shadow cast by Jesus or Romulus darkens this scene. “Look” (ἴδε), he tells them, at “the place where they laid him [ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν]” (16:6). Just as the women expected the stone to be in the entrance to tomb, they certainly expected Jesus’ body to be in his tomb. The language throughout this scene, such as “here” (ὧδε) and “place where” (ὁ τόπος ὅπου), further emphasizes Jesus’ absence from that place. Again, an expectation of presence leads to the revelation of an absence.

This young man continues to speak to the women, saying that they should go tell “his disciples and Peter” that Jesus goes before them “into the Galilee” (εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν). It is “there” (ἐκεῖ) that “you will see him [αὐτόν ὄψεσθε]” (16:7). But the women, like the disciples seeing the spectral Jesus on the sea, “were afraid” (ἐφοβοῦντα). “Trembling” (τρόμος) and “amazement” (ἔκστασις) seize the women. The language in the final sentences of Mark’s gospel is vivid. While the resurrection and subsequent disappearance of Jesus is striking, it is in fact another detail that makes this scene almost incomprehensible. Based on their fear, trembling, and amazement, the text says that the

¹³² Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1982), 1–27.

women “said nothing to anyone” (οὐδενὶ οὐδέν ἐῖπαν).¹³³ And with that, the story ends (Mark 16:8).¹³⁴ It is a dark, disorienting conclusion to the story. Language of sight, seeing, and vision once again pervades this scene, as it did the transfiguration story before it. Yet, the text repeatedly highlights the *nothing* that is seen and said.¹³⁵ None of the characters actually see Jesus. His absence from this final scene supposedly signifies his presence in Galilee. Yet, that is ultimately an absence, for Jesus is not shown to be there at all.¹³⁶ Further, the absence of speech by the women calls into question the very presence and existence of this ending pericope. But, the presence of this story in fact contradicts the women’s supposed silence. The boundaries between presence and absence thus become illusory at the end of the story.¹³⁷

¹³³ A number of feminist readers have read this story not just as evidence for female disciples of Jesus, but as disciples who are characterized as even more faithful followers than the male disciples. See, e.g., Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: CrossRoad, 1985), 321–323.

¹³⁴ “Most scholars agree that v 8 is the earliest recoverable ending for a verity of reasons, including the fact that its priority can explain how all the other variants arose.” Collins, *Mark*, 797.

¹³⁵ These contradictions inherent to verses 7 and 8 have been used to further bolster claims that verse 8 was the end of Mark’s gospel. See e.g., J. M. Creed, “The Conclusion of the Gospel According to Saint Mark,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 31 (1930): 175–80.

¹³⁶ Indeed, despite attempts to argue otherwise, it is difficult to see how this ending does not in fact emphasize Jesus’ *absence*. John Dominic Crossan, “Empty Tomb and Absent Lord (Mark 16:1-8),” in *The Passion in Mark*, ed. Werner Kelber (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 145–152.

¹³⁷ We do have access to a number of early Christian efforts to interpret this ambiguous ending. The resurrection stories of Matthew and Luke pick up right where Mark leaves off at 16:8. I will turn to Luke’s take on this story in the next chapter and Matthew’s in the conclusion. There is also the so-called “longer ending” of the Gospel of Mark. It is not entirely clear when this apparent synthesis of the endings of other gospels like Matthew, Luke, and John was written or added to manuscripts of Mark’s text. Even so, this addendum to Mark is a provocative resurrection story. Jesus “appeared” (ἐφάνη) to Mary Magdalene, yet the disciples refused to believe that “he lives” (ζῆ) and “was seen” (ἐθεάθη) by her (16:9-11). Then Jesus “appeared in another form” (ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἑτέρῳ

The young man sitting in Jesus' tomb, whoever he might be,¹³⁸ says that “the Galilee” (τὴν Γαλιλαίαν) is where Jesus is present, and will be seen. However, the narrative cuts off, and even indicates that this rendezvous may have never occurred. There are several ways that scholars attempt to fill this void. Some assert that Mark and his audience knew the resurrection stories so well that they need not be mentioned.¹³⁹ Alternatively others argue that Mark did indeed tell more of the story, but that it was somehow lost.¹⁴⁰ Jesus' resurrection appearances become a new kind of phantom then, invisible and absent stories conjured by scholars to assure us that they were once indeed present.¹⁴¹ Another interpretation suggests that readers are beckoned back to the

μορφῆ) to two of the disciples, but the others still did not believe (16:12-13). Later he “was revealed” (ἐφανερώθη) to the eleven disciples where he castigated them for not believing “those who had seen him resurrected [τοῖς θεασαμένους αὐτὸν ἐγηγεμένον]” (16:14). After empowering them to perform impressive feats, Jesus “was taken up into heaven” (ἀνελήμθη) where he sits at the right hand of God. Rather than providing simple closure, this addendum raises further questions. The longer ending added to the Gospel of Mark is overburdened with “appearance” language, raising the very specter of a spectral Jesus. Jesus “appears” and supposedly “lives,” but he phases in and out of sight and even changes forms before his disciples. Despite its apparent reliance upon the stories from the other synoptic gospels, it offers no proofs of materiality. The Jesus of the longer ending only compounds the elusively spectral presentation in the Gospel of Mark. See the work by Bruce Metzger for more on the textual issues at play in Mark's multiple endings, and the work of Pagels who connects these details with broader Christian debates around resurrection in early Christianity. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 122–126; Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, esp. 5–14.

¹³⁸ Citing numerous references, (e.g., Daniel 8:15-16; 2 Maccabees 3:26, 33; Josephus *Ant.* 5.8.2, 5.8.3), Collins argues that the “motif of white or shining clothing typically characterizes angels and other heavenly beings.” Collins, *Mark*, 795.

¹³⁹ Such spectral argumentation too easily provides closure to a text seemingly hell bent on resisting it. See e.g., J. Lee Magness, *Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark's Gospel*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 30–31.

¹⁴⁰ e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 616–631.

¹⁴¹ Collins follows this line of reasoning, so that “the fact that the appearances of the risen Jesus was not narrated does not necessarily mean that the author believed that they did not occur or wanted to suppress the tradition that they did.” Collins, *Mark*, 797.

beginning of the story.¹⁴² The young man in the tomb tells the women that they will find Jesus in “the Galilee.” As seen above, numerous scholars have found the resurrected Jesus standing upon the wavy waters of the Sea of Galilee. Resurrection alone is a transgression of life and death, while an accompanying assumption evokes traversal of the elusive boundaries between human and divine. Nowhere in Mark’s gospel are such ideas more clearly evoked than the Transfiguration and the Walking on the Sea pericope. In both scenes Jesus is ambiguously present, with his appearance mystifying those trying to see him. He thus embodies the open questions of life and presence.¹⁴³ The narrative does indeed curl in upon itself, but it ways more spectral than previously imagined.

The “uniqueness” of this empty tomb story has caused anxiety for some scholars. As with scholarship on (Jesus’) resurrection generally, the precise influential relationship between this story and others from the ancient world is a perennial question. This work will literally employ tables and checklists to line up structural and linguistic similarities,¹⁴⁴ much like the empire-critical scholarship explored above. Scholars go back and forth over how “Jewish” Mark’s resurrection story is,¹⁴⁵ or how “Greco-Roman” it is.¹⁴⁶ The empty tomb story of Chariton’s first century CE novel *Callirhoe*, where the living heroine is buried and escapes from her tomb, is a striking comparative

¹⁴² Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), esp. 263.

¹⁴³ “If there is something like spectrality, there are reasons to doubt this reassuring order of presents and, especially, the border between the present, the actual or present reality of the present, and everything that can be opposed to absence, non-presence, non-effectivity, inactuality, virtuality, or even the simulacrum in general, and so forth. There is first of all the doubtful contemporaneity of the present to itself.” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 48.

¹⁴⁴ Miller, “Mark’s Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity,” 772–773.

¹⁴⁵ e.g., Bolt, “Mark 16:1-8: The Empty Tomb of a Hero?”

¹⁴⁶ Miller, *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity*, esp. 150–200.

(e.g., Chariton, *Callirhoe* 1.3-9). The discovery of her empty tomb is a scene that has raised questions about direct relationships between the stories of Jesus' resurrection and the *Scheintod* motif of the novels.¹⁴⁷ Some reject this outright,¹⁴⁸ while others see both sets of materials participating in a popular literary theme.¹⁴⁹

Roman imperial comparative materials prove to be some of the most provocative. The stories of Romulus explored above, and their imperial afterlives, signal clear similarities. The apotheosizing imperial logic of the Roman Empire proves so pervasive that some have argued that Mark is relying on these types of popular Greco-Roman fables for his story of Jesus.¹⁵⁰ Some argue that texts like the Gospel of Mark “assimilated and adapted” the stories of Jesus to this sort of material.¹⁵¹ Others still point to many Jewish stories of assumption throughout the Second Temple era, indicating alternative “backgrounds” for Mark's story.¹⁵² These other stories of empty tombs and mortals translated to be with the gods haunted Mark's gospel in its day, and clearly haunt it today.¹⁵³ The efforts of some scholars to drive cultural wedges between Mark's empty tomb and others from antiquity highlight these contemporary anxieties.¹⁵⁴ Postcolonial models of hybridity help us see how a story like Jesus' empty tomb in fact robustly

¹⁴⁷ e.g., Glen W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 99–120. I explore this issue more fully in the third chapter of this project.

¹⁴⁸ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 68–76.

¹⁴⁹ Fullmer, *Resurrection in Mark's Literary-Historical Perspective*, 171–219.

¹⁵⁰ Miller, “Mark's Empty Tomb and Other Translation Fables in Classical Antiquity.”

¹⁵¹ e.g., M. David Litwa, *Jesus Deus: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus as a Mediterranean God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), ix.

¹⁵² Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, esp. 20–25, 49–53, 83–98.

¹⁵³ Buell, *This Is Not a Ghost Story*.

¹⁵⁴ e.g., Bolt, “Mark 16:1-8: The Empty Tomb of a Hero?,” 27–37; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, esp. 63–74.

participates within its culture.¹⁵⁵ Rather than signify a strictly Jewish or Greco-Roman (or Christian) story, it in fact resides at the hybrid intersections of such cultural binaries.¹⁵⁶ Breaking these connections down by “motifs” or “traditions” focuses too strongly on models of influence that become quickly tied up with concerns for purity and orthodoxy.¹⁵⁷ Spectrality signals the messy ways that all of these materials engage questions of life and death, while haunting can hint at the complex relationships among them.

Mark’s empty tomb story is ultimately a story of a disappearance. Jesus is no longer there, and as far as the reader knows, he is no longer anywhere. The Romans have killed him, and now his body is nowhere to be found. To confront those who become disappeared “under the auspices of state-sponsored terror” explains Gordon, “is to contemplate ghosts and haunting at the level of making and unmaking of world historical events.”¹⁵⁸ The story inhabits the stretching limits of life and death, stretched by the violent power of the Rome and its emperor. Jesus’ figuration at the borders of absence and presence or human and divine mimic that of the emperor. Indeed, the emperor’s haunting (omni)presence finds a kindred spirit in the ways that the resurrected Jesus hauntingly appears in the earlier passages of Mark’s gospel. As Gordon argues, “a disappearance is real only when it is apparitional.” This is because “the ghost or the apparition is the principal form by which something lost or invisible or seemingly not there makes itself known or apparent to us.” The spectrality of the resurrected Jesus in the

¹⁵⁵ Liew, “Tyranny, Boundary and Might,” 12–13.

¹⁵⁶ e.g., Fullmer, *Resurrection in Mark’s Literary-Historical Perspective*, 163–177, 190–196, 211–219.

¹⁵⁷ See, e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, esp. 68–84.

¹⁵⁸ Gordon here is specifically addressing the *desaparecido* of Argentina’s dictatorships. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 63.

Gospel of Mark, appearing not in the end but *in media res*, speaks to the haunting taking place. “The ghost makes itself know to us through haunting,” explains Gordon, “and pulls us affectively into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience as a recognition.”¹⁵⁹ It is this recognition, this feeling of haunting, that the specter of Jesus calls us toward in the Gospel of Mark.

Completing a Conjuring

The Roman Empire reshaped the cosmological landscape of the ancient Mediterranean. Its power and might stretched across a vast area, unifying a diverse populace under a single hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchical pyramid stood the Roman Emperor, who embodied the contradictions that held this empire together. These emperors sculpted the makeup of ancient cities, as their temples and statues permeated local topographies. The figure of the Roman Emperor was an unfathomable construction, simultaneously present in the center of Rome and the provincial cities. Their cult provided material manifestations of their apotheosis, the divine status they attained upon their deaths. Dead figures from the past thus appeared in the present, expecting devotion and signaling Rome’s enduring presence. Such expectations often cast a divine pallor upon the living emperors, making them into an embodiment of the uncertain limits of the human during this period. Indeed, the Roman Emperor participated in a reshaping of the ancient world’s *anthropological* landscape as well.

These ascendant transformations play on the same logic as the ghost stories that gravitated toward these emperors. Emperors frequently found themselves haunted by their slain victims. The past never stayed the past for an emperor, as past traumas

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

interrupted the present. These questions of the living and the dead were amplified when the emperors themselves would appear as ghosts, haunting present regimes with their own. The Roman Empire created many specters, their emperors included, and these ghosts frequently represented past alternatives to the present order of things. Spectrality is embedded in the figure of the emperor, who embodied multiple overlapping and contradictory transgressions of life and death. They evidence the uncertainty of how presence relates to absence, and the past to the present. The omnipresence of such a figure, and the deadly apparatus he represented, contributed to a new “structure of feeling” as Avery Gordon would put it.

This haunting omnipresence of the living and the dead emperors leaves its spectral marks upon Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. The Jesus of Mark’s gospel is an enigmatic figure. For many readers, Jesus’ stroll upon the Sea of Galilee is his most divine moment. Yet, this transference between human and divine coincides with additional slippages as Jesus’ disciples see him as a ghost. At his most divine, Jesus appears situated at the waving borders of life and death, between visible presence and invisible absence. A similarly spectral representation occurs on the mountaintop during the transfiguration. Time itself becomes unhinged upon this mountain. Moses and Elijah, two dead men from Israel’s past appear to talk with the living Jesus about events in the future. Both of these scenes have a strong shade of resurrection due to this troubling of life, presence, and time. These pericopes either anticipate the future resurrection event or they literally *are* that event. The time thus becomes out of joint for Mark’s gospel.

The “spirit comes by *coming back* [revenant],” says Derrida, “it figures *both* a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself again and

again”¹⁶⁰ This notion of the ghost, as repetition and first time, matches well the specter of the resurrected Jesus who haunts earlier moments in the narrative. Jesus’ death by Roman crucifixion is an obvious evocation of Rome’s power. The empty tomb further inhabits the open questions of life and death, signaling the ambiguities of presence and absence. Haunted by many forces and figures, the Roman Emperor is the unspoken spectral presence that Mark cannot exorcize then or now. And yet, Jesus’ mimicry of the specter of this emperor provides its own haunting alternative, a different ordering of things. Jesus’ transfiguration and adoption as God’s son makes him an emperor of a different sort, albeit one also bound up in an incomprehensible negotiation of life and death.

The spectral order of things, the haunting metaphysical foundations of the Roman-ruled ancient Mediterranean, leave invisible traces upon both Jesus and the emperor. Both of these figures are both products of and participants in this *épistème*. This globalizing moment pressed questions of life, presence, and time into newly open positions. While these are always already open questions, the felt experience of that openness varies. These two ghosts I have conjured, that of the emperor and that of Jesus, draw us into this affective recognition. Categorical distinctions like resurrection or translation do not capture the complexities at play. Both point to the role of spectrality in the figures they help represent. Cultural bifurcations like Greco-Roman and Jewish are not only undone by the hybridity of colonial circumstances, they likewise mystify the shared dynamics of these materials. Mark’s Jesus and the Roman Emperor are both represented in ambiguous conversations with life and death. They both signal the ways that absence and presence can be undecideable. Indeed, the common spectrality of these

¹⁶⁰ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

two figures represents a kind of unity then, pointing to the invisible traces left on both of them.

Not all ghosts are equal though. Ultimately, Rome was the enforcer of this order of things. The emperor, shaped by the haunting globalizing presence of its empire, stood upon the globe. Mark's specter of Jesus has his own kingdom though, an alternative based on Israel's past that signals possible futures.¹⁶¹ The Gospel of Mark relies on the same spectral logic as the empire it seemingly opposes. Still, there it remains to speak back, a haunted text haunting a haunted empire. Yet Mark's Jesus is haunted by additional specters, those many other ghosts mentioned by Laura Donaldson that were created by the expansionary practices of empire. The bodies hanging on crosses all across Rome's empire are their own alternative to Mark's crucified Jesus, but silent they remain. These ghosts cannot be perceived in Mark's focalization on Jesus. They thus remain a voiceless voice, unable to speak over the specter of the resurrected Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Buell, engaging work of Avery Gordon (contra Derrida), notes how "Gordon insists strongly that there are "real alternatives" to present conditions that are "already here, embedded in the practices of subversion and not hiding in some elusive or fantasmic futurity" (2011, 5); we need to reckon with ghosts to identify these real alternatives and forge new futures, even if they will contain their own limits and flaws." Buell, "Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies," 36; Gordon, "Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity," 5.

¹⁶² Here I echo how Terry Castle describes the ways that the lesbian in Western history has been "reduced to a ghost effect: to ambiguity and taboo. It cannot be perceived, except apparitionally." Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

CHAPTER THREE

LOOKING FOR THE DEAD AMONG THE LIVING: THE SPECTRALITY OF RESURRECTION IN 2 MACCABEES AND LUKE-ACTS

[T]he ghost arises, carrying the signs and portents of a repression in the past or the present that's no longer working. The ghost demands your attention. The present wavers. Something will happen. What will happen of course, is not given in advance, but something must be done.

- Avery Gordon, "Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity"

Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death. Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance. Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too much like oysters observing the sun through the water, and thinking that thick water the thinnest of air.

- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

While Gospel of Mark concludes with an empty tomb and a missing Jesus, the Christian epic known as Luke-Acts is filled with the spectral traces of the resurrected Jesus.¹ After the disciples hear rumors of his resurrection (Luke 24:9-11, 14-15, 22-24, 34-35), Jesus appears before them. However, they fear that this person who materialized in front of them is a "ghost" (24:37). "Why are you frightened?" Jesus asks them. "Touch me and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see me having" (Luke 24:37-38). This scene raises questions not only for the characters in the story, but for modern readers as well. Where did this resurrected Jesus suddenly come from? How can he be both material (i.e., not a "spirit") yet materialize out of thin air? Why was it necessary to deny he was "spirit"?

¹ For more on Luke-Acts as a Christian epic, see Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

Jesus' pneumatological denial at the end of the Gospel of Luke raises further questions regarding how this story relates with other post-mortem appearances in antiquity. Some argue that ancient Greco-Roman ideas about ghosts influenced Luke's story,² while others deny such a possibility.³ These debates trade on problematic cultural bifurcations of Jewish(/Christian) vs. Greco-Roman outlined in the introduction. The intensity of these debates displays how the resurrected Jesus has always been haunted by other undead figures from the ancient world, and haunts scholars still.⁴ Focusing on obvious evocations of resurrection limits the material in question, excluding comparatives in others texts and within Luke-Acts itself. Indeed, "the spirit of Jesus" becomes an active agent in this text (Acts 16:7), as I show below.⁵ Yet, such spiritual dynamics are missing from scholarly discussions of resurrection in Luke-Acts, despite resurrection being a kind of unifying theme for this text.⁶ I argue that spectrality helps account for the multiple ways that Jesus is represented in negotiation with life and death, and absence and presence. As Herman Melville's Ishmael remarks above, the thin air of the world evidenced in a text like Luke-Acts is in fact thickly occupied. The spectral figure of Jesus himself becomes one of the occupants of this thick air.

² e.g., Prince, "The 'Ghost' of Jesus."

³ e.g., O'Connell, "Did Greco-Roman Apparitional Models Influence Luke's Resurrection Narrative?"

⁴ Buell, *This Is Not a Ghost Story*.

⁵ I assume some level of unity in authorship and narrative for Luke and Acts. For more on this topic, see Robert Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation, Vol. 1: The Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts, Volume Two: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Richard I. Pervo and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

⁶ As Kevin Anderson argues. His study of resurrection in Luke-Acts is the only monograph on the topic, and it notably does not cite this event. Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 13–21.

In order to better account for the “thick air” of the ancient Mediterranean, this chapter will read key scenes from 2 Maccabees in addition to Luke-Acts. I will show how spectrality helps account for the roles that resurrection and spiritual agencies play within both of these texts’ engagements with questions of past and present, and life and death. Scholarship on resurrection in general,⁷ and specifically in Luke-Acts,⁸ regularly cites 2 Maccabees as part of their “backgrounds.” N. T. Wright says that 2 Maccabees “provides far and away the clearest picture of the promise of resurrection anywhere in the period.”⁹ However, I will show how the hauntological affects of imperial power explored in the previous chapters make themselves felt in both texts. As seen in the previous chapter, haunting is “an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely.”¹⁰ Resurrection and other features in these texts evince how the traumatic marks of violence can span generations.¹¹

Luke-Acts and 2 Maccabees are also both interested in identity, and their mappings of self and other in the context of empire occur in concert with resurrectional negotiations of life and death. The deaths of Eleazar (2 Maccabees 6:18-31) as well as the

⁷ e.g., Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 16; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 150–153; Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, 12–29; Charlesworth et al., *Resurrection*, esp. 29–32; Pillar, *Resurrection as Anti-Imperial Gospel: 1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10 in Context*, 20–21.

⁸ e.g., Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, esp 61–69.

⁹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 150.

¹⁰ Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” 2.

¹¹ This dovetails with what Abraham and Torok have called “transgenerational haunting,” where secrets and traumas experienced by past generations make themselves felt in the present. “In no way can the subject relate to the phantom as his or her own repressed experience, not even as an experience by incorporation. *The phantom which returns to haunt bears witness to the existence of the dead buried within the other.*” (emphasis original). Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, 1:175.

mother and her seven sons (7:1-41) become the paradigmatic Jewish models of noble death in this period,¹² as Jesus' death does for Christians.¹³ Much as Luke-Acts polices the borders of a "Christian" identity (Acts 11:26; 26:28), so too 2 Maccabees attempts to solidify a "Jewish" identity (e.g., 2 Maccabees 2:21; 4:10-16; etc.). These identitarian discourses participate in the imperial machinations of the ancient Mediterranean.¹⁴ In both instances, these negotiations of self and other intersect with multiple overlapping explorations of life and death necessitated by imperial violence.¹⁵ As seen in the previous

¹² For an exploration of the deaths of these figures (in 4 Maccabees especially, but 2 Maccabees as well), and connections with larger themes of masculinity and noble death, see Stephen D Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking It Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 2 (1998): 249–73. While 4 Maccabees might prove to be an interesting text to include in the analyses of this project, it's lack of references to concepts of resurrection incline me to set it aside for now.

¹³ For more on Jesus' emblematic role for Christian martyrdom, see Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*, Gender, Theory, and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), esp. 35–36, 50–55, 65–67.

¹⁴ I follow scholars like Jonathan Goldstein and others who see 2 Maccabees as making the most sense in the time period around (or after) 63 BCE in the lead up to (or in the wake of) Pompey solidifying Rome's political control/influence over Israel. Such a crisis moment makes sense as a time for retelling these stories of Jewish survival of the violence from the Greek empires. It likewise explains how the metaphysical themes in view in this dissertation appear so predominantly in 2 Maccabees. Rome's growing influence and reshaping of the Mediterranean world created an affect felt in a text like this. This globalizing affect was already nascent in the Greek expansion and control post-Alexander, the time period depicted in this text. For more dating of 2 Maccabees, see the surveys of positions in Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 41A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 71–83; Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (CEJL) (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 3–15; Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 14–17.

¹⁵ For more on ancient imperialism and constructions of Jewish, Christian, and other identities, see e.g., Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.*; Steven Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, esp. 1–44.

chapter, the spectral logic employed in Luke-Acts and 2 Maccabees is a sign that something(s) haunt(s) them.

Resurrection, among other things, appears concerned with the future in these texts. Kevin Anderson shows how resurrection in Luke-Acts is about eschatological hope.¹⁶ The Maccabean martyrs also envision resurrection as their future hope (e.g., 2 Macc 7:9, 11, 14, 23, 29).¹⁷ Haunting can involve “a contest over the future,” explains Gordon, “over what’s to come next or later.”¹⁸ As the past presses upon the present, the demands of the future make themselves felt as well. Resurrection operates on a similar logic. The Greek words *ἀνάστασις* and *ἐγείρω* along with their semantic friends have general meanings of “getting up” or “rising up,” yet take on a particular force within Jewish and Christian literature (e.g., Daniel 12:2-3, 13; 2 Maccabees 7:9, 14; 12:44; Luke 20:27-36; Acts 1:22; 2:31; etc.). This force, however, is both contested and often unclear.¹⁹ There is a future hope, but the nature of that hope does not appear entirely comprehensible. Resurrection is not a fully isolatable category,²⁰ as its vocabulary is but

¹⁶ Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 13.

¹⁷ For more on the martyrs connections with Jewish hopes for salvation, see Jan Willem van Henton, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*, vol. 57, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (New York: Brill, 1997).

¹⁸ Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” 3.

¹⁹ As Collins notes in her discussion of this vocabulary, “ancient expressions about resurrection are unlikely to be clear and distinct ideas belonging to a philosophically systematic body of thought.” Collins, *Mark*, 782.

²⁰ James H. Charlesworth does not find “resurrection” alone to be a sufficient category. He thus traces out sixteen different “categories” of resurrection. While he claims this brings increased nuance, it also reveals the incomprehensibility of resurrection as a doctrine. “The varieties and differing taxonomies of resurrection beliefs represent not a system but an expression of the common human hope that God has the last word, and the future of the righteous will be blessed.” James H. Charlesworth, “Where Does the Concept of the Resurrection Appear and How Do We Know That?,” in *Resurrection: The*

a trace marker of amorphous ideologies. This play on past, present, and future shows how resurrection is a kind of spectral formation. Spectrality harbors “within itself... eschatology and teleology,” explains Derrida. “It would *comprehend* them, but incomprehensibly.”²¹ Resurrection’s incomprehensible imbrications of past, present, and future thus participate in the broader spectral hopes of these texts.

The conjurations of this chapter will begin by showing how resurrection becomes its own kind of specter in 2 Maccabees, hovering beyond full the comprehension of its pages. A text like Luke-Acts then attempts to provide additional comprehension to this specter of resurrection. I argue that it is in this vein that the text tries to discipline and control (the) resurrection (of Jesus). However, I contend that such a disciplinary practices are doomed to a certain kind of failure.²² Resurrection in both of these texts coincides with multiple transgressions of life and death, shifts between presence and absence, and disorientations of past, present, and future. The heavenly apparition of the slain high priest Onias in 2 Maccabees and the spiritual machinations of Luke-Acts display the role of spectrality in these texts. This again is a sign of the haunting presence of imperial power, and how the metaphysical globalization of the ancient Mediterranean haunts these texts. Yet, the interests of both 2 Maccabees and Luke-Acts in identity formations and alternative futures show the different haunting alternatives to this order of things embedded in their pages.

The Soul of the Maccabean Martyrs

Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine, ed. James H. Charlesworth et al., Faith and Scholarship Colloquies Series (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 18.

²¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

²² Echoing (and adapting) again Buell’s point about modernist and humanist discourses. Buell, “Cyborg Memories,” 332.

As stated above, resurrection participates with numerous explorations of life and death in 2 Maccabees. However, studies of resurrection in 2 Maccabees tend to focus on only two passages in the text: chapters 7 and 12.²³ Chapter 7 tells the famous story of the martyrdom of a mother and her seven sons, while chapter 12 narrates Judas Maccabeus performing a variety of actions on account of “the resurrection of the dead.” However, this fixation on explicit evocations of “resurrection” reflects the philological and typological focus of many studies of this topic, missing how these scenes collude with others throughout the text.²⁴ Indeed, both scenes are tied together with negotiations of the borders of Jewish identity under the violence of Hellenistic rulers. While 2 Maccabees does not have the strict “Judaism” vs. “Hellenism” ideology as many interpreters have seen,²⁵ it is interested in policing Jewish identity.²⁶ I will show below how resurrection, while only fleetingly present in 2 Maccabees, occurs alongside other moments where the boundaries between life and death are rendered as open questions.

The spectrality evidenced in 2 Maccabees explorations of these questions of life and death signal the ways this text is haunted by the unsettled metaphysical landscape of this period. The grotesque imperial violence portrayed in this text shows how these

²³ e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 150–153; Charlesworth et al., *Resurrection*, 29–35, 66–67.

²⁴ On this point I agree with Bennie Reynolds, and the work he presented in his as yet unpublished paper on visions of the dead. Bennie H. Reynolds III, “I See Dead People: The Post-Mortem Vision Motif in Ancient Jewish & Christian Literature” (Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 20, 2011).

²⁵ See the work exploring the problems with such a binary understanding of culture in 2 Maccabees by Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, 30:xiv, 5–6, 12–40; Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans*, 219–231; Mason, *Josephus, Judea, and Christian Origins*, 141–184.

²⁶ See e.g., Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity*, 34–54; Lawrence M. Wills, *Not God’s People: Insiders and Outsiders in the Biblical World*, Religion in the Modern World 1 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 87–100.

questions can become increasingly urgent. The chaos and confusion of such traumatic violence pervades these questions as well. I will show how resurrection arises as an answer of sorts, yet the spectrality of this answer proves incomprehensible in various ways. I begin by following the encounters that the high priest Onias has with the region's Hellenistic occupiers. The drama of this scene sets up the death and ultimate reappearance of Onias, while the violence inflicted upon him likewise leaves marks on the martyrs in 2 Maccabees 6-7. The evocations of resurrection in chapter 12 then set up the visionary experiences of chapter 14. The spectrality that appears in 2 Maccabees operates within the haunting presence of empire, yet gestures toward possible resurrectional alternatives to the imperial order of things.

Priestly Apparitions

A productive entry point in 2 Maccabees is a dramatic scene in the Jerusalem temple involving the high priest Onias.²⁷ King Seleucis of Asia sends his charge Heliodorus to confiscate the temple's treasury. When Heliodorus enters the temple, the city falls into distress and the priests pray fervently to God. During this tumult, precisely when Heliodorus reaches the treasury, "the Sovereign of spirits and all authority" (ὁ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης ἐξουσίας δυνάστης) causes a "great manifestation" (ἐπιφάνειαν μεγάλην) that astounds all those nearby (2 Macc. 3:24).²⁸ An ornamented horse and frightening rider "appeared to them" (ἔφθη...αὐτοῖς), rushing forward and striking Heliodorus (3:25). Two strong and beautiful young men also "appear" (προσεφάνησαν)

²⁷ This scene is especially pertinent given his postmortem presence later in the narrative, to which I will return.

²⁸ Translations of 2 Maccabees are my own, made with reference to the NRSV. For the Greek Text, I rely on Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta*, 2nd ed. (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007).

and strike Heliodorus repeatedly (3:26). The sudden appearance of these phantasmal foes leads the outmatched (and *outmanned*) Heliodorus to fall down and have a deep darkness fall over him (3:27).

The visual appearances of these mighty figures from the “Sovereign of spirits” leads to a lack of vision on the part of a mostly dead Heliodorus. Daniel Schwartz’s argument that these “spirits” are in fact “angels” evades the dynamics at play here.²⁹ The title “God of spirits” (θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων) occurs in the Septuagint a few times (Numbers 16:22; 27:16) and “Father of spirits” (τῷ πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων) is found in Hebrews 12:9, while “Lord of Spirits” appears in *1 Enoch* numerous times (e.g., 37:2-4; 38:4; 39:2, 7). However it seems that “Sovereign of spirits” (ὁ τῶν πνευμάτων...δυνάστης), complete with its imperial overtones, is unique to 2 Maccabees.³⁰ God, as the Sovereign of spirits, appears here to govern the boundaries between seen and unseen, and physical and immaterial. Such governance simultaneously controls these boundaries while rendering them permeable and open. The text emphasizes the humbling of this man who entered the treasury with a “great retinue” and “bodyguard” at the hands of the “sovereign power of God” (2 Maccabees 3:28). The temple thus appears momentarily safe from its imperial aggressors.³¹

The invisible agencies of this scene are not done with the Hellenistic intruder. The friends of Heliodorus—this same aggressor sent on behalf of the king—beg the high

²⁹ Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 201.

³⁰ Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 212–213; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 200–201; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 87.

³¹ Indeed, Goldstein notes that this whole story is evocative of a common trope from ancient Greece and the Near East, “of how a god defended his temple from desecrators or robbers” (e.g., Herodotus 8.35-39). Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 198.

priest Onias to call upon his God to “give life to one who was assuredly lying in his last breath [τὸ ζῆν χαρίσασθαι τῷ παντελῶς ἐν ἐσχάτῃ πνοῇ κειμένῳ]” (3:31). Heliodorus is on the verge of losing his breath, or spirit (πνεῦμα). God, as sovereign of spirits, can thus also govern the boundaries between life and death. Onias fears retribution from the king upon the Jews if Heliodorus dies, so he makes a sacrifice for his recovery. While doing this, the same two handsome men from before “appeared again” (πάλιν ἐφάνησαν) to Heliodorus, telling him to be grateful to Onias because “for his sake the Lord has granted you your life [διὰ γὰρ αὐτόν σοι κεχάρισται τὸ ζῆν ὁ κύριος]” (3:33). They then tell him to report these events of the “power of God” to all people. After saying these things, they “became invisible [ἀφανεῖς ἐγένοντο]” (3:34). Sent from God, these young men appear and disappear at will from the scenes.

The precise manner in which these spectral young men are present in these scenes is uncertain. Are they material entities touching Heliodorus with their blows? In their first “appearance” they are so present that they knock Heliodorus to the ground and to within an inch of his life. As Julian Wolfreys suggests, “that which is spectral is only ever perceived indirectly by the traces it has left.”³² These physical blows upon Heliodorus are traces of their presence. But, the fact that they can appear and disappear calls their materiality into question. Moreover, the story indicates that they can “appear” to whom they please. Their first injunction into the scene is an ambiguous appearance,³³ but their second foray into the earthly world is an appearance “to Heliodorus” (τῷ Ἡλιοδώρῳ). Likewise, the manner in which the ornamented horse and its rider are made manifest

³² Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*, 3.

³³ Doran explains how it “is not clear whether only Heliodorus sees the two young men” in verse 26. Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 87.

(“appeared to them [ὤφθη...αὐτοῖς]”) does not indicate to whom they appear.³⁴ Much like the God to whom Onias prays, these figures reside in the spaces between seen and unseen, material and immaterial, and absent and present. Some scholars suggest that the author weaving together multiple sources best explains these confusions.³⁵ However, this sort of spectrality is not alone within 2 Maccabees, and reflects the larger discourses I have been exploring. This powerful absent-presence halts the imperial march into the temple’s treasury. It is in this exact way that they bear witness (and force Heliodorus to bear witness) to the awesome power of God as construed by 2 Maccabees.³⁶

The march of empire does take a death toll, however. The text narrates the rise of Jason, and then Menelaus, to be high priests of the temple as a result of foreign imperial meddling. Menelaus’s rise came at the cost of the life of high priest Onias, whose sacrifice earlier spared the life of Heliodorus. The text recalls this as an “unreasonable murder,” a crime hated by both Jews and Greeks. This even caused the Greek King Antiochus much grief, and he “wept because of the moderation and good conduct of the deceased” (4:37).³⁷ His own deputy, Andronicus, had “put him [Onias] out of the way quickly” (παραχρήμα παρέκλεισεν).³⁸ The absent-presence of the good man Onias affects

³⁴ As Daniel Schwartz notes, “the careful phrasing leaves open the possibility that only Heliodorus and his men, but no others, saw the horse.” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 201.

³⁵ e.g., Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 198–213.

³⁶ “Heliodorus’s sacrilege thus appears as a marked disruption of the normal relations between the Jews and their rulers, and that relationship is restored after God beats the offender into submission—an experience that does more than deter Heliodorus but converts him into a supporter of the Temple.” Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity*, 42.

³⁷ “That is,” according to Daniel Schwartz, “Onias was the complete Hellenistic gentleman.” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 239.

³⁸ “‘Remove from the World,’” explains Doran, “is another euphemism for ‘kill.’” Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 118.

the king greatly, and he in turn “dismembered the bloodthirsty man [τὸν μαιφόνον ἀπεκόσμησεν]” Andronicus (4:38). The Greek king’s effusive display here highlights the ambivalence inherent to empire,³⁹ and shows how 2 Maccabees is not as anti-Hellene as some might think.⁴⁰ This scene also displays the continued affective presence of the slain high priest Onias, who will make himself visible later in the narrative. The violence inflicted upon him continues to echo throughout the narrative of 2 Maccabees.

Martyrological Time

Empires create ghosts in large part through their power over life and death. In 2 Maccabees, conflicts between the Greek King Antiochus and the Jews escalate, with the king attempting to force the Jews to break their laws. So goes the story of Eleazar, an elderly and noble scribe whom the authorities try to force-feed pork. Rather than deceive his torturers and eat kosher meat, he chooses to “leave the young a noble example of how to die a good death [ἀπευθανατιζειν] and willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws” (6:28).⁴¹ Eleazar’s death is not just for his own piety, but is intended to impact subsequent generations. This models what Steven Weitzman calls “cultural persistence,” or the imaginative ways that Jews ensured cultural survival.⁴² Carlin Barton shows how this attitude is not unique to Jews in this period. To be noble, to be manly, in the Roman

³⁹ For more on ambivalence in imperialism/colonialism, see Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 121–131.

⁴⁰ “Although the author of 2 Maccabees believes Judah Maccabee was engaged in a battle against Hellenism, he was surely wrong, if by Hellenism we mean the adoption of elements of Greek culture by non-Greeks. The evidence is unambiguous.” Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.*, 35.

⁴¹ Goldstein suggests that “Eleazar’s heroism is all the greater if he again marches voluntarily to the torture instruments.” Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 287.

⁴² Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity*, esp 1–12, 34–54.

world required “the willingness, on behalf of the collectivity to lose everything, to become nothing.”⁴³ The events of chapter 7, featuring the “youths who followed Eleazar’s example,”⁴⁴ begin to cast a shadow over Eleazar’s own martyrdom. This story signals the future, while a future story leaks backward in time.

Eleazar’s martyrdom becomes a hinge in time, where the past and the future overlap in complex ways. There is a certain spectrality effect then, to Eleazar’s martyrdom, where the opposition between past and future comes undone. “Before knowing whether one can differentiate between the specter of the past and the specter of the future, of the past present and the future present,” explains Derrida, “one must perhaps ask oneself whether the *spectrality effect* does not consist in undoing this opposition.”⁴⁵ This is just one of several ways that spectrality plays a significant role in the narrative’s events and characterization. This spectrality effect will continue throughout Eleazar’s story and beyond.

The violence inflicted upon Eleazar raises questions about parts of him both seen and unseen, as the spectrality effect likewise raises questions about the relationship “between actual, effective presence and its other.”⁴⁶ In his dying breaths, Eleazar states that he “might have been saved from death” (δυνάμενος ἀπολυθῆναι τοῦ θανάτου) by God. Here in his last speech as a martyr,⁴⁷ it sounds as if he “calling on God as a witness” to hear his words.⁴⁸ “I am enduring terrible sufferings in the body [σῶμα]” he goes on, “but

⁴³ Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 277.

⁴⁴ Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 292.

⁴⁵ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 48.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 293.

⁴⁸ Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 154.

the soul [ψυχὴν] is glad to suffer these things” for God (6:30). A martyr providing a last speech in this way became a common theme in antiquity. Indeed, Goldstein and Schwartz note the strong resonances between Eleazar’s dying words and the final speech of Socrates (e.g., Plato, *Apology* 36-41; *Crito* 54b-d; *Phaedo* 118).⁴⁹ These cultural resonances hint at the complex layers of hybridity occurring in 2 Maccabees and the larger culture.⁵⁰

Eleazar plays on the body/soul dichotomy to further redeem his noble death,⁵¹ which he hopes others will emulate. Doran notes the particular “Hellenistic” worldview reflected in this “soul-body distinction.” He further explains that “Eleazar’s distinction between body and soul thus looks forward to the possibility of a future life.”⁵² A hope for future life is thus embedded in the moment of his death. “Eleazar expresses a belief that the soul survives and receives retribution after death,” explains Goldstein, “but he says nothing here of resurrection”⁵³ There is a lack of clarity around Eleazar’s hope for further life after death. There is, however, a hope that his death will be repeated. Eleazar desires for his death to live on as “an example of nobility and a memorial of courage” (6:31). The deaths of Eleazar and Onias dramatize the awful effects of imperial power and violence. The manner in which their stories display the uncertainties of life and death reflect the additional effects of this imperial power. Their deaths cannot erase them from the text, as

⁴⁹ Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 285; Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 293.

⁵⁰ Regarding Hybridity, Bhabha explains that “the differences of cultures can no longer be identified or evaluated as objects of epistemological or moral contemplation: cultural differences are not simply there to be seen or appropriated.” Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 114.

⁵¹ Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 9–23.

⁵² Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 155.

⁵³ Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 287.

their presence continues to be felt throughout the narrative. They are both “something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes,” as Avery Gordon puts it, but which “makes itself known or apparent to us.”⁵⁴ Onias appears again later in the narrative, while Eleazar has a more immediate albeit subtle presence.

The noble example put forth by Eleazar is in fact taken up in the direct aftermath of his dramatic death. Seven brothers and their mother are arrested, and compelled to eat pork much like the departed Eleazar. The drama of this scene is amplified by their tortures coming from none other than king Antiochus himself. His grief over the death of former-high priest Onias did not prevent him from outlawing Jewish practices and customs (2 Maccabees 6:1). One of the sons asks their torturers what they hope to accomplish, “for we are prepared to die rather than transgress our ancestral laws” (7:2.). This stance of being “prepared to die” (ἔτοιμοι ἀποθνήσκειν) echoes again later in the words of followers of Judas Maccabeus (8:21),⁵⁵ and it further enrages the king.⁵⁶ Antiochus ratchets up the torture until the brother is cooked alive in a giant pan. The brothers and the mother then encourage one another to “die nobly” (γενναίως τελευτᾶν), evoking the example of Eleazar (7:5).⁵⁷

After killing this first brother, the king throws another to the same tortures. With his dying breaths, this brother says that “the King of the cosmos” (ὁ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου

⁵⁴ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 8.

⁵⁵ This willingness to die for one’s ancestral customs is a “typically diasporan stance” according to Schwartz, who cites Philo, *Legatio* 229–230 and Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.271. The repetition by the soldiers in 2 Maccabees 8:21 is a shift in social location, dying in a fight rather than the refusal of fighting. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 301.

⁵⁶ Doran notes how the “contrast between the young men and the foreign kind is highlighted” here. Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 155.

⁵⁷ And, notably, evoking the example of Eleazar’s friends who encouraged him to escape death (6:21). *Ibid.*, 156.

βασιλεύς) will “raise us” (ἡμᾶς...ἀναστήσει), “bringing us to new life everlasting [εἰς αἰώνιον ἀναβίωσιν ζωῆς ἡμᾶς]” (7:9). While written here in Greek, the text specifies earlier that the brother was speaking in the “language of his ancestors [τῆ πατρὶω φωνῇ]” (7:8). This is a defiant gesture,⁵⁸ echoing other heroes in their final moments (ie, Ps.-Callisthenes 3.32-33; Genesis 49:1-27; Deuteronomy 33)⁵⁹ but in a language foreign to his foe. In this moment of fierce pride and defense of his Jewish identity, the brother asserts his expectation of being raised from the dead by God in the future. The specter of the future makes itself known here. This is the first explicit reference to “resurrection” in the text of 2 Maccabees, and its haunting presence will continue to make fleeting appearances in this scene.

The third brother comes before the king and his cronies, submitting to further tortures. At the threat of losing his tongue and hands, he “nobly” says, “I have received these from heaven, and because of his laws I ignore them, and from him I hope for these to return again” (7:11). These bold words, defying the wishes of the torturers and displaying a hope that includes his body, leaves the king and those with him “amazed at the young man’s soul [ἐκπλήσσεσθαι τὴν τοῦ νεανίσκου ψυχὴν]” (7:12). As with Eleazar’s noble death, the body-soul separation appears again. Eleazar hoped to live on in the repetition of his actions among the Jewish people. When this happens in the actions of these brothers, they themselves expect to live on in a much more literal manner.

The fourth brother, also brought forth for tortures, speaks of the “hope God gives of being raised up again [τὰς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ προσδοκᾶν ἐλπίδας πάλιν ἀναστήσεσθαι] by

⁵⁸ As Schwartz puts it, “our author could have allowed even the most provincial of Jews to say ‘no’ in Greek, so the use of Hebrew here should be seen as an expression of defiance.” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 303.

⁵⁹ “Heroes about to die are often given long speeches.” Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 156.

him.” “But for you,” he says to the king, “there will be no raising to life [ἀνάστασις εἰς ζωὴν οὐκ ἔσται]” (7:14). Not only do these brothers expect to overcome their immanent deaths, they claim that their attackers cannot expect the same. Resurrection is here woven into the identity politics occurring in this scene of imperial violence. “We” have resurrection, they claim, while “you” do not. The specter of resurrection becomes imbricated with “a contest over the future, over what’s to come next or later” that Avery Gordon argues is at the core of haunting.⁶⁰ While a text like Daniel 12:2 expects a resurrection for everyone, here 2 Maccabees expects different futures for different people.⁶¹ There is no future for the King in particular,⁶² indicating the personal nature of these contrasts and expectations.⁶³

The mother of these martyred brothers may best represent this cultivation of a Jewish identity in opposition to the Hellenizing King Antiochus. She repeatedly speaks in “the language of their ancestors” (7:21, 27), reiterating their commitments to the “laws of our ancestors” (7:2). She encourages her youngest son to nobly face the same tortures and death her other sons suffered. “Accept death” (ἐπίδεξαι τὸν θάνατον), she says to him, “so that through mercy I may receive you with your brothers” (7:29). Unlike her children, the Maccabean mother speaks privately rather than publicly.⁶⁴ In the face of their erasure by the power of empire, this family maintains their expectation of a future reunion where they will be present to one another. This youngest brother interrupts his mother to

⁶⁰ Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” 3.

⁶¹ Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 304.

⁶² Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 158.

⁶³ Wills, *Not God’s People: Insiders and Outsiders in the Biblical World*, 92–93.

⁶⁴ Robin Darling Young, “The ‘Woman with the Soul of Abraham’: Traditions about the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs,” in *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, Early Judaism and Its Literature 1 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 70.

interrogate the king himself. He maintains his defiance of the king's wishes, who has contrived "all sorts of evil against the Hebrews" (7:31). The rare self-appellation of "Hebrews" here and elsewhere (2 Macc. 11:13; 15:37) evokes the suffering of the "Hebrews" in the early chapters of Exodus (e.g., Exodus 1:15, 16, 19; 2:6, 7, 11, 13, etc.). The stories of past ethnic identifiers thus weigh on this scene.⁶⁵

While God may be allowing these martyrs to experience (or is even punishing them with)⁶⁶ sufferings now, "he will again become reconciled with his slaves" (7:33). As Wright puts it, "The martyrs' suffering is redemptive for the nation."⁶⁷ This echoes the first brother's quotation of Deuteronomy 32:36, which states that God will "have compassion on his slaves" (2 Maccabees 7:8). In identifying themselves as the slaves of God, their hope for new life after death thus springs forth from God's mercy and compassion. They hope that their deaths will mean life for their people.⁶⁸ As for Antiochus, the youngest brother says, "You have not yet escaped the judgment of the all powerful [παντοκράτορος], all seeing [ἐπόπτου] God" (7:36). This hope of resurrection is not bestowed on the wicked king, a defiance that further enrages him. Using a common imperial title like παντοκράτωρ no doubt further stokes the fires of the king's anger.⁶⁹ The

⁶⁵ "The reference to Moses in the previous verse may explain its ["Hebrews"] presence here, as the term occurs most frequently in the early chapters of Exodus where the Hebrews are forced into slave labor by Pharaoh. It is a term that stresses the dignity of the race." Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 161.

⁶⁶ "The martyrs here can assume the somewhat paradoxical position that they are suffering for their sins, but Antiochus is punishing them unjustly." Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 293.

⁶⁷ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 152.

⁶⁸ "As he goes to his death, the last of the seven sons expresses the hope that, through his and his brothers' death, the people's misfortunes will come to an end." Weitzman, *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity*, 140.

⁶⁹ On the Greek word παντοκράτωρ, Schwartz notes that it appears "frequently of God in our book (5:20; 6:26; 7:38; 8:11, 24, etc.), as in the rest of the Septuagint (where it

youngest brother and mother both die under the tortures of the king, completing the family's emulation of Eleazar's noble death and pointing toward their future awaited resurrection.

The role of spectrality in this story is further underscored by the fact that it occurs in a spatial unknown. The story of Eleazar is placed within the context of events in Judea, perhaps even Jerusalem (6:2-11). This happens after Antiochus' sacking of Jerusalem (5:2-27). There is no distinction in scene between Eleazar's martyrdom and that of the mother and brothers (7:42). This would indicate that their martyrdom occurs in or near Jerusalem, as 4 Maccabees 4:22-5:4 and 18:5-6 suggest. However, Antiochus has left Judea at this point in the story of 2 Maccabees, returning to Antioch (2 Macc 5:21-27). There is no indication in this text or any other that the tyrant ever returned to Judea. This martyrdom story thus appears to occur in a spatial impossibility, neither here nor there. Goldstein argues that this is the result of conflicting sources used by the author of 2 Maccabees.⁷⁰ However, I suggest that this is further evidence of spectrality in the story, which signals the haunting effects of imperial violence. Time and space come undone in this spectral figuration of the martyred family.

As seen with the empty tomb of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, disappearance is a haunting component of imperial power. To live under empire is to "live under the mantle of the omnipresent dread disappearance produces."⁷¹ The stories of Eleazar and the martyred family represent these kinds of disappearances made apparent. Within the story

usually accompanies Kyrios as the translation of "Lord of Hosts;"...It is a particularly apt term for our book, which is frequently bent on demonstrating God's strength...3:34; 7:17; 9:17; 11:4." Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 155.

⁷⁰ Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 296–298.

⁷¹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 124.

of the mother and brothers in particular, resurrection is a haunting alternative future that envisions their re-appearance. And yet this specter of resurrection remains loosely defined. “Something will happen. What will happen of course, is not given in advance, but something must be done.”⁷²

Specters of the Past and Future

The atrocities that befall Eleazar and the martyred family at the hands of imperial aggressors serve as the immediate prelude to the rise and revolt of Judas Maccabeus. Judas rallies the Jewish people to fight off their foreign oppressors. In one particular battle, Judas himself raises a battle cry in “the language of their ancestors” before leading a successful sneak attack on the enemy (12:37).⁷³ This echo of the mother martyr entwines their stories with the following details, making these connections more clear. Judas later returns to the battlefield to retrieve the bodies (τὰ σώματα) of his comrades so they can lay with “their kindred” in the “tombs of their ancestors [τοὺς πατρώους τάφους]” (12:39). The story of Caligula’s haunting post-mortem presences from the previous chapter indicated that the dead could be felt in multiple places, but also underscored the fact that proper burial was a major concern.⁷⁴

Under the tunics of each dead person Judas visits, he finds “sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia,” items which are forbidden by Jewish law (12:40).⁷⁵ Such deviations

⁷² Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” 3.

⁷³ “Apparently Hebrew is meant,” according to Schwartz, “the language of prayer; so too 15:29.” He also notes that the normal spoken language would likely be Aramaic. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 438.

⁷⁴ In this instance, Doran notes that to “die unburied in the land of one’s fathers was a curse (1 Kgs 13:22). The same motif occurs in the deaths of Antiochus IV (9:28) and Menelaus (13:7-8).” Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 129.

⁷⁵ Schwartz suggests that this parenthetical notation of Jewish laws may indicate potential intended non-Jewish audiences for *2 Maccabees*. As with “such comments concerning the

from the laws of their ancestors explain why these soldiers died while others (presumably more pious) lived. Judas and his companions thank God, “who makes hidden things visible [τὰ κεκρυμμένα φανερὰ ποιοῦντος]” (12:41). God again appears as the arbiter of the seen and unseen, allowing Judas to discover the true, hidden allegiances of these dead men.⁷⁶ This distinction between what is seen and what is not seen proves decisive in determining who is dead and who is alive. Judas and his companions respond to this revelation with prayers of supplication on behalf of their fallen friends. He tells the people to pray likewise, and avoid such sins that lead to death. They also gather a large donation of silver and send it to Jerusalem for a sin offering for these dead sinners. The text states that this was good and honorable behavior, for Judas was “concerned for the resurrection [ὑπὲρ ἀναστάσεως διαλογιζόμενος]” (12:43). These prayers, supplications, and offerings on behalf of the dead soldiers are explained because of “the resurrection.” The text explains further that “if he did not expect that those who had fallen [τοὺς προπεπτωκότας] would rise [ἀναστῆναι],” then it would have been absurd “to pray on behalf of the dead [ὑπὲρ νεκρῶν εὐχεσθαι]” (12:44).

The dead thus cast an odd shadow over the living, driving their actions and expectations. “Judas believes the community reaches beyond the grave,” explains Doran, and “sees those dead who acted against the law as requiring purification.”⁷⁷ This is what

Sabbath (5:25) and pigs (7:1), here too it is likely that this explanation was meant for non-Jewish ears (however difficult it might be to imagine that even Gentiles would not know Jews were supposed to keep away from idolatry).” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 440.

⁷⁶ Pointing to a variety of Hebrew Bible passages (e.g., Jeremiah 16:17; Proverbs 16:5; Daniel 2:47), Doran suggests that it “is a commonplace that God knows the hidden things...Here the author has used the antithesis to heighten the effect.” Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 246.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 247.

Schwartz calls a “complicated piece of logical gymnastics,”⁷⁸ which in fact highlights the contested nature of resurrection itself.⁷⁹ Indeed, here resurrection becomes embroiled with all sorts of other negotiations of life and death. While the dead are no longer present and alive, their presence is felt in the responsibilities placed upon the living. Those who face death not only can expect resurrection, but they face the possibility of haunting the living to achieve that resurrection. This is why Judas “made atonement for the dead” (περὶ τῶν τεθνηκότων τὸν ἐξίλασμον ἐποιήσατο) in order for them “to be released from sins” (12:45). Some actions taken by the living are only sensible and honorable in light of the expected resurrection of the dead. Resurrection thus stretches and folds the limits between life and death, causing the absent-dead and the present-living to interact.

These living-dead encounters increase toward the end of the narrative. Judas Maccabeus prepares himself and his soldiers for another battle with the Seleucid general Nicanor. During these preparations, Judas arms the men not with shields and spears, but with “good words.” These good words are in fact a “dream” (ὄνειρον), or “a sort of vision” (ὑπαρ), that Judas experiences. The text emphasizes that this dream is “worthy of belief [ἀξιόπιστον]” (15:11).⁸⁰ The use of ὑπαρ further instantiates this, as it is a term often opposed to ὄναρ (a dream at night).⁸¹ As seen in the stories of the emperors, the

⁷⁸ Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 449.

⁷⁹ “The fact that our author sees fit to emphasize this may indicate that such a belief was a matter of controversy.” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 442.

⁸⁰ Though, not all commentators are convinced by this dreamy posturing: “Our author apparently knows that some dreams are not trustworthy” Ibid., 500.

⁸¹ The contrast is so jarring that some suggest that this is a textual corruption. As Goldstein explains, “*hypar*, far from being employed to define more closely the word ‘dream,’ is usually used as its antithesis, ‘something seen by one’s eyes while he is awake.’ It is, indeed, conceivable that our writer would enjoy so juxtaposing opposites, but I think that the evidence favors the other reading.” Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 498.

boundaries between living and dead are often crossed within dreams and visions. The language here thus doubly emphasizes the reality and trustworthiness of the apparition seen by Judas.

In this “spectacle” (θεωρία) Judas sees Onias, “who had been high priest” (a fact known to readers from earlier in the narrative). With “outstretched hands,” Onias was “praying over the entire community of the Jews” (15:12). Then, another man “appeared” (ἐπιφανῆναι) in a similar manner, this one having gray hair, dignity, magnificence, and prominence (15:13). This term ἐπιφανῆναι “is the root for the term for God’s miraculous appearances, ἐπιφάνεια,” explains Doran. These apparitional transgressions of life and death thus are imbued with a divine connotation.⁸² Onias reappears to introduce this other figure, saying, “This one is a lover of family, and he offers many prayers for the people and the holy city: Jeremiah, the prophet of God” (15:15). Onias, the dead former high priest from earlier in the story appears to Judas to introduce a dead figure even more ancient and revered. Jeremiah briefly appeared earlier in 2 Maccabees, when the text renarrated events leading up to Israel’s exile and return (2:1-8).

This vision of Jeremiah is an “apparition...as reapparition of the departed.”⁸³ Jeremiah is a figure from the past who (re)appears in the present, and proves to be an active presence. He is praying for the people and Jerusalem, just as Onias was praying for the Jews as well. Both of these dead figures pray for the living. Schwartz and Doran note that the description of Onias and Jeremiah here evokes that of Eleazar,⁸⁴ further crowding

⁸² Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 292.

⁸³ Derrida explains that “the technique for having visions, for seeing ghosts is in truth a technique to *make oneself seen by ghosts*.” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 6.

⁸⁴ “The fact that Onias had devoted himself to virtue ‘since childhood’...makes him like Eleazar (6:23).” Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 501.

this scene with echoes of figures traversing life and death.⁸⁵ The dead, separated from their bodies, are enfolded with the affairs of the living (and vice versa). This ghost of Jeremiah stretched out his right hand and gave to Judas a “golden sword.” “Take this holy sword,” Jeremiah says, “a gift from god, with which you will shatter the opposition” (15:16). While the text emphasized the realness of this vision, Judas does not use a golden sword in the ensuing battle. Rather, the vision itself becomes the sword that cuts down his enemies. This dream is what “arms” his soldiers (15:11). Judas’s visionary experience “incites the souls [ψυχὰς] of the young men,” who bravely rush into battle. The invisible part of these living men is affected by a vision of other (dead) men.⁸⁶ This sudden injunction of dead figures into the present inspires the living Jews to kill their enemies and win the day.

Maccabean Resistance

A text like 2 Maccabees represents ways that an oppressed people can cultivate their identity amid violence and death. It likewise displays how this imperial violence raises questions about life, presence, and time. What happens to those rendered spectral at the hands of empire? How do those who are alive and those who died interact? In what ways does a violent past encroach upon the present, and raise additional questions about the future? Resurrection arises among these myriad questions, but it does not do so alone. Unknown, perhaps heavenly figures appear and disappear at will while physically impacting the bodies of the living. A martyr hopes that his noble death will be emulated

⁸⁵ “Onias is described in the most fulsome terms as noble, a good Greek gentleman, as Eleazar was (6:18, 23),” explains Doran. And then, with regard to Jeremiah, the “terms *πολιά* (‘grey hair’) and *ὑπεροχή* (‘majesty’) are used in 6:23 in the description of Eleazar.” Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 292.

⁸⁶ Similar to how Derrida describes reactions to the ghost in Hamlet. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 168.

by future generations, granting him a kind of embodied immortality and timelessness. The martyred family, themselves embodying this noble repetition, expects that they will rise to be reunited with each other and their God. All of these martyred figures hint at a body-soul division that enables them to endure their bodily sufferings while maintaining their hopes for redemption. Onias dies at the altar of imperial power only to come back in a vision, bringing an even more ancient prophetic figure with him.⁸⁷ Spectrality manifests itself in multiple ways, as the past uncontrollably interrupts and intrudes upon the present. Resurrection is part of a cloud of witnesses to this phenomenon.

2 Maccabees also renders resurrection as something of a specter itself. Within the world of the text, resurrection is not a complete doctrine or a detailed expectation of future events. Rather, it exists in the text in hints and traces. A statement by a character here, and a narrator's note there, work together to provide mere suggestions of what resurrection actually *is*. In this way, it hovers just beyond the confines of 2 Maccabees, flitting in and out of the narrative. Much as Slavoj Žižek says of "ideology," resurrection exists as part of a "generative matrix that regulates the relationship between visible and non-visible, between imaginable and non-imaginable, as well as changes in this relationship."⁸⁸ Its appearance in concert with other transgressions of life, presence, and time produces incoherence with regard to the limits of these concepts.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Again, I am in agreement with Bennie Reynolds who noted the significance of the post-mortem appearances in 2 Maccabees and other texts, and their novelty compared to earlier Jewish literature. Reynolds III, "I See Dead People: The Post-Mortem Vision Motif in Ancient Jewish & Christian Literature."

⁸⁸ Žižek, "Introduction: The Spectre of Ideology," 1.

⁸⁹ Žižek gestures toward something like this as well, when talking of encounters with "the inherent limit of social reality, what has to be foreclosed if the consistent field of reality is to emerge, precisely in the guise of the problematic of ideology, of a 'superstructure', of something that appears to be a mere epiphenomenon, a mirror-reflection, of 'true'

Resurrection in 2 Maccabees is one of several ways that spectrality operates within this text. The previous chapter showed how (the Roman) empire's globalizing presence reshaped the metaphysical landscape of antiquity. Questions of life and death become both more open and urgent, as did concerns over time as well as absence and presence. The spectrality in 2 Maccabees is another sign of this haunting (dis)order of things. Resurrection arises as a kind of expected restitution for the scars of imperial violence. Wright argues that "Resurrection belief, throughout 2 Maccabees, means new bodily life."⁹⁰ However, 2 Maccabees is not so univocal on the subject of materiality. Indeed, resurrection has not yet taken on flesh; it is not entirely *there*. Such a spectral doctrine remains a kind of phantom, part of the spectral logic of this text and others.

Yet, resurrection still presents an urgent alternative to the present order of things. Empire's violent and kyriarchal power systems render countless people into ghosts. These ghosts are seemingly denied a future. Resurrection, spectral it may be, represents a "something-to-be-done" that "feels as if it has already been needed or wanted before, perhaps forever, certainly for a long time, and we cannot wait for it any longer."⁹¹ The spectrality of resurrection names the unknowable ways that an alternative future vision is always already there. Indeed, this specter of resurrection that 2 Maccabees looks to for its future hope haunts other texts as well,⁹² and Luke-Acts is among them.

social life. We are dealing here with the paradoxical topology in which the surface ('mere ideology') is directly linked to - occupies the place of, stands in for - what is 'deeper than depth itself', more real than reality itself." Ibid., 30.

⁹⁰ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 153.

⁹¹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 5.

⁹² Yet, as Derrida argues, the specter sees us in ways that we can never see it. "This spectral *someone other looks at us*, we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority (which may be on the order of generation, of more than one generation) and

Spirits of Jesus in Luke-Acts

Unlike the Gospel of Mark, Luke-Acts enacts a prolonged gaze at Jesus' resurrected body, devoting significant time and space to his resurrection and (post-)postmortem activities. In doing so, the text seems anxious about Jesus' resurrected body. When the disciples see and attempt to comprehend the resurrected Jesus, they fear that he is a "spirit" (πνεῦμα). Jesus assures them that he is not a "spirit" (Luke 24:37-38). As I show below, this denial of "spirit" signals the spectral pneumatology in Luke-Acts. Beginning with Jesus' baptism and ending with the appearance of Jesus' own spirit, spiritual agencies perform as much of a unifying function for Luke-Acts as resurrection.⁹³ Resurrection and spiritual agents thus participate in the spectrality that suffuses Luke-Acts. The manner in which Luke-Acts navigates this pneumatology connects with larger themes in the text, providing a window into how it handles life, presence, and time.

Opening this window gives a sense of the spectrality occurring in Luke-Acts, which in turn is a sign of the haunting presences that filled the "thick air" of this period. Jesus' resurrection occurs after he is rendered a kind of ghost by the Roman Empire's singular power over life and death. The spectral doctrine of resurrection glimpsed around the martyrs and elsewhere in 2 Maccabees thus arises once again interwoven with the haunting presence of empire. Luke-Acts tries to discipline and control the spectrality of

asymmetry, according to an absolutely unmasterable disproportion. [...] We feel ourselves seen by a look which will always be impossible to cross, that is the *visor effect*." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 7.

⁹³ Anderson's argument suggests the ways that resurrection, and its accompanying eschatological hope, function to unify Luke-Acts. However, Anderson's arguments largely ignore issues of πνεῦμα, and particularly ignores the πνεῦμα of Jesus in Acts 16:7. Thus, I build on Anderson's argument to accommodate how spiritual agents function as coworkers in the spectrality of Luke-Acts. Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, esp. 13–21.

the resurrected Jesus, while it also navigates the limits of a new “Christian” identity (Acts 11:26; 26:28). The limits of self and other are open questions, just as they are with life and death. In this way both Luke-Acts and 2 Maccabees use resurrection in negotiations of identity. It signals their haunting alternatives, their hope for a different order of things in the face of empire’s globalizing and violent presence. Luke-Acts fleshes out Jesus’ resurrection more than Mark, but the spiritual logic employed makes him more spectral than ever. However, the text’s emphasis on the here and now may ultimately muddle resurrection’s haunting call for justice.

The Spirit of Jesus’ Baptism

The scene of Jesus’ baptism provides an early glimpse at the spiritual logic in Luke-Acts. While related to the same scenes in the other synoptic gospels, Luke’s version of the story contains several unique and important details that speak to the large thematic workings of the text. While Jesus was praying after he was baptized, heaven opened above him (3:21). The “Holy Spirit” (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον) then descended from heaven down upon Jesus not only “in bodily form” (σωματικῶς εἶδαι), but “as a dove” (ὡς περιστερὰν). A heavenly voice then speaks from above, saying, “You are my son, the beloved one, I am well pleased with you” (3:22). This scene overflows with Christological and theological themes scholars and theologians have focused on for millennia.⁹⁴ While these features are important, it is the pneumatological elements of the pericope that are of interest for this study.

⁹⁴ For a survey of the history of scholarship on this passage, see François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Christine M. Thomas, Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 131–132.

The manner in which the spirit descends from heaven has proven perplexing for many scholars. In general, scholars have been at a loss for how to interpret the Holy Spirit coming from heaven “as a dove.”⁹⁵ While this pneumatological animality is indeed unique, what also proves perplexing for commentators is the *materiality* of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁶ Luke’s rendition of Jesus’ baptism scene is the only version to specify that the Holy Spirit descends from heaven “in bodily form.” The word *σωματικῶς*, here in the dative, is the adjectival form of *σῶμα*, which refers to the physical and material body of a human or animal. This is typically opposed to *ψυχή*, or the soul. In 2 Maccabees, hopes for the future focused on both souls (Eleazar) and bodies (the mother and her sons). Both spirits (Heliodorus) and souls (Eleazar) functioned as the invisible life-giving aspect of a person. The relationships among these terms are at least non-oppositional. The word *εἶδει*, likewise the dative form of *εἶδος*, combines with *σωματικῶς* to form a “dative of manner” construction.⁹⁷ Thus, it describes the manner in which the spirit descends. The noun *εἶδος* refers to the visible, that which is seen, or the shape and form of what is seen. More generally it can denote a form, sort, or particular kind of something. This word’s broader semantic range encompasses the noun *εἶδωλον*, a common term for ghosts and visions of the dead as seen in the introduction.

⁹⁵ e.g., Stephen Gero, “The Spirit as a Dove at the Baptism of Jesus,” *Novum Testamentum* 18, no. 1976 (1976): 16–35; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 129; Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 1 & 2:480.

⁹⁶ e.g., “Luke’s ‘in bodily form’ emphasizes the materiality of this apocalyptic scene in a characteristic way (cf. 22:43-44; 23:44-45; 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11; 2:1-4).” Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1997), 187.

⁹⁷ Martin M. Culy, Mikeal Carl Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall, *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010), 118.

This language in this scene thus evokes the otherworldly visions of trans-/extra-human agencies. While John Nolland is a notable detractor,⁹⁸ most commentators have suggested the bodily nature of the spirit as it descends roots this scene in “the real.”⁹⁹ Thus, this is not just a “vision” imagined by or revealed to Jesus or those around him. By comparison, the Gospel of Mark specifies that Jesus “saw” (εἶδεν) the spirit descending (Mark 1:10), suggesting that it was a personal vision more along the lines of Judas Maccabeus’s vision of Onias and Jeremiah.¹⁰⁰ Luke instead paints this scene as a narrative and historical event.¹⁰¹ Yet, this notion of a “bodily” spirit remains in its odd embodied existence. Specifying that a “spirit” comes “bodily” implies that is not usually the case. Such language raises a separation between “spirit” and “body” while simultaneously erasing that distinction. This same confusion existed in 2 Maccabees, where the spirit/soul appeared separable from the body when necessary while still holding to a bodily expectation of resurrection. This helps explain the redundant changes made to Luke’s story in Papyrus 4, which substitutes πνευματικῶ for σωματικῶ. In this rendering, the spirit descends in “spiritual” form.¹⁰² This repetitive textual variation owes its existence to the confusion of a spirit existing in bodily form. Even if for just a moment, this is a material and bodily spirit. The spectral existence of this bodily spirit is the first hint at why Jesus denies being a “spirit” later in the narrative.

⁹⁸ John Nolland, *Luke. 1-9:20*, vol. 35A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1989), 161.

⁹⁹ e.g., Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 187; Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 1 & 2:484.

¹⁰⁰ And in that instance, the line between “personal/private” and “public” is shattered quickly.

¹⁰¹ Bovon, *Luke 1*, 128.

¹⁰² Culy, Parsons, and Stigall, *Luke*, 118.

Throughout the narrative of Luke-Acts, however, this Holy Spirit performs actions unusual for an embodied or material entity. Following his baptism, Jesus is described as “full of the holy spirit” (πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου), and being “led by the spirit” (ἤγετο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι) into the desert (Luke 4:1). This spiritual doubling has caused some theological concerns over Jesus here being subordinated to the Holy Spirit.¹⁰³ After being tempted by the devil for forty days, Jesus returns “in the power of the spirit” (ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος) to the Galilee (4:14). Then, in Nazareth, Jesus reads aloud from a scroll of the prophet Isaiah, which begins, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me [Πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμέ]” (Isaiah 61:1 LXX; Luke 4:18). This scriptural citation connects the Holy Spirit of Luke-Acts—which has been coming upon and filling Jesus, driving him around—with the enigmatic Spirit of the Lord found throughout the Hebrew Bible.

As seen in Isaiah and Luke, the Spirit of the Lord conveyed prophetic ability to human agents (e.g. 1 Samuel 10:6; 2 Samuel 23:2; 1 Kings 22:24). This spirit could also provide protection from enemies (e.g. 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16), or assure that God deliver one’s enemies to them in battle (e.g. Judges 3:10; 6:34-7:22; 11:29; 14:19; 15:14). Luke-Acts is filled with the spiritual precedents set by these biblical references, in that the Holy Spirit acts as an invisible agency. At Pentecost, the text says that “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak” (Acts 2:4).¹⁰⁴ This pattern of behavior occurs

¹⁰³ Indeed, Bovon finds it enough of a possibility that he cautions that this “cannot mean the subordination of Jesus, but rather the solidarity of the Messiah and the Spirit.” Bovon, *Luke I*, 140.

¹⁰⁴ “Acts of the Apostles uses the holy spirit entering into both Jews and Gentiles to demonstrate not only the scope of God’s power but also the means by which this new

all throughout the narrative (e.g. Luke 1:35, 40, 67; 2:25-27, etc.).¹⁰⁵ The spirit, then, is present in the words and actions of the person upon/in whom it acts. It is generally not a material or even bodily entity, despite its appearance as such in Jesus' baptism.

The same holds true for other spirits throughout the narrative. After Jesus claims that the words from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah are about him, the ensuing argument leads the crowd to drive him from town. Jesus then goes to Capernaum, where he meets a man "having a spirit of an unclean demon" (ἔχων πνεῦμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου) in a synagogue (Luke 4:33). The Greek word δαίμων could refer to ghosts as well as divine entities of various sorts, as could the associated δαιμόνιον that appears here.¹⁰⁶ After the demon identifies him as "Jesus of Nazareth" and "the Holy One of God" (4:34), Jesus casts it out of the man (4:35). The spirit moved the man's body about and spoke through him, but otherwise appears completely invisible. The crowd sees how Jesus commands the "unclean spirits" (ἀκαθάρτοις πνεύμασιν) with power and authority, and is amazed that they obey him (4:36). Luke's unparalleled connection of πνεῦμα and δαιμόνιον here and elsewhere (6:18; 7:21; 8:2, 29; 9:38-43; 11:24-26)¹⁰⁷ further highlights how spirits function as invisible actors who are made present in their influence over others.

Like the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus, these demonic spirits too help construct Jesus' identity. They identify him in similar terms to the heavenly voice that

'way' indexes membership in Israel throughout the known world (see especially Acts 10:34-48; 15:8)." Buell, "Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies," 32.

¹⁰⁵ For more on the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts, see William Henry Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁶ Bovon suggests that Luke-Acts and other texts from Jewish literature followed the LXX "which uses δαιμόνιον in a disparaging sense." Bovon, *Luke 1*, 162.

¹⁰⁷ Nolland notes the unique combination here on the part of Luke. Nolland, *Luke. 1-9*, 35A:206.

accompanied the embodied Holy Spirit. They also provide opportunities for Jesus to display his powers over spirits, to manipulate these entities between seen and unseen. Overall, these dynamics are a similar visible/invisible spiritual logic already seen in 2 Maccabees. The text of Luke-Acts renders the (holy) spirit(s) present in its narrative world primarily through non-visible means. A figure that is physically and materially absent throughout the text gets a concrete presence during the baptism scene, albeit for a moment. This spiritual fluctuation becomes important as the narrative progresses.

Luke's version of the transfiguration scene connects with the baptism and its spiritual dynamics. Jesus, James, and Peter go up the mountain to pray (9:28). While they are praying, the text says that the "appearance" (τὸ εἶδος) of Jesus' face was "different" (ἕτερον), and his clothes become dazzling white (9:29). The term τὸ εἶδος was used earlier to describe the "form" of the Holy Spirit at the baptism. While Mark's version says that Jesus' clothes change, Luke says Jesus' face changed too. Jesus himself has changed.¹⁰⁸ Moses and Elijah again stand and talk with Jesus (9:30). By placing Moses and Elijah in correct chronological order, Luke attempts to fix the "out of joint" transfiguration in Mark. These two "appeared" (ὀφθέντες) "in glory" (ἐν δόξῃ), and spoke with Jesus about his "exodus" (ἐξοδόν) that was "about to happen in Jerusalem" (9:31). The connections with the baptism become clearer when a voice speaks from a cloud, saying, "This is my Son" (9:35). Jesus is identified as the Son of God once again. When this happens, his facial form is "different." Hence, the manner in which Jesus is rendered present in this scene is outside the norm, even for him. Indeed, Jesus' epiphanic transformation here

¹⁰⁸ Bovon argues that this scene "expresses change not in essence but in the relationship of Jesus to the others and of the others to him. According to Luke, Jesus does not become different from what he was before, but for a moment his appearance becomes a divine sign to humanity, the sign of his true identity." Bovon, *Luke 1*, 375.

evokes his future heavenly glorification.¹⁰⁹ Similar to Mark's gospel, he is identified in a moment when linear time compresses in upon itself. Two dead venerated figures from Israel's past stand beside Jesus, having a discussion about events that will happen in the future. The living and the dead inhabit the same scene, presence is obscured at the same moment that identity is asserted, and all while past, present, and future collide.

In the epigraph heading the introduction, Derrida explained the necessity to "learn spirits."¹¹⁰ That necessity feels pressing after this initial gaze into Luke's gospel. There is an odd pneumatology here, where agencies visible and invisible interact in complex ways. The contradictory dynamics of spiritual presence and absence make themselves felt in both 2 Maccabees and Luke-Acts. Spirits, holy and otherwise, drive the actions of material bodies and respond to them as well. While Luke erases the demonic Legion from his story, he cannot do the same to the spectral logic of the Roman Empire glimpsed in the previous chapter. The "thick air" of Luke-Acts surrounds the transfiguration, and makes itself felt through these invisible agencies. As in Mark, the mountain upon which the transfiguration took place stands in the shadow of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Crucified Spirits of Resurrection

Jesus is betrayed, arrested, and put on trial before competing (imperial) powers. Having been bounced around from Pilate to Herod and back again, Jesus' fate is sealed by the crowd's shouts of "crucify him!" (23:21). His Roman executioners hung his body

¹⁰⁹ John Paul Heil explains that "dramatic change in the face and clothing of Jesus signals to the audience that he has been externally and temporarily transformed by God into a heavenly being while still on earth. It anticipates his future and permanent attainment of glory in heaven as promised to the righteous after their death." John Paul Heil, *The Transfiguration of Jesus: Narrative Meaning and Function of Mark 9:2-8, Matt 17:1-8 and Luke 9:28-36*, Analecta Biblica (Rome: Pontificio Ist Biblico, 2000), 227.

¹¹⁰ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xvii–xviii.

on a cross, crucifying two criminals on either side of him. The chaotic crowd, a persistent and problematic theme throughout Luke-Acts,¹¹¹ mocks and debases Jesus throughout the entire ordeal. This gloomy tone is matched by the dark skies that roll in to cover the event (23:44-45). This shadowy scene climaxes when Jesus cries out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I hand over my spirit [τὸ πνεῦμά μου]” (23:46). Here, at the dramatic and climactic moment of his death, Jesus quotes Psalm 30:6 from the Septuagint. This psalm, a prayer for deliverance from one’s enemies, takes on new life in Jesus’ mouth. It also causes the language of “spirit” (πνεῦμα) to arise again in the narrative.

Spiritual language permeates this scene. After Jesus’ grand psalmic exclamation, the text employs the verb ἐξέπνευσεν to signify his last living action. Coming from the verb ἐκπνέω, this term can mean “to exhale,” to “to breathe” or “blow out.” It can also mean “to breathe one’s last,” “to expire,” or just “die.” This is an augmented form of πνέω, the same word used to signify Heliodorus’s “last breath” in 2 Maccabees 3:31. The scene evokes the reversal of God’s creative act in Genesis of “breathing the breath of life into the face [ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον...πνοήν ζωῆς]” of the first human (Genesis 2:7 LXX). This particular verb signifies breath and breathing, and all of this is etymologically linked to the aforementioned πνεῦμα. Jesus’ last words communicate that he is handing over his spirit to his heavenly father, and then the text says that he ἐξέπνευσεν. This connection with πνεῦμα gives the verb the force of Jesus “dispiriting” so

¹¹¹ Lawrence M. Wills, “The Depiction of the Jews in Acts,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991): 631–54.

to speak, literally giving up his life-giving spirit.¹¹² In his death on the cross, Jesus lets loose that absent-present πνεῦμα that has flitted about throughout Luke's text. His spirit has vacated, and all that remains is Jesus' body.

The text repeatedly references and emphasizes Jesus' body (σῶμα) in the ensuing scenes, indicating that Jesus' (in)visible spiritual agency has gone elsewhere. The enigmatic Joseph of Arimathea enters the scene following the spectacle of the crucifixion. Having disagreed with those who had conspired against Jesus, he came to Pilate after Jesus' death. Joseph asks for the "body of Jesus" (τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), and Pilate appears to grant him this wish (23:52). Taking the body down, Joseph wraps "it" (αὐτὸ) in linen and then places "it" (αὐτὸν) in an unused tomb (23:53). Bovon calls this placement of Jesus' body the "signature of the crucifixion."¹¹³ These pronouns carry an ambiguous force. On the one hand, they could be read as "him," referring to Jesus himself. However, the most recent antecedent for the pronouns is "the body of Jesus" (τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), with "body" (σῶμα) being the primary noun. This draws attention to the uncertain or even severed relationship between Jesus and his body after his spirit departs.

Luke's text goes on to specify that the women from Galilee, who had stood at a distance during his crucifixion (23:49), followed Joseph to see the tomb and how "his body" (τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ) was laid (23:55). These same women, after resting on the

¹¹² Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 1 & 2:1519; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 491; John Nolland, *Luke. 18:35-24:53*, World Biblical Commentary (Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1993), 1158.

¹¹³ And he argues that this emphasis on his body prevents an anti-docetist reading, though the resurrection appearances are far less clear on that front. "Letzere setzt Schlusspunkt nach der Kreuzigung. Hier dient sie als Argument gegen jegliche Form von Doketismus." François Bovon, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas*, vol. 3/4 (Zurich: Benziger Verlag, 2009), 503–504.

Sabbath, returned to the tomb carrying spices and ointment. However, they found the stone at the entrance of the tomb rolled away. Moreover, upon further inspection they did not find “the body” (τὸ σῶμα) inside the tomb (24:3).¹¹⁴ Even after Jesus has risen, the disciples on the road to Emmaus say that the women did not find “his body” (τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ) in the tomb (24:23). They go on, saying that some of their own ran into the tomb, but they did not find “him/it” (αὐτὸν) there either. (24:24). In the short period after Jesus’ death and before he appears alive again, the text repeatedly emphasizes that it is his “body” (σῶμα) that remains. His spirit—his πνεῦμα—is gone. The visible and dead part of him remains, while the invisible and life-giving element has vacated the scene.

Some scholars have argued that “spirit” in Luke-Acts does not carry an independent force or identity, and that it is not separable from the body in a “body-soul” binary.¹¹⁵ This caution against a Cartesian dualistic reading of pre-modern texts is one worth heeding. However, the text does produce and rely upon some level of a bifurcation of body and spirit as it emphasizes Jesus’ death and the burial of his dead body. These figurations of body and spirit had occurred previously in the figure of the Holy Spirit, further signaling the ambiguous relationship between the two. Amid the noble deaths and expectations of resurrection in 2 Maccabees, such an uncertain body-soul relationship was hinted at as well. Jesus’ noble death connects him with those martyrs before him,

¹¹⁴ Bovon helpfully notes that the word σῶμα can refer to a “dead body,” but does not note the repeated emphasis in this passage on that body. “Σῶμα kann bekanntlich den Sinn eines ‘toten Körpers’, oder eines ‘Leichnams’ annehmen und synonym sin mit πτῶμα.” Ibid., 3/4:524.

¹¹⁵ e.g., Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 826.

while also pointing toward the ongoing community for whom he died.¹¹⁶ The specter of resurrection brings with it many facets and features that resist comprehension. Indeed, this pneumatic and somatic confusion is far from over in Luke-Acts.

A body missing from a tomb is a momentous event in and of itself, with a wide range of possible meanings seen in the other chapters of this project. Luke's rendition of this tale further taps into some of the larger themes of the text, and ramps up the surreal nature of the end of the gospel. Beginning with the crucifixion, the text gradually renders Jesus more and more absent from the narrative world. First, his spirit takes off to places unseen, leaving the body behind as a remainder. Then, the body itself disappears, making Jesus fully absent both in body and in spirit. This is a profound absence, sending Jesus' companions from earlier in the narrative running about scared and asking endless questions.

This fully absent Jesus becomes present again when he visits some unnamed disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus (24:15). Their "eyes were kept from recognizing him" (24:16), so they spoke to him as a stranger along the road. Jesus' presence is clear to the reader, but is obscured for these characters in the story. The text is not forthcoming as to what keeps the disciples' gaze from seeing Jesus.¹¹⁷ Perhaps it is

¹¹⁶ For more on Jesus' death and "noble death" traditions, see e.g., Colleen Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 70–78, 96–106, 177–179; Brittany E. Wilson, *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), esp. 190–242.

¹¹⁷ "It is worth noting that nothing in these particular verses indicate that Jesus or his body is what is strange here, but rather the vision of the disciples." Foster, "Polymorphic Christology," 70.

God,¹¹⁸ who was the arbiter of things visible and invisible in 2 Maccabees. Here, however, God is more elusive. Nonetheless, after (not-)Jesus explains the scriptures to them, they invite him to dinner. At the dinner table, Jesus blessed and broke the bread, and then “their eyes were opened” and “they recognized him” (24:31a). Suddenly the disciples are able to see and experience the presence of Jesus. But, at this moment, “he became invisible” (αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο) from them (24:31b). The noun ἄφαντος here comes from the verb φαίνομαι, which has to do with appearing, sight, and vision. This verb’s semantic range encompasses a number of related terms often used when referencing the dead, such as φάσμα and φάντασμα.¹¹⁹ The text thus leans into this vocabulary to make the apparently present Jesus disappear right before his disciples’ eyes.

While disciples’ eyes had been the sites of the problem on the road to Emmaus, here Jesus morphs from visible to invisible. It is thus unclear what constitutes this absent-present Jesus who has been interacting with his former disciples.¹²⁰ Fitzmyer notes the resonances between the logic of visibility here and in the story of Heliodorus in 2 Maccabees 3 above.¹²¹ Not only is this Jesus able to travel many σταδίους from Jerusalem in an instant (24:13), he appears to be able to become invisible at will. He (dis)appears in

¹¹⁸ Nolland is a rare commentator who suggests that it was a “Satanic blinding that has kept the disciples from perceiving that it was Jesus who was with them.” Nolland, *Luke*. 18, 1206.

¹¹⁹ As seen in the introduction.

¹²⁰ Bovone comments on the dynamics of presence and absence in this scene, saying, “Sprechen wir von dieser Präsenz: In der Erzählung ist sie real, aber vorübergehend. Haum haben die Jünger den Auferstandenen erkannt, wird er auch schon ἄφαντος, ‘unsichtbar’. Im Leven is seine Gegenwart real, aber unsichtbar. Die modernen Theologen und Theologinnen haben nicht Unrecht, von einer Präsenz-Absenz zu sprechen.” Bovon, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas*, 3/4:563.

¹²¹ Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 1 & 2:1568.

much the same way as the enigmatic divine figures defending the temple in 2 Maccabees.

Who, or what, *is* this Jesus?

These suprahuman abilities continue in the next scene, the same scene referenced at the beginning of this chapter. The disciples from Emmaus ran to Jerusalem to tell the eleven and their companions what they had experienced. Then, while they all discussed these fantastical events among themselves, “he stood in the midst of them” (24:36). The text offers no verbs or qualifying terms to explain the mechanisms by which Jesus suddenly stood among them. No language of visions, appearance, or (in)visibility enters into the equation here. The sparse sentence states matter-of-factly that “he stood in the midst of them” (αὐτὸς ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν). There is a suddenness and an inexplicability that such a straightforward sentence conveys. This is further highlighted by the disciples’ dramatic collective reaction. “Being startled [πτοηθέντες] and becoming afraid [ἔμφοβοι], they thought they saw a spirit [ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν]” (24:37). Jesus tries to alleviate their fears. “Why are you troubled?” he asks, “You see [ἴδετε] my hands and my feet, that I am myself” (24:39a).

Whether or not Jesus’ reference to his “hands” and “feet” should evoke the marks of crucifixion, as is explicit in the Gospel of John 20:24-28,¹²² has been debated by scholars.¹²³ Regardless, the visibility of such markings would only prove Jesus’ *identity*, not that he was material, embodied, or even alive. “Luke insists on the bodiliness of the risen Jesus,” claims N. T. Wright, and “explicitly rebuts any suggestion that this was a

¹²² Which will receive much attention in the next chapter.

¹²³ e.g., Nolland, *Luke. 18*, 1213–1214; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 38–43; Bovon, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas*, 3/4:584–585.

phantom, a ghost or a hallucination.”¹²⁴ However, Greg Riley has shown that ghosts and spirits of the dead could bear such markings in Judeo-Greco-Roman antiquity.¹²⁵ In this way, the resurrected Jesus first assures his disciples of who he is, that he is the man they have known and followed throughout the narrative. However, these words do nothing to assuage their fears that Jesus is in fact a *spirit*.¹²⁶ Being able to “see” (ἴδετε) him operates within the possible reality of Jesus’ new spiritual existence. His next line appears to address these apostolic concerns head on.

“Touch me and see [ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε],” says Jesus, “for a spirit (πνεῦμα) does not have flesh and bones as you see me having” (24:39b). This statement, attempting to negate the possibility that Jesus is a “spirit” (πνεῦμα), is peculiar on several levels. Being able to “see” (again) and “touch” him would only prove that he has some sort of physical bodily existence in his post-mortem state. Moreover, unless Jesus has large open wounds and/or compound fractures in his resurrected body, it may prove difficult for his disciples to “touch” or even “see” his “flesh” and “bones.” The oddity of Jesus’ proofs is further underscored by the disciples’ reactions. They were still “disbelieving” (ἀπιστούντων) and “wondering” (θαυμαζόντων) what was happening (24:41). Much like the spectral Jesus walking on the sea in Mark, nothing he says can make these fantastical events more comprehensible or palatable.¹²⁷ Jesus gives additional proof that he is not a “spirit” by eating some broiled fish “before them [ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν]”

¹²⁴ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 657.

¹²⁵ Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 50–51.

¹²⁶ Bovon, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas*, 3/4:585.

¹²⁷ For more on the role of the fantastic in the gospels, see Young, *Subversive Symmetry*; Aichele, *Phantom Messiah*.

(24:42-43). Once again, this does not constitute evidence that Jesus' post-resurrection state is beyond the pale of ancient beliefs about the dead.¹²⁸

The vocabulary used in these scenes is quite distinctive though, and the use of the word πνεῦμα (“spirit”) throughout is striking. It is not a typical word used for dead entities who visit the living, as explored in the introduction.¹²⁹ In Mark and Matthew, by comparison, when the disciples see Jesus walking on the sea, they become terrified because they think that he is a “ghost [φάντασμα]” (Matthew 14:26; Mark 6:49). As seen in the previous chapter, Jesus responds much as he does in Luke's resurrection story: attempting (but failing?) to calm his disciples' fears. Likewise, the longer ending of Mark is filled with “appearance” language (Mark 16:9, 14) and even shape-shifting (16:12). The D text of Luke's resurrection story responds to this incongruity. Rather than fearing that Jesus is a “spirit” (πνεῦμα), the disciples think that he is a “ghost” (φάντασμα).¹³⁰ Ignatius of Antioch reports a story much like that seen in Luke. However, there the word δαίμων is used, a word for deity generally but also common for ghosts and spirits of the dead (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* 3.1-3).¹³¹ The vocabulary employed in these stories resembles that used in the wealth of comparative material from antiquity already explored in the introduction.

The uncertainty of “spirit” (πνεῦμα) comes across as a deliberate word choice on Luke's part. A common reading suggests this story is an apology against criticism of

¹²⁸ Paul Foster argues for how this merely emphasizes the risen Jesus as being *embodied*, and having continuity with his living self, albeit with many new abilities. Foster, “Polymorphic Christology,” 72.

¹²⁹ Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 23–25; Smith, “Seeing a Pneuma(tic Body),” 755.

¹³⁰ Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 1 & 2:1575–1576.

¹³¹ For more on the word δαίμων as a possible ghost-reference, refer to the discussion of vocabulary in the introduction. Also, see the work of Felton and Johnston. e.g., Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, esp. 24; Johnston, *Restless Dead*, esp. 162–165.

Christian beliefs in Jesus' fleshly resurrection.¹³² However, the details of the story do not appear to accomplish such a task in a convincing manner.¹³³ The use of "spirit" (πνεῦμα) would be peculiar in this regard. Others suggest that this is an intra-Christian polemic. The targets of this polemic are any number of potential phantoms opponents. Perhaps this scene is anti-docetic.¹³⁴ Or, this could counter the Pauline notion of the "spiritual body."¹³⁵ There are many real or imagined targets that can be raised as possibilities. Yet, these efforts to find one group, figure, or event explain the peculiarities of Luke's resurrection story suffer from the problems endemic in resurrection scholarship generally. They reduce the story to identity politics, missing how negotiations of identity are bound up with negotiations of life and death. Navigating absence and presence, as well as time, occurred in concert with negotiating self and other in 2 Maccabees. Luke-Acts likewise polices the limits of "Christian" identity while attempting to police how life and death intersect in resurrection. All of this resonates the spectral logic of the expansive imperial presence felt throughout the Mediterranean.

All of these themes focalize in Jesus' foretold "exodus" at the end of Luke's gospel. After appearing to his disciples, and teaching them about the scriptures (Luke 24:44-49), Jesus leads them outside of Jerusalem. As he blesses them, Jesus is suddenly "taken up into heaven" (ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν) away from them (24:51). Once again, Jesus is fully absent, taken up into heaven like Elijah (2 Kings 2:10-11), Romulus (Livy

¹³² e.g., Bovon, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas*, 3/4:586.

¹³³ "Nestled between these two demonstrations of materiality is a transparent indication that such exhibitions are insufficient for producing the desired effects." Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 855.

¹³⁴ Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 1 & 2:484; Nolland, *Luke*, 18, 1213.

¹³⁵ As argued by Daniel Smith in several places. Smith, "Seeing a Pneuma(tic Body)"; Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, 99–114.

1.16), and various Roman Emperors (e.g., Dio Cassius 75.5.5) as seen in the previous chapter. Their ascent to the heavens renders them absent at the same time it grants people access to their presence across the cosmological geography of the ancient Mediterranean. The undead figure of the resurrected Jesus, whose presence has been obscured throughout his appearances to his disciples, now appears even more removed in his new dwelling amid the heavens. Moreover, time appears to be unhinged in this story.

The end of Luke's gospel suggests that Jesus' resurrection and ascension all happened in more or less one day. However, Acts states explicitly that Jesus was with his disciples for *forty* days post-resurrection (Acts 1:3), and it even re-narrates his ascension to heaven. Scholars have puzzled over this apparent contradiction, offering a number of imperfect solutions.¹³⁶ When Jesus' "exodus" was discussed previously in the narrative during the transfiguration, Jesus' physical and visual presence was obscured. Moreover, he received divine and human prophetic favor from Elijah, Moses, and God's voice. Past, present, and future all intersect alongside life and death in that scene, as they do here. Wendy Brown explains that spectral figures do not abolish past, present, and future. Rather, the specter "underscores the weightiness of the relation among the three terms."¹³⁷ The text's initial protagonist here ascends to his greatest heights, transcends life and death, oscillates between presence and absence, and bends time itself. Luke-Acts attempts to provide additional comprehension—missing from Mark's gospel—to the figure of the resurrected Jesus through these narrations. Yet, it does so in ways that resist the comprehensibility the text attempts to provide.

¹³⁶ e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 649–656; Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 5–10; Henk Jan de Jonge, "The Chronology of the Ascension Stories in Luke and Acts," *New Testament Studies* 59, no. 2 (2013): 151–71.

¹³⁷ Brown, *Politics Out of History*, 150.

Afterlives

With this transition to the Acts of the Apostles, however, Jesus' absence is once again partial and incomplete, as his presence continuously creeps back into the narrative. His body has gone to heaven, but as many commentators note, his name remains. The Acts of the Apostles is filled with speeches by Peter (e.g., Acts 2-3), Stephen (Acts 7), Paul (e.g., Acts 13), and others, who regularly invoke the person of Jesus. These speeches are replete with retellings of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. In this way, one of the primary ways that Jesus is present in Acts is with references to moments of his most intense spectrality. While not exhaustive,¹³⁸ this section explores some key themes from these speeches to further highlight the spiritual logics of life and death in Luke-Acts.

Throughout these speeches, many honorific titles for Jesus are bandied about. One title in particular warrants close attention here. While speaking to a group of "Israelites" in Solomon's Portico, Peter refers to Jesus as what the NRSV renders "the Author of Life" (Acts 3:15). The word translated as "author" here is ἀρχηγός, which has a rather large semantic range. It is difficult to translate here, let alone interpret within the passage.¹³⁹ The possible English renderings of this word range from a "leader" or "ruler" to "one who begins," an "instigator," an "originator," or even a "founder." Kevin Anderson, following Lake and Cadbury, notes that this term would carry a "classical flavor" and evoke "the mythical or historical founders of institutions" as well as "pioneers who bestowed blessings on mankind [sic]."¹⁴⁰ Several commentators agree

¹³⁸ For a more exhaustive surveys of these speeches, see Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994); Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 197–260.

¹³⁹ Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 224.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 225.

with the NRSV, that “author” is the best translation of ἀρχηγός, while others suggest translations such as “Leader to Life” or even the “champion” of life. The only other use of this word in Acts is helpful here.

Peter, again, tells the chief priest of the Jerusalem temple that “the God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.” He goes on, saying, “God exalted him as leader and savior [ὁ θεὸς ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα ὑψωσεν] to his right hand” (Acts 5:30-31). This title of ἀρχηγός, here independent of the “of life” clause, is bestowed upon Jesus after God raises him from the dead along with the identification as “savior” (σωτῆρα).¹⁴¹ Here the sense of leadership and primacy is clearly evoked.¹⁴² Along with “savior,” the title has an imperial shade to it. Thus, “author” does not carry the civic and even mythic force this term can convey.

That force becomes all the more clear when seeing this title in its immediate context in Peter’s speech. Peter accuses the “Israelites,” saying, “you killed the

¹⁴¹ It is worth noting the only other two instances of this word appearing in the New Testament are both in the book of Hebrews, and both in reference to Jesus. Hebrews 2:10 refers to Jesus as the “pioneer of salvation” (τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας), while Hebrews 12:2 calls Jesus the “pioneer and perfecter of faith” (τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν). Again, the title here definitely leans into the mythic, foundational, and perhaps even civic and politic dimensions of the term. Beyond these references, the term did not gain a lot of use in early Christianity with only a few notable exceptions. Gregory of Nyssa and Eusebius both refer to Jesus only as ἀρχηγός, as well as the ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς seen here in Acts. It is likely that they are both picking up on the term directly from Acts of the Apostles. Perhaps the most interesting parallel is found in the *Letter of the Churches of Vienna and Lyons to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia* (which is found in Eusebius’s *History of the Church*, coincidentally or not), which refers to Jesus as “the firstborn of the dead, the leader of/to the life of God” (πρωτοτόκω τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ἀρχηγῶ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ). For more on this, see Paul-Gerhard Müller, *XPICTOS APXHΓOΣ: Der Religionsgeschichtliche Und Theologische Hintergrund Einer Neutestamentlichen Christusprädikation*, vol. 28, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 23 (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1973).

¹⁴² Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 225.

Author(/Founder/Leader/Champion) of Life, the one whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses” (Acts 3:15). It is a dense statement packed with the themes I have been following throughout Luke-Acts. It pinpoints the “Israelites” as those who “killed” Jesus, assigning the blame for one of the pivotal events of the text to them. As noted before, this is far from the only time the text frames the Jews or the Israelites in a problematic vein.¹⁴³ It was not just “Jesus” whom they killed, but the “Founder of Life” (ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς). This is a borderline cosmic entity, the source and foundation of life itself. It seems ironic then, that such a figure could die at the hand of mortals on earth.

Peter’s speech meets this incongruity immediately, as this Founder of Life is in fact the one whom “God raised from the dead [θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν]” (3:15). The text confirms that the Champion of Life was in fact dead, only to be “raised” from this death. Several commentators suggest that this unique title of ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς for Jesus in fact signifies his role as the first one of the larger resurrection of the dead.¹⁴⁴ His particular resurrection is the proof of the coming general resurrection, thus making him the Progenitor of Life. Thus, it is a title only properly bestowed upon Jesus *after* he raises from the dead. Indeed, the other mention of ἀρχηγός in Acts 5:31 also indicates that the title was given to Jesus after he dies and God raises him up. Yet, the manner in which this speech remembers the event frames Jesus as already being the Founder of Life *before*, or at least at the moment of, his death. Linear time once again becomes jumbled and incoherent when focused around the resurrection. Jesus’ later exaltation and concomitant honorific titles are remembered backwards into his life as well as his death.

¹⁴³ Wills, “The Depiction of the Jews in Acts,” esp. 644.

¹⁴⁴ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 28; Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 225.

Moreover, Jesus' existence as the firstborn of the resurrection means that many others will one day follow his example in their own resurrections. Much as Eleazar expected future generations to emulate his honorable death, Jesus the Prince of Life can expect future generations to emulate his return from death. This is but one of the subtle ways that figures from the past haunt the present and future actions of others. Likewise present honorific memories and future expectations haunt the past, reshaping identities long gone. As Carla Freccero puts it, "[t]he borderline between then and now wavers, wobbles, and does not hold still."¹⁴⁵ Also evoked is the fact that this was "witnessed," as Peter claims that he and his compatriots saw Jesus' resurrection transpire. However, they saw no such event. In fact, this claim obscures the difficulty Peter and others had with visions of this so-called Founder of Life. The text again attempts to provide comprehension around the risen Jesus, yet does so in a manner that contradicts its own portrayal of these events. The differences between seen and unseen, or present and absent, crumble in these negotiations of life and death. The spectrality of Jesus, indeed of Luke-Acts itself, is on full display in Peter's speech.

Peter is not the only one to have some confusion around his visions of the resurrected Jesus. Paul, or Saul, has the most dramatic encounter with the supposedly absent Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles. The text introduces Saul in the scene of Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7:58), so death accompanies him even at the beginning of his narrative journey. Indeed, Saul "gave approval to the murder" (Acts 8:1), which implicates him in Stephen's noble death. Stephen's death evokes the noble deaths of Eleazar and the other Maccabean martyrs, and likewise gestures toward the specter of the

¹⁴⁵ Freccero, "Queer Spectrality," 196.

resurrected Jesus.¹⁴⁶ When the story reintroduces Paul, he is “still breathing even a threat of murder [ἔτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου] to the disciples of the Lord” (9:1), further emphasizing how the righteous dead cast their shade upon him. It is after this additional detail that Saul experiences his famous encounter on the road to Damascus. The story highlights the divine intervention, stating, “Suddenly [ἐξαίφνης] a light [φῶς] shone around him from heaven [ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ]” (Acts 9:3). Not only does light rip through the barrier between heaven and earth, it does so without warning.¹⁴⁷

This heavenly light show causes Saul to fall to the ground; sounds rush forth to join the sights. “Saul, Saul,” speaks an incorporeal voice, “why are you persecuting me?” (9:4). Saul asks to whom this voice belongs, and it answers: “I am Jesus” [Ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς]” (9:5). As seen in the last chapter, the redundant “I am” uttered from the spectral mouth of the heavenly Jesus here casts a divine shade on him. This living-dead Jesus who vacated the narrative at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles is now suddenly and divinely present to Saul the killer. Jesus’ identification with Stephen and others whom Paul is persecuting continues to call into question the boundaries between the living and the dead.¹⁴⁸ Wright notes how this story parallels that of Heliodorus’s visionary

¹⁴⁶ For more on Stephen’s mimicking of Jesus, see Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Drew Peterson cites a variety of passages (e.g., Exodus 19:16; 2 Samuel 22:13, 15; Psalms 77:18; 97:4; 144:5-6; etc.) to note that the “appearance of lightning or of a brilliance like lightning is a feature of theophanies in the Bible” David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 303.

¹⁴⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 31, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 425.

experiences in the temple in 2 Maccabees.¹⁴⁹ Heliodorus too has heavenly visions that knock him down in the midst of his marauding (2 Macc 3:24-28).

The vocal presence of Jesus is so affecting that the men traveling with Saul “stood speechless” because they were “hearing the voice but seeing no one” (Acts 9:7). The paradoxes of the scene play out in these details, as these men cannot speak because of a voice that they have heard. They look, but they see nothing. Saul, too, “having opened his eyes was seeing nothing” (9:8). Whereas Jesus’ body resided in the darkness of a tomb for three days, Saul was in darkness “not seeing for three days” (9:9). While the story here says that Paul only saw a light, others disagree. Ananias says that “Jesus appeared” (Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθείς) to Paul (9:17), while Barnabas argues that Paul “saw the Lord” (εἶδεν τὸν κύριον) before the Jerusalem disciples (9:27).¹⁵⁰ The heavenly Jesus thus causes confusion of the senses with his injunctions to earth, just as he did when he traversed life and death in his resurrection.

The original story of Saul’s encounter with Jesus is provocative, but it gets more complicated as he recounts the tale himself. Having been dragged before the tribune in Jerusalem, Paul (formerly Saul) speaks before the chaotic Jewish crowd (a redundant qualification in Acts) in “the Hebrew language [τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ]” (21:40).¹⁵¹ The formerly murderous apostle who has encountered the living-dead absent-present Jesus now mimics the actions of 2 Maccabees’ martyred mother and her seven sons. The Semitic sounds uttered by Paul sooth the crowd, allowing him to list his own Jewish

¹⁴⁹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 391.

¹⁵⁰ Leading some scholars to suggest that Jesus’ appearance to Paul was thus implied in the story of Acts 9:3-9. e.g. Ibid., 389; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 304–305.

¹⁵¹ Though most scholars agree that the language being spoken is actually Aramaic, not “Hebrew.” For surveys of this scholarship, see Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 31:701; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 593.

credentials. He proceeds to narrate his encounter with Jesus. His tale begins with a detail that was missing from the original story; the heavenly light occurred “about noon [περὶ μεσηβρίαν]” (22:6). While time was indeterminate in the first version of the story, it is now more specific. This is the exact midpoint of the day, between sunrise and sunset. This new detail distinguishes this visitation from the heavenly Jesus from standard nighttime apparitions.¹⁵²

When the heavenly Jesus identifies himself while discoursing with Paul—now fallen on the ground—he says he is “Jesus of Nazareth [Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος]” (22:8). In the first telling of the story, Jesus neglected to mention his hometown. The most striking detail is Paul’s report about his companions, who now “saw the light but did not hear the voice” (22:9). This is the exact opposite of what occurred earlier, where they “heard the voice but saw no one” (9:7). Scholars have puzzled over this clear contradiction in details.¹⁵³ Given how the senses of sight and hearing were so obscured during the initial telling of the story, it is no wonder that details continue to unravel upon a second encounter with the heavenly Jesus. This haunting figure continues to fill the thick air of Luke-Acts in order to disrupt time, vision, and even hearing.

When Paul tells the story a third time, the risen Jesus dominates the tale. There is no longer a dialogue between Paul and Jesus. Rather, Jesus launches into a monologue. He does not merely identify himself and send Paul to Damascus, but states the purpose for which he has appointed Paul. “I appeared [ὤφθην] to you,” says Jesus, “to appoint you a servant and a witness [μάρτυρα] of that which you saw [ὧν τε εἶδές] and that which I

¹⁵² Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 31:705.

¹⁵³ Some, like Wright, attempt to brush these differences under the rug as “best explained by Luke’s following the Hellenistic convention of style according to which variation in a narrative lends interest.” Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 388.

will make manifest [ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαι] for you” (26:16). Like Ananias and Barnabas, the heavenly Jesus claims that he did indeed appear to Paul despite the narrative of 9:3-9. Jesus goes on to say that he will deliver Paul from “the people” and the “Gentiles.” Paul will “open their eyes” (ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν), turning them from “darkness” to “light” and from Satan to God (26:17). Here the heavenly Jesus descends from on high to manifest himself as present in the story of this past. But he is now far *more* present than in the first or even second telling of that event. “[T]he spirit comes by *coming back*,” explains Derrida, “it figures *both* a deceased man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself, again and again.”¹⁵⁴

Jesus’ spectral appearance to Paul indeed happens again and again, with the comprehensibility becoming more elusive each time. Moreover, Jesus’ speech is overburdened with the language of “appearance,” “witnessing,” “seeing,” and “making manifest.” This is odd since Jesus does not in fact *appear* in the scene at all. While his body is absent, his voice renders this Jesus present. Indeed, this telling of the story injects even more of his presence into the past narrative than was there originally. The spectrality of the heavenly Jesus’s presence grows with each re-narration of Paul’s spiritual encounter along the road to Damascus. While multiple versions of the same story might otherwise making it more comprehensible, these three conflicting renditions make the story truly incomprehensible. “Christ introduced great distress into history,” says Karl Marx as he summarizes the arguments of Max Stirner, precisely in how “Christians have racked their brains in order to comprehend him.”¹⁵⁵ Jesus’ (non-

¹⁵⁴ Emphasis original. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

¹⁵⁵ Derrida quotes this passage from *The German Ideology* in his exegesis of Marx on incarnation, specters, and more. Karl Marx, *The German Ideology: Including Theses on*

)presence through spiritual encounters with Peter and Paul disrupts mappings of time and space in Luke-Acts.

Resurrections False and Otherwise

Jesus is not the only person to die and come back from the dead in Luke-Acts. After Paul's initial "conversion," the text tells the story of the disciple Tabitha (or Dorcas) in Joppa. Possibly a wealthy woman, as she was devoted to "good works" (ἔργων ἀγαθῶν) and "charity" (ἐλεημοσυνῶν),¹⁵⁶ she becomes ill and dies (ἀσθενήσασαν αὐτὴν ἀποθανεῖν; 9:36-37). Peter was in nearby Lydda, so some disciples from Joppa send for him to visit the departed Tabitha. He arrives at a house crowded with weeping widows who show Peter clothes and garments that Tabitha had made before she died. Peter proceeds to push the crowd out of the room and kneel down to pray along with Tabitha's body. The text is careful to note that Peter turns and speaks to "the body" (τὸ σῶμα) of Tabitha (9:40), replicating the body/spirit dichotomy used earlier for Jesus' death. Some scholars suggest that this is merely a "revivification" or "apparent death" story, and thus not a true "resurrection."¹⁵⁷ However, as usual the details of the story suggest that such categorical hair-splitting is more distracting than helpful.¹⁵⁸

Feuerbach and Introduction to the Political Economy, Great Books in Philosophy (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998), 171; Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 180–181.

¹⁵⁶ For a survey of scholarship on Tabitha and her social location, see Janice Capel Anderson, "Reading Tabitha: A Feminist Reception History," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff, vol. 9, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 22–48.

¹⁵⁷ e.g., Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, 90.

¹⁵⁸ Kevin Anderson argues that stories like this (Luke 7:11-17; 8:41-46; Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12) are in fact intended to bolster the claims of the reality of Jesus' own resurrection. Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*, 119–129.

Just as Jesus is a “body” while dead, and his spirit is elsewhere, so too is Tabitha. “Tabitha,” Peter says, “get up [ἀνάστηθι]” (9:40). She “opened her eyes” (ἤνοιξεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῆς) and, “having seen Peter [ἰδοῦσα τὸν Πέτρον], she sat up” (9:40). Peter’s command evokes the “arising” language of resurrection, and her response once again injects the sense of sight into these scenes where life and death are traversed. Peter helps Tabitha up and parades her before the crowd that had gathered, showing that “she was alive [αὐτὴν ζῶσαν]” (9:41). Jane Schaberg argues that Luke’s gospel distances women from the resurrected Jesus. In contrast to the other canonical gospels, all encouragement for the women to bear witness to the empty tomb is missing in the Gospel of Luke.¹⁵⁹ Here is another silent woman, but one who embodies Jesus’ resurrection in her own.¹⁶⁰ She embodies the hope of the Maccabean martyrs, and the story brings the past activities of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-37) into the present.¹⁶¹ Yet her silence, and immediate absence after this story, ultimately serves to bolster Peter’s stature.¹⁶² All of this comes in the immediate wake of Paul’s first encounter with the risen

¹⁵⁹ Jane Schaberg notes that Luke’s gospel contains no actual commission for the women at the empty tomb to report what they have seen, unlike Mark 16:7 and Matthew 28:7-10. Jesus appears to women in Matthew 28:9-10, (the longer ending of) Mark 16:9, and John 20:11-18. As Schaberg puts it, these women’s “witness is not essential to the Christian faith” in Luke’s text.” Jane Schaberg, “Luke,” in *Women’s Bible Commentary: Expanded Edition With Apocrypha*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 378–379.

¹⁶⁰ Despite some (male) interpreters attempts to read this as just a “resuscitation” story rather than a proper resurrection, as seen above.

¹⁶¹ Pervo notes these resemblances “include both general pattern and specific details.” Richard I. Pervo, *Acts, Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 254.

¹⁶² Indeed, Elaine Pagels argues that Luke’s Jesus appearing only to his male followers, and subsequently ascending narrowly restricts the authority of a personal resurrection encounter. She contends that bodily resurrection “legitimizes the authority of certain men who claim to exercise exclusive leadership over the churches.” Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, 6–10.

heavenly Jesus. The text thus enacts further echoes of the Jesus's resurrection, which begins to emanate outward in additional emulations, showing how he is indeed the First One of Life...the First of the Resurrection.

Associations between the belated apostle Paul and death prefaced his encounter with the living-dead present-absent Jesus. Paul is a murderer, forever linked with the dead body of Stephen the martyr, which likewise echoes not only Jesus but also the Maccabean martyrs. His encounters with death only increase later in the narrative. Paul and Barnabas visit the city of Lystra, where the locals think them to be “the gods” (οἱ θεοὶ) who have “been made like humans” (ὁμοιωθέντες ἀνθρώποις) and “came down” (κατέβησαν) from heaven (Acts 14:11). Barnabas is called Zeus, while Paul is Hermes.¹⁶³ As seen in the previous chapter, “the gods do, in the guise of strangers from afar, put on all manner of shapes” (Homer, *The Odyssey* 17.485-487). The crowds attempt to offer them sacrifices, but Paul protests to them that they are “human, having been made like you [ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι]” (Acts 14:15). This religious fervor is inspired because Paul healed a lame man, and told him to “stand up [ἀνάστηθι]” (14:10). This command echoes the vocabulary of resurrection, the transcending of life and death, which in turn leads to confusion about the limits of the human and the divine.¹⁶⁴ The competing

¹⁶³ Fitzmyer and others suggest that a particular mythical story of Zeus and Hermes from Phrygia may be the source of these particular association (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.617-725). e.g., Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 31:531.

¹⁶⁴ Pervo suggests that that Paul's healing by speech here is necessary for the ensuring divine-human controversy, since Paul is thought to be the messenger god Hermes. Pervo, *Acts*, 353.

claims in this scene point to the crisis of the category of the human occurring at this time.¹⁶⁵

While Paul and Barnabas's protests fail to dissuade the Lystrians, a group of Jews turn the crowd against them. The crowd proceeds to stone Paul and drag him out of the city. They leave him there, "thinking him to have died" (νομίζοντες αὐτὸν τεθνηκέναι), thus darkening the shadow of death cast over him from his introduction. As far as this crowd knows, Paul is dead and gone. A death by stoning evokes the death with which Paul is associated: that of Stephen. However, despite the layers of death that have been heaped (like so many stones) upon him, news of Paul's death turns out to be exaggerated. Some disciples gather around him, and "having arisen" (ἀναστὰς), he returns to the city (Acts 14:19-20). The once murderous apostle, now himself apparently murdered, has his own "rising up" that looks (and sounds) like Jesus' "rising up." Paul experiences a *Scheintod*, or false death,¹⁶⁶ an ancient theme explored in the next chapter.¹⁶⁷ This scene takes place in a mere two verses, yet tells a story of Paul being assaulted and assumed dead only to rise again. Paul has been haunted by the death of Stephen (and, by proxy, Jesus) from his introduction in Acts, and now comes close to his own death in the midst of his encounters with the living-dead Jesus. "The living dead haunt," explains Avery Gordon, "because in

¹⁶⁵ As discussed in the previous chapter. See Moore, "Why There Are No Humans or Animals in the Gospel of Mark," esp. 89.

¹⁶⁶ Richard I. Pervo, *Profit With Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress, 1987), 26, 148.

¹⁶⁷ Near death experiences like this were a frequent occurrence in ancient literature. Such stories haunt tales of resurrection, both in history and today. For instance, see the efforts of Tannehill to distance this story from any association with the ancient novels (and Pervo's own response) in Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts, Volume Two: The Acts of the Apostles*, 2:180; Pervo, *Acts*, 360.

their liminality and in their ability to cross between the worlds of the living and the dead, they carry a sharp double-edged message: it could be you.”¹⁶⁸

Spirits of Jesus

Jesus’ oscillations between absent and present in the Acts of the Apostles is perhaps most perplexing when Paul and others want to go to the region of Bithynia. Despite their desires, they are stopped by the “Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 16:7). Having just met Timothy in Derbe and Lystra, Paul and his companions continue to travel throughout Asia Minor. They go through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, because they were “forbidden by the Holy Spirit [κωλυθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος] to speak the word in Asia” (16:6). The pneumatic pressure does not stop there though, as this “Spirit of Jesus” appears in the next line. “They attempted to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus [τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ] did not allow them” (16:7). This is the only time in Luke-Acts that the phrase “Spirit of Jesus” (τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ) occurs. Acts mentions the more ambiguous “Spirit of the Lord” (τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου) twice. Peter evokes the “Spirit of the Lord” when dealing with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:9), and the “Spirit of the Lord” snatches Philip away after baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:39). This phrase (“The Spirit of the Lord”) could be a reference to the spirit of Jesus, but the fact that Jesus himself reads the phrase “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me” in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1) suggests that this “Lord” is in fact God.¹⁶⁹ As seen above, the Hebrew Bible

¹⁶⁸ Here Gordon is specifically using the concept of “living dead” to explain the existence of modern prisoners. Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” 13.

¹⁶⁹ For more on this, see Gustav Stählin, “To Pneuma Iēsou (Apostelgeschichte 16:7),” in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honor of Charles Francis Digby Moule*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 229–52.

is filled with references to an enigmatic “Spirit of the Lord” figure. Yet, that has not deterred some scholars from reading this “spirit” as something other than Jesus’ own.¹⁷⁰

Numerous commentators assert that it is in fact the “spirit” that descends upon Jesus during his baptism that prevents Paul from traveling to Bithynia.¹⁷¹ This makes little sense at the level of language or context. It is clearly the “Holy Spirit,” an entity active independent of Jesus (and his own spirit) throughout Luke-Acts, which descends on Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:22). Moreover, the Holy Spirit is mentioned one verse prior as having forbidden Paul and others from entering “Asia” (Acts 16:6).¹⁷² While the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus may both show interest in controlling the movement of material earthly bodies, they are distinct entities.

This Spirit of Jesus must be none other than the spirit Jesus “gives up” at his death on the cross. As I showed earlier, the moment of Jesus’ death in the Gospel of Luke is punctuated by his declaration, “Father, into your hands I hand over my spirit [παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου]” (Luke 23:46). After this, he literally gives up his spirit (ἐξέπνευσεν), simultaneously signaling his death and the separation of his life-giving spirit from his body. Jesus’ body ultimately ascends to heaven after it resurrects, taking his spirit with him. As it has throughout 2 Maccabees and Luke-Acts, this oscillation between separation and unity of body and spirit continues. The body of Jesus now apparently resides in the heavens with God, but apparently his spirit is able to take the

¹⁷⁰ e.g., Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 455; 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: Fortress Press, 2012), 397.

¹⁷¹ In terms of these two spirits, Pervo says that their “function, if not their identity, is the same.” Pervo, *Acts*, 390.

¹⁷² Fitzmyer thus says that the “Spirit of Jesus” “stands in parallelism with the ‘Holy Spirit.’” Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 31:578.

elevator down to earth. It is this Spirit of Jesus, the absence of which signaled Jesus' death, which here directs the actions of Paul. What a strange entity, which can be the source and symbol of life for one body while later directing the movements of another.¹⁷³

In the end, there is no indication as to *why* the Spirit of Jesus prevents Paul from visiting Bithynia. Joseph Tyson suggest that this is an effort by the author to distance Paul from his big fan Marcion (of Pontus, which was unified with Bithynia as a single province by the Romans) as part of Luke-Acts' larger anti-Marcion polemic.¹⁷⁴ He cautions however that this is a speculative argument. The resistance to comprehension that the Spirit of Jesus inspires in Acts 16 is but an exclamation mark on the themes I have been elucidating throughout this chapter. This is an incorporeal entity moving bodies in the corporeal world. And yet, spirits *can* be bodily entities, as the Holy Spirit showed during Jesus' baptism. Jesus' spirit left him at his death, but rejoined him at his resurrection and followed his body when it went to heaven at his ascension. However, Jesus' spirit continues to leave his heavenly body in order to move around other bodies in

¹⁷³ The rarity of the Spirit of Jesus ultimately emphasizes its oddity. This is the only reference of the "Spirit of Jesus" specifically in Luke-Acts. There are additional inferences, but nothing as clear as what takes place in Acts 16:7. None of the canonical gospels use such a title, and it only appears infrequently in the epistolary literature. The genuine Pauline letters refer to the "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9), "the Spirit of his [God's] Son" (Galatians 4:6), and "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19). In Romans and Galatians, the Spirit of Christ/Spirit of God's Son is something that insiders possess and outsiders do not. As seen in both 2 Maccabees and Luke-Acts, constructions of identity are once again done in concert with navigations of absent and present or life and death. The Spirit of Jesus Christ in Philippians is expected to aid Paul, alongside the prayers of the letter's recipients, though how exactly is unclear. The only other direct reference to the "Spirit of Christ" is in 1 Peter, where this entity is said to be in the ancient prophets and helping them "testify in advance" (προμαρτυρούμενον) to Jesus' sufferings and more (1 Peter 1:11). The Spirit of Jesus providing prophetic inspiration is its own kind of bodily manipulation. This handful of references, and their subtle resonances with Acts 16:7, underscore the rareness of this concept at this time.

¹⁷⁴ Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 77.

the living world. The living-dead absent Jesus meddles with the affairs of this living world throughout the book of Acts. That this spirit does something random and nonsensical is thus not a surprise, but true to its character.

The specter of the resurrected Jesus, glimpsed in Mark's gospel, becomes a "spirit" in Luke-Acts. Some scholars tried to send the reader back to Jesus' baptism to find the true identity of this Spirit of Jesus. However, I argue that the "spirit" that Jesus exhaled at his crucifixion is a much more appropriate antecedent. Still, returning to the Holy Spirit's "bodily" descent during the baptism is helpful. The pneumatological machinations occurring throughout Luke-Acts work through invisible spiritual agencies making their presence felt in visible material bodies. Indeed, the body-spirit dynamic of Jesus death and resurrection continues forward into the Spirit of Jesus in Acts 16:7. Yet, studies of resurrection in general¹⁷⁵ and in Luke-Acts¹⁷⁶ appear to ignore this passage. These spiritual dynamics illustrates the multiple ways that the limits of absence and presence are navigated in Luke-Acts, and how this connects with transgressions of life and death. In 2 Maccabees these dynamics multiplied not only in the resurrectional aspirations of the martyred family in the wake of Eleazar's example, but also in the heavenly appearance of the slain high priest Onias. In each of these cases, these kinds of spectral agencies work within negotiations of self and other. Jesus is constituted by

¹⁷⁵ e.g., Pheme Perkins, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984); Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*; Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*.

¹⁷⁶ e.g., Jean-Marie Guillaume, *Luc Interprète des Anciennes Traditions sur la Résurrection de Jésus*, Études Bibliques (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1979); Anderson, *God Raised Him from the Dead*.

spectrality, haunted by those before him and by discourses that fill the thick air around him.

Spiritual Conjurations

2 Maccabees painted scenes drenched in blood, where violence at the hands of imperial aggressors attempted to erase the Jewish people. The traumas that these forces inflict upon the protagonists of the text leave marks both visible and invisible. Not only does the text tackle what it means to be a Jew in a world like this, it explores what it means to be alive and/or dead in a world like this. Eleazar's noble death envisioned a severing of the body and its soul, while those who emulated him hoped for bodily restoration. Judas Maccabeus must perform ritual actions with the dead bodies of his fallen countrymen, showing the continued interactions between the living and the dead on account of the resurrection. He likewise has a vision of the slain high priest Onias standing alongside the prophet Jeremiah, both of whom exist in some form in the heavens and pray for the living. Onias's presence evokes his role in the defense of the Jerusalem Temple against the march of Heliodorus, who was defeated by spectral foes sent by the Sovereign of Spirits.

Scholars frequently cite 2 Maccabees as a touchstone in the origins of the doctrine of resurrection, and as a background text for the resurrection of Jesus. Yet, resurrection appears loosely defined in this text, its full comprehension residing somewhere else. Moreover, this specter of resurrection rises amid many other transgressions of life and death within 2 Maccabees. This is all part of the spectrality at the heart of many of the narrative's characters and events. This spectrality signals the additional unspoken ways that the text is haunted by the globalizing presence of empire. Resurrection connects to

the future hope of this text, of its expectations of the “something-to-be-done.”¹⁷⁷ The specter of resurrection in 2 Maccabees is part of the haunting alternatives envisioned by the text, where Jews and their non-Jewish oppressors receive different future rewards. Negotiating self and other under empire thus also becomes an endeavor to negotiate life and death, presence and absence, and the nature of time.

Resurrection likewise reflects the spectrality within Luke-Acts. The text engages in multiple complex negotiations of life and death as it polices the boundaries of its emerging “Christian” identity. Indeed, the spectral doctrine of resurrection appears manifest in the resurrection of Jesus. The proofs the text offers of Jesus’ materiality hint at the ways that Luke-Acts attempts to increase comprehension of the incomprehension at the heart of resurrection seen in texts like 2 Maccabees and Mark’s gospel. The resistance to comprehension that (Jesus’) resurrection provokes thus inspires anxious efforts to discipline and control such an event. The text strains to smooth out questions of spirits vs. flesh and bodies, but does so in ways that appear unsatisfying even to the characters in the narrative. Jesus’ spiritual and heavenly existence in the Acts of the Apostles brings about further complications, as the visions of Peter and Paul contain numerous contradictions. The spiritual logic of the text hinted at in Jesus’ baptism comes to full force in the bodily manipulations by the Spirit of Jesus. As in 2 Maccabees, resurrection in Luke-Acts exists among the overlapping ways that absence and presence comeingle, and life and death are regularly transgressed. The spectrality of resurrection in Luke-Acts and 2 Maccabees are both bound up in the routine violence of empire, and signal how the

¹⁷⁷ Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” 3.

cosmos itself is scarred by such violence. The relationships between life and death, presence and absence, and past and future are felt to be undecidable.

As seen in the previous chapter, Gordon explains that the “exercise of state power through disappearance involves controlling the imagination, controlling the meaning of death, involves creating new identities, involves haunting the population into submission to its will.”¹⁷⁸ Luke-Acts and 2 Maccabees both portray figures erased by imperial powers. Resurrection, as future hope and present reality, appears alongside a proliferation of renegotiations of death and absence in these texts. All of this colludes with how both texts construct and define identities, showing how the limits of the self and the other are spectrally imbricated with the limits of life and death. The disappearing power of empire fills the thick air of the Judeo-Greco-Roman world, raising endless questions about the nature of life, presence, and time. The resurrectional answers to these questions in 2 Maccabees and Luke-Acts are partial and provisional, impossible answers to impossible questions. In their own ways, they hope for a change to this order of things, despite being marked by it.

“[F]uturity is imbricated or interwoven into the very scene of haunting itself,” explains Gordon. “That real alternatives...are already here, embedded in the practice of subversion and not hiding in some elusive or fantasmatic futurity, is profoundly unsettling: this knowledge makes the present waver, makes it not quite what we thought it was.”¹⁷⁹ Haunted by empire and the open questions of life and death, both 2 Maccabees and Luke-Acts have their own contributions to thick air of the ancient Mediterranean. The specters of (Jesus’) resurrection, though they may breath in this haunted air, speak

¹⁷⁸ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 124.

¹⁷⁹ Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” 3–5.

back in their own way. 2 Maccabees expects a future where those unjustly disappeared by state power will return, while the unrighteous enactors of this power will not. This calls the disappearing power of this violence into question. Luke-Acts brings that hope into a certain hauntological existence through Jesus' resurrection and subsequent spiritual presence. This alternative future becomes embedded in the present, which wavers in the face of Jesus' continued spectral presence through his followers. The existence of these alternatives, and their future expectations, call into question the stability of the present and its (dis)order. Yet, Luke-Acts' investment in the here and now experience of the resurrected spirit of Jesus may undercut some of the radical potential of these future visions. These tensions of present and future, and concomitant problems of just alternatives to the order of things, find additional articulations in the Gospel of John.

CHAPTER FOUR

FALSE DEATHS AND FALSE DICHOTOMIES: NOVEL HAUNTINGS

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND *LEUCIPPE AND CLITOPHON*

After a short while, she set off to go, as it was time for her to play the lyre. To me, though, she seemed still present: though departed, she had left behind her image in my eyes.
- Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.19

What is a ghost? What is the effectivity or the presence of a specter, that is, of what seems to remain as ineffective, virtual, insubstantial as a simulacrum? Is there there, between the thing itself and its simulacrum, an opposition that holds up?

- Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*

A beloved companion, thought to be dead and gone, appears before a loved one.

This should be a joyous reunion, for what was dead is now alive, what was gone has been found. However, this moment of discovery evades comprehension. This interruption of the order of life and death—of absence and presence—sparks misrecognitions. The living do not recognize this lost loved one upon their return. This person returned when such a return was unthinkable. Yet these returns occur, over and over again, in texts like the Gospel of John and Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon*. These misrecognitions raise questions concerning the relationship between a body and its identity, especially when life and death are transgressed. There is a certain inability to know those who were absent but are now present, both before and after their supposed deaths. The story forces its characters and readers into a position of comprehending them, but incomprehensibly.¹

¹ I am continuing this theme from the previous chapter. "This logic of haunting," Derrida explains, "would harbor within itself, but like circumscribed places or particular effects, eschatology and teleology themselves. It would *comprehend* them, but incomprehensibly." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

This chapter conjures forth the Gospel of John and the novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*. As I will show, spectrality suffuses the characters and events in these narratives. The novels, with their adventures and romantic love, may seem different from the gospels. However, similar generic conventions and narrative events inspire closer inspection. Numerous scholars read the gospels alongside the ancient novels.² The resonances between the empty tomb/resurrection stories of the gospels and the *Scheintod* (“false death”) theme in the novels are an obvious point of comparison. Some suggest a direct influential relationship in either direction.³ Others disagree.⁴ The many false deaths in novels like *Leucippe and Clitophon* are thus among the alternatives that haunt the gospel stories of Jesus’ resurrection, both in antiquity and today. I argue that these complex articulations of life and truth coincide with illusive mappings of presence and

² As well as Acts of the Apostles. See, e.g., Pervo, *Profit With Delight*; Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark’s Work in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), esp. 55–78; Lawrence M. Wills, *The Quest of the Historical Gospel: Mark, John and the Origins of the Gospel Genre* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Wills, “The Depiction of the Jews in Acts”; Fullmer, *Resurrection in Mark’s Literary-Historical Perspective*; Virginia Burrus, “The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles,” in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 144–47; Eric Thurman, “Writing the Nation/Reading the Men: Postcolonial Masculinities in Mark’s Gospel and the Ancient Novel” (Drew University, 2010); Scott S. Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark’s Jesus: Narrative Criticism after Poststructuralism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011).

³ To be explored more below, e.g., Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 99–120; Amy L. Huprich, “John 20:11-18 : The Recognition/Reunion Scene and Its Parallels in Greek Romance,” in *Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies*, 15 (Buffalo: Canisius College Press, 1995), 15–22, <http://ezproxy.drew.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001217941&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Kathleen E. Corley, *Women & the Historical Jesus: Feminist Myths of Christian Origins* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2002), 130.

⁴ e.g., Wright, who says, “For Mark (or anyone else) to invent such a story about Jesus on the basis of a plot-twist in a romantic novel is patently absurd.” Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 72.

absence, and ambiguous orientations of time. These dynamics illustrate the spectrality within both Achilles Tatius' novel and John's gospel.

Both of these texts are haunted by notions of "Greekness" in modern scholarship.⁵ Scholars often see the Gospel of John as the most "Hellenistic" of the canonical gospels,⁶ or more conversant with "Hellenism."⁷ Scholars also situate *Leucippe and Clitophon* within the so-called "Second Sophistic," which is understood as expressions of Greekness under the Roman Empire.⁸ Many contest John's connections with Hellenism,⁹ or apparent

⁵ Simon Goldhill provides a nice exploration of the concept of "Greekness" in the High Roman Empire, noting how "the issue of Greekness is articulated across a range of writings, social practices and ideological expressions. Explicit statements about the constituent elements of Greek culture abound (from different viewpoints), as do explicit responses to Roman rule from Greeks, and to Greek achievements by Romans. Such explicit utterances, however, form only part of what is a far more complex picture - and not merely because of the difficulty of accounting for the rhetoric of such explicitness in each work (as with Juvenal), nor because of the invested power relations which make statements about power by elite writers more than usually veiled. Affiliations to Greekness are seen - explored, contested, projected - also through the education system which linked the elite of Empire in a proclaimed communality of *paideia*, a shared system of reference and expectation. What it means to be Greek is also implicit in claims about tradition and the past; in the study of philosophy, rhetoric and medicine; in performances of ritual; in building projects; in sport and other entertainments. Since Greek becomes a language of advancement and a key sign of the cultivated citizen, the Greek language transcends - and provokes debate about - ethnic origin in the determination of affiliation and status." Simon Goldhill, ed., *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13–14.

⁶ e.g., C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

⁷ e.g., C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*, trans. D. Moody Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975); Peder Borgen, "The Gospel of John and Hellenism: Some Observations," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 98–123.

⁸ e.g., Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 101–131; Timothy Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 86–88.

similarities with the Greek. Others debate the solidity of the category “Second Sophistic” and its interests in Greekness.¹⁰ I find the problematics of these issues of Greekness and the Second Sophistic to be helpful entry points for exploring the complex relational dynamics of *Leucippe and Clitophon* and the Gospel of John.

In this chapter I employ an abstracted notion of the “Second Sophistic.” As Simon Goldhill explains, “‘The Second Sophistic’ conventionally refers to Greek writings (and the intellectual society that produced them) from the first to the third centuries CE (following - and authorized by - its use in Philostratus *VS* 481).”¹¹ It was a way in which people (re)claimed and (re)deployed the Greek past (language, literature, and philosophy) under Roman imperialism.¹² Scholars have defined this term problematically, especially in their exclusions.¹³ Negotiations of Greekness (by elite Greeks) are only part of the

⁹ See especially scholarship on the “Johannine Community,” such as Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 29, The Anchor Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), esp. LXXIII–LXXV, LXXXIII–LXXXV; J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed., The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

¹⁰ e.g., Goldhill, *Being Greek Under Rome*, esp. 14; Tim Whitmarsh, *Beyond the Second Sophistic: Adventures in Greek Postclassicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

¹¹ Goldhill, *Being Greek Under Rome*, 14.

¹² The Second Sophistic is also understood as involving a revival of Attic Greek style, with prominent figures and groups placing a premium on properly inheriting the titans of classical Greek literature, philosophy, and rhetoric. The novels in particular often feature Atticizing Greek, while typically taking place in pre-Roman times or appearing effectively timeless. Likewise, their settings are far from the city of Rome, preferring instead to explore the provincial Greek cities and lands beyond the borders of Rome’s empire. The “recent stood next to the ancient” in this play on time, place, and language.” Laura Salah Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 89.

¹³ Tim Whitmarsh suggests that while the term itself is not a problem, the “Second Sophistic has been—and remains in much current scholarship—a modern fantasy projected back onto the ancient world...an impossible idealization of pure, untainted

picture, so it is necessary to expand the conversation. Kendra Eshleman argues that numerous social networks beyond the Second Sophistic (such as Christian apologists) all reflect “a set of culturally available technologies of identity formation, authorization, and institutionalization.”¹⁴ I follow Laura Nasrallah then, who explains that the “Second Sophistic” is best seen as “a convenient shorthand for a range of phenomena that look similar,” particularly around a “set of rhetorical practices that produced debate over culture...under Rome.”¹⁵ By situating both the Gospel of John and *Leucippe and Clitophon* under a more loosely defined Second Sophistic, I aim to see how both participate in these cultural negotiations.¹⁶

These rhetorical practices—parsing self and other while mapping the past’s relationship with the present—resonate with this project’s understanding of various engagements with Rome’s globalizing imperial presence. Debates over how the Gospel

aristocratic Greek tradition.” Whitmarsh, *Beyond the Second Sophistic: Adventures in Greek Postclassicism*, 3.

¹⁴ Kendra Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians*, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7.

¹⁵ Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture*, 29–30.

¹⁶ As D. Moody Smith notes, it was once common to see the Gospel of John as a document from the mid-to-late second-century CE. Since the publishing of P⁵², most scholars have decided on a mid-to-late first-century CE dating (as evidenced by the surveys in the example commentaries cited below). However, Brent Nongbri has made a convincing case that early datings P⁵² of have been severely misguided. Thus, my work here is a modest return toward seeing the Gospel of John as possibly involved in second-century conversations. Though, such dating is not at all necessary to my arguments. For more on this, see D. Moody Smith, *John*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 41–42; Brent Nongbri, “The Use and Abuse of P52: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel,” *Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 01 (2005): 23–48; Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John, Volume 1: Introduction, Analysis, and Reference*, Complete series, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich. u.a.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), esp. 5, 50–56; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 37–38.

of John and *Leucippe and Clitophon* relate to Greekness reflect the categorical problems explored in the introduction, and the need to decenter Greekness. Instead, I will show the confounding ways both of these narratives navigate past, present, and future. The characters of these stories are rendered absent and present in complex relationships with life and death. With articulations of identity especially pressing under Roman imperialism, distinctions of self and other appear at times unknowable in these texts. Truth and falsity themselves come into question. I thus see spectrality operating within the cultural negotiations of both *Leucippe and Clitophon* and the Gospel of John.

I will begin by exploring the theme of *Scheintod* in the novels. Dynamics of life and (false) death in these texts set up my investigation of *Leucippe and Clitophon*. The character of Leucippe phases between seen and unseen, and passes from absent to present, in ways that confound those around her. *Scheintod* participates with conflicting negotiations of the limits of the other as (un)seen in Leucippe. Both Achilles Tatius' novel and John's gospel begin with complex prologues and end without closure, underscoring uncertainty within these texts over linear time. The ways that these texts explore space and time provide glimpses of their haunting alternatives to the present (imperial) order of things. Scholars struggle to reconcile the resurrectional tensions of past, present, and future in John's gospel. I suggest that spectrality accounts for these temporal ruptures embodied in the figure of Jesus. Time and space fold in upon representations of the resurrected bodies of Jesus and Lazarus. Others frame the relationships between resurrection and *Scheintod* in terms of literary connections or social oppositions, but I see them in a non-oppositional relationship. Indeed, both of these texts leave distinctions between true and false deaths as an open question. The spectrality

in John's Gospel and Achilles Tatius' novel thus points to the hauntings that are taking place. Under a globalizing imperial power, which "involves creating new identities" and "haunting the population into submission to its will,"¹⁷ both of these texts suggest that identity itself can be illusive.

Death and other Phantoms in the Ancient Novels

First observed and categorized by Erwin Rohde,¹⁸ *Scheintod* is one of several means by which the novels represent their characters amid the phantasmal boundaries between life and death. More recently, Glen Bowersock argued that the novels owe their interest in death and (supposed) resurrection to the circulation of stories of Jesus's death and resurrection.¹⁹ The popularity of these Christian stories, he suggests, led to popular ("pagan") imitations. Bowersock's argument succumbs to the genealogical trappings outlined in the introduction, but he gestures toward the similarities of these diverse bodies of literature. Judith Perkins searches for a common socio-cultural connection among the novels and early Christian literature. She argues that depictions of (false) deaths and resurrections in both sets of texts reflect common lived experiences of violence and social change under Roman imperial rule. This is part of the "epistemic break" explored in the introduction. Both evince the threat of violence against bodies, and how that violence is ineffective. Perkins argues that the violence against the elite bodies of the novels is fictive, whereas the lower status Christian bodies in the gospels and Apocryphal Acts

¹⁷ The full quote from Gordon, referenced before, is, "The exercise of state power through disappearance involves controlling the imagination, controlling the meaning of death, involves creating new identities, involves haunting the population into submission to its will. On the ground of the very shape and skin of everyday life itself." Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 124.

¹⁸ Erwin Rohde, *Der Griechische Roman Und Seine Vorläufer* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1960), esp. 361–497.

¹⁹ Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 119–143.

actually die. What *appears* to be a body coming back from death in the novels is a *bona fide* resurrection in Christian writings. For Perkins, their different views on the realities of death and violence reflect differences in social status and location for the authors/readers of the two strands of literature.²⁰

Perkins's gestures toward how *Scheintod* and resurrection engage with the larger ancient culture is where my project takes both inspiration from, and issue with, her arguments. The characters of the ancient Greek romances, along with figures in early Christian narratives like the gospels, inhabit ambiguous spaces between life and death. Moreover, recent studies of the novels have shown how the processes of representation in these texts endeavor to make the "absent" "present," to render the "unseen" "seen."²¹ I argue that these narrative processes also navigate the muddy waters of life and death, and past, present, and future. Scholars examining narrative representation in the ancient novels give *Scheintod* and related themes of life and death only passing attention.²² While Perkins' socioeconomic argument has some merit, my exploration of these texts will further complicate the picture of life and death that emerges in these texts. In order to set the stage for *Leucippe and Clitophon* and the Gospel of John, I will survey some comparable material from other Greek novels. These

²⁰ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 45–61.

²¹ Shadi Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel: The Reader and the Role of Description in Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Helen Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus*, 98–132.

²² e.g., Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel*, 126–129; Simon Goldhill, *Foucault's Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 117–118; Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon*, 161–172; Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus*, 109–110.

texts explore the limits of life itself in the representations of their characters, as ancient language and cultural attitudes about ghosts seep into their characterizations.

Chariclea and Theagenes

Heliodorus' *Chariclea and Theagenes* (or *An Ethiopian Tale*), possibly the latest of the Greek novels,²³ is a story filled with spiritual agencies. The opening scene introduces the hero Theagenes wounded and sprawled out on a rock by the seashore. His lover, the story's heroine Chariclea, sits beside him amid a crowd of bodies scattered along the beach under cover of darkness. "My darling," Theagenes whispers, "are you really alive, or are you another victim of the fighting and cannot bear to be separated from me, even in death? Does even your ghost [φάσμα], your soul [ψυχή], still care what befalls me?"²⁴ (Heliodorus, *Chariclea and Theagenes* 1.2). Theagenes feels near death, is surrounded by dozens of dead bodies, and thinks the woman beside him is the ghost of his lover. Typically a φάσμα (or φάντασμα, an "appearance" of the dead) is different from a ψυχή ("soul"). However, 2 Maccabees and Luke-Acts showed how formal distinctions between terms like ψυχή and πνεῦμα ("spirit") do not always stand. D. Felton notes that while ψυχή generally means "soul," it often refers to the disembodied "phantom of the deceased."²⁵

²³ For the dating of Heliodorus's novel, see the thorough overview by Ewen Bowie in Tim Whitmarsh, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 32–25.

²⁴ For the English translation of Heliodorus's text, I rely on J.R. Morgan's translation unless otherwise noted. Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 349–588. For the Greek text, I have consulted that provided by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.

²⁵ "In homer, for example, 'phantom' was one of the usual meanings of the word, and the image of Patroclus is referred to as *psyche* when it appears to Achilles in a dream (*Illiad* 23.65)." Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 24.

A group of Egyptian bandits approach the protagonists with “dark skins and unkempt faces.” Chariclea addresses them, saying, “If you are the ghosts (εἶδωλα) of those who lie dead, you are wrong to trouble us” (1.3).²⁶ This seaside setting, littered with the dead, is a place where the dead might appear. The sight of these foreign Egyptian figures inspired this Greek woman to think that they were netherworldly agents.²⁷ She did not recognize them, showing how the limits of life and death intersect with the limits of vision and knowing, and with the limits of the human being itself. From the opening scene of this novel then, the protagonists are surrounded by the (un)dead. They think that they see ghosts when they look at others, or at one another. As seen throughout this project, the language of life, death, and the spaces between (or after) cannot be neatly categorized.

In a later scene, Theagenes discovers a woman’s dead body in a cave. He believes it to be Chariclea and becomes distraught (2.3). In the midst of his mourning, he hears a female voice calling his name from within the cave. “I am coming, beloved spirit,” (ἤξω φιλάτη ψυχῇ) he proclaims. Theagenes thinks this voice to be the spirit of his beloved, whose body lies at his feet. “Evidently you still haunt the earth [εὐδηλος εἶ περὶ γῆν],” he soliloquies. “You cannot bear to depart from the beautiful body from which you were forcibly expelled or perhaps the ghosts of the underworld [νερτερῶν εἰδώλων] refuse you admittance because you are unburied” (2.5). Theagenes wonders aloud why his beloved’s

²⁶ Related to the noun εἶδος and the verb εἶδω, Εἶδωλα (the plural of εἶδωλον) also has to do with “seeing” as well as “knowing.” It is another common word for “apparitions of all sorts.” Ibid., 23–24.

²⁷ Jack Winkler argued that scenes like this also show the correlation of monochromatic figures (all black or all white) and ghosts. Jack Winkler, “Lollianios and the Desperadoes,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980): 155–181; See also C. P. Jones, “Apuleius’ ‘Metamorphoses’ and Lollianios’ ‘Phoinikika,’” *Phoenix* 34, no. 3 (1980): 243–254.

ghost lingers in the cave. Perhaps it is because her body has not received proper burial rites,²⁸ or her body was too beautiful for her soul to depart from it. However, Chariclea's voice calls from the darkness again to interrupt his ponderings. Theagenes realizes that Chariclea is still alive. Her death was a *Scheintod*, yet the scene is filled with the language of ghosts and spiritual agencies. Knemon, Theagenes's companion, launches into a tirade about the actual victim lying on the floor of the cave: his own beloved Thisbe. Theagenes dismisses Knemon's mourning. "Enough...of your dread of ghosts [εἰδῶλά] and shadows [σκιᾶς],"²⁹ he yells (2.11). Theagenes's hypocritical remarks over spectral speculations serve to underscore how the language of ghosts permeates the characterizations in Heliodorus's novel.

Kalasis, an Egyptian who whisks the two protagonists out of Delphi and acts as a kind of adoptive father to them, also illustrates some of these themes. While he is a magician, he bemoans magic that is of "low rank." This sort of magic "waits upon ghosts [εἰδῶλων] and skulks around dead bodies [σώματα νεκρῶν]," he claims. He decries that it deals with "the unreal made to appear real [φαντασίας τῶν μὴ ὄντων ὡς ὄντων]" (3.16).³⁰ Kalasis constructs a "real" vs. "fantasy" magic dichotomy, and the latter involves too much interaction with the dead. Yet, the narrative shows how Kalasis's own magic can be a fantasy in its own right (e.g., 3.17).

²⁸ As Felton notes, this is a common belief in antiquity and today. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 8–12.

²⁹ I have adapted the translation here, as Morgan uses "phantom" to translate σκιᾶς instead of the more appropriate "shadows." In this context, σκιᾶς/shadows is another common word for ghosts in antiquity. Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 385.

³⁰ A more literal translation would be "fantasies of things not existing as existing." Thus, the nature of reality, of *being*, is at stake here.

Moreover, he witnesses some of this so-called “low rank” magic in a way that overturns his rhetoric. Kalasiris and Chariclea are in the desert at night when they watch an old Egyptian woman practice necromancy. She raises her dead son, to have him tell her the fate of his brother. In a whispery voice, the reanimated corpse curses his living mother for bringing him back from the land of the dead. He also issues a prophecy for Kalasiris and Chariclea, the viewers of this undead spectacle (6.13-15).³¹ Kalasiris is shaken after experiencing this event. Rightfully so, since this woman’s actions prove the effectiveness of the “low rank” magic which he abhors. Kalasiris’s investment in real vs. unreal magic falls apart. He dies shortly after this scene (7.11), but later appears again in the dreams of Theagenes and Chariclea to prophesy future events (8.11). These details display common conceptions about the dead: they come from the past, can know the future, and appear both in the flesh and in dreams.³² Kalasiris thus shows the variety of ways in which novelistic characters exist in regular negotiations between life and death, amplifying what was shown before with Chariclea and Theagenes.

One last example occurs at the end of Heliodorus’s novel. In a procession of offerings to the Ethiopian king, one of the gifts is an “unusual” (ἀλλόκοτος) and “amazing” (θαυμάσιος) animal: a giraffe (10.27). This creature has never been seen by anyone attending the procession, including the other non-human animals. When the animals seen this “foreign” (ξένος) and “unusual” (ἀγθης) creature, they react “as if they

³¹ Ogden explains how this story illustrates that necromancy frequently involves prophecies. “Sometimes, and importantly, such prophecies can be self-fulfilling. The vigorous prophecy of Heliodorus’s corpse of its mother’s immanent doom (alongside that of its brother) is remarkable in this respect. In revealing that her rite has been watched, the corpse sends her chasing over the battlefield in an attempt to kill Charicleia and Kalasiris, thus causing her to impale herself accidentally on a spear.” Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 241.

³² Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 18–21.

had seen a ghost [φάσμα].” The panic-stricken animals rush around in a violent stampede, which Theagenes subdues (10.28). Similar to Chariclea’s reaction to the Egyptian bandits in the opening of the novel, there is a correlation between ghosts and that which is foreign. This proves true not just for humans, but for non-human animals as well. These encounters with the limits of what is known and what can be seen leave those experiencing them confounded. Heliodorus’s novel highlights the pervasiveness of these themes as his novel contains additional spectral moments unseen here.³³

Chaereas and Callirhoe

Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, possibly the earliest extant Greek novel,³⁴ contains similar spectral characterizations. Believing his lover Callirhoe is having an affair, an enraged Chaereas kicks her in the stomach.³⁵ The blow leaves her “silent,” “not breathing,” and looking “as if she were dead [νεκρᾶς εἰκόνα]” (1.3).³⁶ Everyone, including Chaereas, believes Callirhoe to be dead. After her funeral, Callirhoe’s supposedly dead body is laid in a tomb. However, Callirhoe “came back to life” (παλιγγενεσίαν; literally “was born again”) in her tomb. This dark enclosure intended for her death is where she finds new life. She does not come into this new life alone though, as a group of bandits break in to Callirhoe’s tomb to steal the treasure buried with her. They make a racket as they break through the tomb’s door, which causes Callirhoe to fear that “some divinity”

³³ Chariclea’s saint-like avoidance of martyrdom by fire (8.9) for instance, or the protagonists being “haunting by a vision of their own violent death” (8.17).

³⁴ For issues of dating Chariton’s text, see the survey by Bowie in Whitmarsh, *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, 21–26.

³⁵ This is a shocking and violent scene of domestic violence that deserves more attention than it has received. See the brief discussion of violence and gender by Morales in *Ibid.*, 52–55.

³⁶ For the English translation of Chariton’s text, unless otherwise noted I rely upon B.P. Reardon’s translation found in Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 17–124. For the Greek text, I again rely on that found in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

(τις δαίμων) was coming for her. When the first robber enters the tomb she throws herself at his feet. Like the resurrected Jesus' disciples, the bandit responds with terror. "Let's get out of here!" he yells. "There is some sort of spirit [δαίμων] on guard here who won't let us come in!" (1.9). The supposedly dead Callirhoe and the grave-robbing bandit scare one another, each thinking the other to be a spirit in the tomb. The chief bandit Theron gives the humor of the scene an exclamation mark when he brings Callirhoe out of the tomb. "There you are," he says to the scared bandit, "there's the spirit [δαίμων] you were afraid of. A fine brigand you are!" (1.9).³⁷

Chariton's tale also situates the male protagonist Chaereas at the limits of life and death. After the two protagonists separate, Callirhoe sees a "vision of Chaereas" (εἰκὼν Χαιρέου) standing over her in her dreams. This scene employs a less common word for ghosts (εἰκὼν), but the text compares Callirhoe's vision with that of Achilles when the dead Patroclus visits his dreams (*Illiad* 23.66-67). Chaereas appears so real to Callirhoe that she "jumped up and tried to embrace him" (2.9). He appears in her dreams repeatedly, both before (3.7) and after (4.1) she hears a story that he died in a shipwreck (3.9). After hearing of Chaereas's supposed death, Callirhoe stages a grand funeral for him in her mourning. At the head of the funeral procession is an "image of Chaereas" (εἶδωλον Χαιρέου). While εἶδωλον—like εἰκὼν—can refer to an image of any sort, it often refers to ghosts as well. Indeed, Chariton's own use of the term later in the narrative suggests that he is employing a phantasmal double entendre here.

³⁷ As seen in the introduction, δαίμων is a word with a broad range of meanings, with the spirits of the dead among them. See Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome*, 23–25.

Reports of Chaereas's death were greatly exaggerated. Despite continuing to haunt Callirhoe's dreams (5.5), he is very much alive and trying to reunite with his forlorn lover. In the middle of an assembly in Persia, Chaereas's travel companion Mithridates tells the crowd that he can summon the dead man before their eyes. Acting as one performing a divination,³⁸ Mithridates calls out Chaereas's name. "Appear, noble spirit [φάνηθι, δαῖμον ἀγαθέ]" he yells (5.7).³⁹ Chaereas steps forward as these words are uttered, sending the crowd into turmoil (5.8). Callirhoe, standing amid the assembly, is as confused as all those around her. "Have you really seen Chaereas?" she asks herself. "Was that my Chaereas? Or is that too an illusion [ἢ καὶ τοῦτο πεπλάνημαι;]? Perhaps Mithridates called up a spirit [εἶδωλον] for the trial" (5.9). In her ponderings about this apparition of Chaereas, Callirhoe uses the same word employed earlier to describe the "image" (εἶδωλον) that led his funeral procession. This language of images and phantoms swirls around the main characters of Chariton's novel. Their presence in the narrative is elusive, making the relationship between things seen and unseen undecideable.

Seeing Death Falsely

These examples show how the ancient novels situate their characters at the limits of life and death.⁴⁰ Frequently thought to be dead, these figures are known more by their

³⁸ "as if in a divinely inspired frenzy" in Reardon's translation. Greek: ὡσπερ ἐπὶ θειασμοῦ.

³⁹ Ogden notes how this scene illustrates the frequent associations between necromancy and (particularly Persian) foreignness. Mithridates is in fact a Persian character. Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, 130–31.

⁴⁰ Another example would be Xenophon of Ephesus' *Anthia and Habrocomes* (or *An Ephesian Tale*), which also situates its main characters at the precipices of life and death. However, it does so without the language of ghosts in the other novels. The female protagonist Anthia faces a sacrificial death at the hands of bandits. However, she is rescued by Perilaus, the *eirenarch* of Cilicia, who decides that he will marry her (2.13). With "Habrocomes before her eyes," Anthia ingests poison that she hopes will kill her.

absence than their presence. They haunt their loved ones, influencing their feelings and actions from afar and seemingly from the grave. Characters living and dead appear in dreams and visions, causing a great deal of confusion. Indeed, a character appearing present is no guarantee of their existence, while a character appearing dead and gone is often merely elsewhere. Identity itself proves spectral, with the relationships between bodies and selves provoking misunderstanding. These details show how spectrality operates within the novels, and how *Scheintod* is a participant in these dynamics.

Representing (the Ghost of) Leucippe

Achilles Tatius's tale, dating from the mid-to-late second century,⁴¹ represents its characters amid the same limits of life and death as the other novels. This is especially so

She hopes to join Habrocomes in the next life, and a vision of him leads her to cross the threshold from life to death (3.4-6). This "death" is a *Scheintod*. She wakes up in a tomb to find that she took a sleeping potion (3.8). Both Perilaus (3.7) and Habrocomes (3.9-10) believe that she is dead. Pirates kidnap Anthia from her tomb (3.8). This empty tomb awaits Habrocomes, whose sorrows grow at her absence. The empty tomb multiplies his experience of her absence. Habrocomes searches for her lost body, hoping to embrace a trace of his lost love (3.10). His travels across the Mediterranean take him to Sicily. There he meets an old man named Aegialus, who lives with the embalmed body of his dead wife. Though absent in death, her corpse is a companion for Aegialus. Habrocomes's encounter with this man cohabitating with a dead lover highlights his own desire to be with the dead body of Anthia (5.1). Along this journey, Habrocomes encounters tortures that leave him disfigured. The text says that "his blood drained out, and his handsome appearance wasted away" (2.6). Later he is crucified and left for dead in Egypt, only to be saved by the Nile (4.2). While his body and image face threats of death and erasure, he enters the vision and dreams of Anthia (3.4; 5.8). When the two lovers reunite, their formerly devoted servants do not recognize them (5.10, 12). In Xenophon's story, the bodies of Habrocomes and Anthia are not present to one another for most of the narrative. They face constant threats of erasure through scarring or death, while they are present to each other through dreams and visions in ways that exceed their own bodies. However, when these bodies are reunited, their presence is not comprehended. This resonates with the other novels, as they all explore the limits of life, presence, and visibility. For more on this text, see the survey of scholarship by Graham Anderson and his translation in Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 125–169.

⁴¹ For more on dating the novel, see the brief discussion by Morales in the introduction to Whitmarsh's translation as well as the introduction by John Winkler to his own

with the protagonist Leucippe. Like the Gospel of John, the text begins with a prologue. The story is mediated by the voice of Clitophon, which is likewise mediated by the anonymous opening narrator. It is a “swarm of stories” (Σμῆνος ἀνεγείρεις) says Clitophon, “like a fictional adventure” (μύθοις ἔοικε). “Eros has dealt me enough blows” (τοσαύτος ὕβρεις ἐξ ἔρωτος παθῶν), he says, and the narrator remarks that Clitophon’s physical appearance attests to this fact (Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.2).⁴² Clitophon’s relationship with Leucippe is thus rendered (in)visible in the opening scene of the novel, before he even begins to narrate her story. Leucippe is absent from the framing narrative, but the characters and reader feel her presence. This ambiguous play of presence and absence will constitute her characterization throughout the novel.

Clitophon begins his story by narrating how he and Leucippe met, and how after this encounter she constantly infects his sight. “All my dreams [πάντα ... τὰ ἐνύπνια] were of Leucippe,” he says. “I was talking with her, frolicking with her, eating with her, touching her.” This dream experience goes deeper, as he says, “I even kissed her, and the kiss was real [καὶ ἦν τὸ φίλημα ἀληθινόν]” (1.6). Though she is physically absent from Clitophon, Leucippe exists like a ghost for him. She infects his dreams, blurring the lines between reality and fiction. Later, Clitophon watches Leucippe across a garden. “After a short while, she set off to go,” he explains. “To me though, she seemed still present: though departed, she had left behind her image [τὴν μορφὴν] in my eyes” (1.19). Despite

translation. Unless otherwise noted, I rely on Whitmarsh for the English translation of the ancient novel. Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, trans. Tim Whitmarsh (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), xiv–xv; Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 170–175.

⁴² For the Greek text, I rely on the Loeb edition of the novel. Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, trans. S Gaselee, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

her absence, Leucippe’s image, or form (τὴν μορφήν), stays with Clitophon. Even when she is gone, she is there. The narrative figures her as doubly present, playing on the spectrality of absence and presence.⁴³ On the one hand this illustrates the powerful connection between a lover at their beloved. On the other, Simon Goldhill shows how it reflects an epistemology that develops within the Second Sophistic era of the Roman Empire.⁴⁴ This is an epistemology where someone can be felt and seen despite their absence.

The text presents a haunting counter-example to Leucippe’s overflowing presence in the figure of Charikles. He is the lover of Clitophon’s brother Clinias who dies in a violent horse-riding accident. Charikles’s dead body is so torn apart that “no one who saw him would even recognize him [ὥστε οὐκ ἂν αὐτόν τις ἰδὼν οὐδὲ γνωρίσειεν]” (1.12). His corpse is rendered “a most pathetic, pitiable spectacle” (θέαμα οἴκτιστον καὶ ἐλεεινόν), being “one big wound” (ὄλος γὰρ τραῦμα ἦν). Charikles’s father bewails the death of his son, contrasting the disfigured corpse with others for whom “at least a trace is preserved

⁴³ Elliott notes how Leucippe is doubled here, and that this scene is an “intersection of admixture, sight, and speech.” He connects this with what Whitmarsh says about the novels more broadly, that “fusion and paradoxical hybridity are the defining indices of novelistic discourse.” Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark’s Jesus*, 114–15; Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 79–80.

⁴⁴ Goldhill explains how the “viewing subject as articulate, witty, uncoverer of sedimented and learned images found its most fully developed epistemological and physiological model for viewing in Stoic theory—which unlike Platonic paradigms of mimesis, privileges viewing as a mode of access to knowledge of the world. *Phantasia* is the central term for the impact the external world makes on the viewing subject and produces articulate reaction.” So, when Clitophon describes the images of Leucippe that constantly haunt him, “he’s not just uttering the well-known lover’s complaint of ‘I see her everywhere’, but is expressing it in a term which, while certainly not requiring a full Stoic (or other systematic) epistemology, evokes a theoretical perspective on the eye’s work.” Simon Goldhill, “The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict,” in *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic, and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 168–69.

when they die.”⁴⁵ Unlike other corpses, Charikles no longer has an “image” (τὸ εἶδωλον) remaining to comfort those left behind (1.13). In this way he functions as a kind of anti-Leucippe. Gone in death, his eviscerated body erases what visual presence might otherwise remain. Charicles is wiped away. The language of spectacle, appearance, and “image” highlight how far this character has slid toward (and beyond) death. Indeed, his father says that he has died a “double death” (θάνατον διπλοῦν).⁴⁶ This magnification pushes him toward a complete dis-appearance. As the next two episodes show, Charikles’s absence via “double death” evokes a direct comparison with the omnipresent Leucippe.⁴⁷

The False Deaths of Leucippe

Egyptian bandits capture Leucippe later in the narrative (3.13-14). Clitophon tracks her down only to be separated from her by a deep trench. From across this chasm, he narrates what appears to be the gruesome sacrifice of Leucippe. He describes how an attendant cuts open her stomach, causing her entrails to spill out. He likens her body to that of Marsyas, who was flayed alive by Apollo (e.g. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.383-400). The bandits proceed to dine on what appears to be Leucippe’s innards and then place her

⁴⁵ Greek: “τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοις τῶν ἀποθανόντων κἂν ἵχνος τῶν γνωρισμάτων διασώζεται”

⁴⁶ Leucippe experiences her own “double death” later in the narrative. Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Clitophon*, 43.

⁴⁷ I will explore this more below. This contrast may fit well into the larger programs of elevating heterosexual love over and against homosexual love that Foucault, Konstan, and others have argued is taking place during this time period. For a critical interrogation of these arguments, see the work by Goldhill and Morales below. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 3: The Care of the Self* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 228–232; David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Goldhill, *Foucault’s Virginity*, 46–161; Helen Morales, “The History of Sexuality,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 39–55.

body in a coffin. Clitophon stares transfixed at this heart-, and stomach-wrenching scene (3.15). The chasm between the living Clitophon and the apparently sacrificed Leucippe both facilitates and highlights the intensely visual nature of this scene.⁴⁸ Once Clitophon crosses this fissure, he finds that appearances were deceiving, for “Leucippe will now be resurrected [ἀναβιώσεται].” Like a modern zombie, the bloody and eviscerated body of Leucippe rises from her coffin to greet Clitophon. “Ye Gods,” Clitophon exclaims, “what a fearful, chilling spectacle! [φοβερὸν θέαμα, ὧ θεοί, καὶ φρικωδέστατον]” (3.17). Their friends Menelaus and Satyrus explain to Clitophon the trick used to fool not just him, but the bandits as well. Their long narration tells how they used a faux stomach, animal entrails, and a retractable sword from a collection of theater props (3.18-22).

The detailed ekphrastic description of the trick sword highlights the theatricality of this scene, evoking the phantasmal space of the theater where the unreal and the unseen appear dramatically present.⁴⁹ “The theater has always been the place of greatest spectral intensity,” says Derrida. “The theater is the place of the visibility of the invisible, we do not know what is visible, what is not visible, what is flesh and bone, what is not.”⁵⁰ Leucippe’s false death sets a stage for exploring the limits of life, vision, and presence. Distinctions between truth and falsity appear unknowable. Helen Morales explains that this scene sets up a distance between reader, text, characters, and violence only to trouble those separations and cause “an excess of signification, a leakage, as it were, from one

⁴⁸ The voyeuristic elements of this story are explored in Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Clitophon*, 166–172.

⁴⁹ Bartsch highlights the importance of *ekphrasis*, theatricality, and making the real of the unreal in this scene. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel*, 58–59.

⁵⁰ “Le théâtre a toujours été le lieu de la plus grande intensité spectrale. Le théâtre c'est le lieu de la visibilité de l'invisible, on ne sait pas ce qui est visible, ce qui n'est pas visible, ce qui est en chair et en os, ce qui ne l'est pas” (Translation my own). Derrida, Guillaume, and Vincent, *Marx En Jeu*, 24.

medium to another.”⁵¹ Clitophon traverses this separation, crossing the canyon to visit his dead Leucippe, only to have his knowledge and comprehension immediately confounded.

One good *Scheintod* deserves another. Leucippe and Clitophon separate again, ending up on different boats at sea. Pirates kidnapped Leucippe, and Clitophon pursues them on a ship. He watches across the choppy sea as a pirate puts a sword to Leucippe’s neck. “Behold your prize!” he shouts. He cuts off her head “and shoved the rest of the body into the sea” (5.7). Clitophon’s fellow sailors hold back their despondent comrade to prevent him from throwing himself into the sea after Leucippe’s body. Again separated by a chasm, this time the chaotic space of the sea, Clitophon must wait until the ship reaches land before he can embrace the waterlogged body. He cries out,

Now I can truly say you have died a double death [θάνατον διπλοῦν],
Leucippe...divided between land and sea [γῆ καὶ θαλάττῃ διαιρούμενον]. I
am holding the leftovers of your body, but you yourself I have lost. The
allotted division between sea and land is hardly equal: small is the part of
you apportioned to me, though it may seem the larger, while the sea holds
your entirety in a small part (5.7).

Leucippe again dies before Clitophon’s eyes. Her decapitated body is a trace of a trace of her presence. She is split in two, divided between land and sea. Clitophon’s delay in reaching her body prefigures his delay in learning the truth of what he just saw.⁵² Her “double death” (θάνατον διπλοῦν) evokes the prior annihilation of Charikles, whose presence and life were rendered so invisible as to disrupt mourning itself. Yet, her continued existence further emphasizes the contrast between these two beloveds. For Leucippe, the boundaries between the seen and the unseen waver as much as the choppy

⁵¹ Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Clitophon*, 183.

⁵² Indeed, Clitophon will not learn the truth of these events until Leucippe discloses them to him near the end of the novel (8.16).

waters upon which she supposedly died her double death. The same goes for presence and absence, and life and death, as the narrative spectrally constructs her character.

Clitophon lives in a reality where Leucippe has died, so he moves on. He becomes betrothed to an Ephesian woman named Melite, whose husband also (supposedly) died at sea (5.11-14). They agree to not consummate their marriage until after they sail to Ephesus. However, Melite demands her conjugal rights mid-voyage. Clitophon protests,

Do not force me to break my pious covenant with the dead [Μή με βιάσῃ λῦσαι θεσμὸν ὀσιας νεκρῶν]...We have not yet passed the borders [τοὺς ὅρους] of the land of that poor girl, not until we set foot on another land. Have you not heard how she died at sea? Even now I am sailing on Leucippe's tomb [Λευκίππης τὸν τάφον]. Perhaps her ghost [εἶδωλον] is roaming around this ship somewhere! They say that the souls [ψυχὰς] of those killed at sea do no even descend to Hades at all, but wander around the water in that spot. Perhaps she will manifest [ἐπιστήσεται] ourselves while we are embracing! (5.16)

The spectral figure of Leucippe is a felt presence here. Clitophon's devotion to his absent lover manifests in his speculation that her "ghost" (εἶδωλον) is around their ship. Perhaps she is one of the "souls" (ψυχὰς) lost at sea, hovering over the waves.⁵³ The irony of his belief is that she does indeed haunt him, affecting his actions and decisions from beyond the false grave. He worries that her ghost will see him. Derrida suggests that this is how ghosts operate, for "we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part."⁵⁴ Despite being dead to Clitophon—

⁵³ This is the scene that I referenced in chapter one to counter Jason Combs's argument that the phantom of Jesus could not have walked on water in the Gospel of Mark. Combs, "A Ghost on the Water? Understanding an Absurdity in Mark 6:49-50."

⁵⁴ He goes on, explaining that this is "according to an absolute anteriority (which may be on the order of generations, of more than one generation) and asymmetry, according to an absolutely unmasterable disproportion... We feel ourselves seen by a look which will always be impossible to cross." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 7.

absent from this scene and existing in the past—Leucippe remains a felt presence. While her death may be false, Clitophon feels it as true.

When they finally arrive in Ephesus, they meet a woman named Laecana. She is “bound in heavy irons, carrying a mattock, her head shaven and her body filthy, girt with an extremely shoddy tunic” (5.17). Shortly after this encounter, Satyrus brings Clitophon a letter sent by Leucippe (5.18). “Have you brought this letter from Hades?” asks Clitophon. The underworld itself is the only possible point of origin for such a letter. “If not,” he goes on, incredulous, “what is the meaning of this? Has Leucippe risen from the dead *again* [Λευκίππη πάλιν ἀνεβίω]?”⁵⁵ This “again” highlights the repetitive nature of Leucippe’s dying and rising in the eyes of the other characters.

Clitophon is exasperated. His frustrations grow when he finds out that Laecana is in fact Leucippe, whom he failed to recognize in her ghastly attire (5.19). Perkins argues that Clitophon’s misrecognition of Leucippe in laborer garb this scene illustrates the class bias of the novels.⁵⁶ This may be true, but misses how the scene intersects with the role of *Scheintod* in the illusive construction of Leucippe. “The miraculous reanimation of Leucippe is figured by her authorship of a new text,” explains Whitmarsh.⁵⁷ In response, Clitophon immediately plots to flee his unconsummated marriage to rejoin his true love

⁵⁵ Emphasis my own.

⁵⁶ “Her appearance as a laborer literally hides her identity.” Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 75.

⁵⁷ Whitmarsh explains how this letter is “a female-centered text protesting vigorously against the androcentric worldview of Clitophon’s (and Achilles’s) monopolized narrative, wherein self-absorbed males turn a blind eye to the horrendous violence inflicted on women. Leucippe’s letter, then, turns out to be more than just a claim on Achilles’s part of generic proximity to Chariton; it also articulates Achilles’s most important revision of the genre, the limiting (more or less) of narrative authority and subjectivity to a single male.” Whitmarsh, *Beyond the Second Sophistic: Adventures in Greek Postclassicism*, 45.

Leucippe. She lives, despite what Clitophon and others witnessed at sea. Even so, when she stood alive and present before him, Leucippe proved to be just as incomprehensible as ever.

Melite is not pleased to be dumped by Clitophon. She bemoans that “some dead woman [τις νεκρά] is closer to his [Clitophon’s] heart than” she is (5.22). When she too discovers that Leucippe is alive, she fears her marriage with Clitophon will never happen. The final nail in the coffin is when she discovers that her own husband Thersander is also alive. “All these bizarre events are conspiring against me,” she cries out, for “even the dead are resurrected” (ἀναβιοῦσι καὶ νεκροί). She feels that life and death are betraying her. She even curses the sea, for it has “sent two of the dead against me” (δύο ἀποστείλασα κατ’ ἐμοῦ νεκρούς).

The living and the dead haunt Melite, directing her paths and narrowing her choices. “May you never lose Leucippe again,” Melite tells Clitophon as she admits defeat, “may she never die again, not even a false death [οὐτῶ μηκέτι μηδὲ ψευδῶς ἀποθάνοι]” (5.26). These final words of Melite’s discourse put real death and “false death” in the same breath, indicating that they have a similar affective impact on the living. It is the same turmoil, pain, and incomprehensibility regardless of the truth or falsity of the death. Judith Perkins argues that the “significance of these deaths... is their unreality.”⁵⁸ However, that unreality does not change the affect of these (false and otherwise) deaths. Melite’s words question any hard distinction between true and false deaths. The spectrality of Leucippe only grows here, as Melite feels her as present when she is absent, and as dead when she is alive.

⁵⁸ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 47.

Though Leucippe has twice escaped execution in the story, she continues to be constituted amid an ongoing play between life and death. A chaotic love quadrangle breaks out that involves Melite, Clitophon, Thersander, and Leucippe. Thersander becomes infatuated with Leucippe, and traps her in a shed outside the city (6.3-4). She refuses his sexual advances, but Thersander threatens to force her or even torture her (6.20). In response, Leucippe orders Thersander to “prepare the tortures!” (6.21). “Arm yourself,” she says, goading him further, “Bring on the whips, the wheel, the fire, the knife, and use them on me!” She claims that “freedom” (τὴν ἐλευθερίαν) is her only weapon, “but it will not be battered by your blows, nor cut up by your knife, nor scorched by your fire” (6.22). Her ability to survive multiple threats and kidnappings unscarred only heightens her “glory” (6.22). Like a martyr throwing herself on her persecutor’s blades, she confidently rebukes Thersander. Morales describes this scene as “a fantasy of female empowerment through exhibitionism.”⁵⁹ Leucippe knows that her virtue and stature will survive any damage that Thersander can inflict. She has faced death twice before, yet confounded it each time.

Leucippe’s dramatic speech allows her to escape death yet again, sending Thersander away ashamed. However, with Leucippe confined to the shed and absent from the city, he spreads a rumor of her murder (7.1-4). When word of this reaches Clitophon, grief strikes him for a third time over Leucippe’s death. “Alas, Leucippe,” he cries out, “how many times death has torn you from me [ποσάκις μοι τέθνηκας]!” “Am I always to mourn you,” he asks, “as death follows death [τῶν θανάτων διωκόντων ἀλλήλους]?” Clitophon feels that Leucippe will always be dead, absent, and unknowable

⁵⁹ Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Clitophon*, 160.

to him. The previous (false) deaths provided some small comfort for him, as her body remained in some form for his mourning. Now she truly has died a “double death” (θάνατον διπλοῦν), “in body and in soul [ψυχῆς καὶ σωματος]!” (7.5).

For Clitophon, Leucippe’s third death feels like that of Charikles. She is radically absent, her death occurring far from his eyes and her corpse residing in places unknown. However, his brother Clinias asks the obvious questions. “Who knows whether she has come back to life [Τίς γὰρ οἶδεν, εἰ ζῆ πάλιν]?” “Has she not died many times before? Has she not been resurrected many times before?” (μὴ γὰρ οὐ πολλάκις ἀνεβίω;). Clinias observes that death is just part of life for Leucippe. Throughout the narrative, Leucippe’s absence rendered her presence even stronger. But, Clitophon has had enough, and seizes this opportunity to end his miseries. True and false deaths no longer remain opposed for him. He is tired of being haunted by the perpetually dying Leucippe, chasing after her ghost to be confounded every time. He confesses that he plotted Leucippe’s murder, hoping to bring about his own death (7.6)

The ensuing trial is a chaotic scene of impassioned speeches and soaring rhetoric. Clinias protests, but to no avail. Clitophon’s confession, that he murdered Leucippe, seals his fate. He is convicted and tortured (7.7-12). Rohde bemoaned scenes in the novels like this, with a passive and submissive male protagonist.⁶⁰ However, Katherine Hayes suggests that these portrayals were “attractive to men who felt politically marginalized by the imposition of a new power structure.”⁶¹ This new power structure is the all-encompassing Roman Empire. Perkins likewise connects these “passive heroes” with the

⁶⁰ Rohde, *Der Griechische Roman Und Seine Vorläufer*, esp. 356.

⁶¹ Katherine Hayes, *Fashioning the Feminine in the Greek Novel* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 99.

new ways that Rome was shaping the human subject during this period. These novelistic portrayals become “an assistant in the implementation of Empire.”⁶² Clitophon thus displays the affective power of not only Leucippe, but also Rome.

During his trial, Leucippe escapes her captivity and flees to Ephesus’s famed temple of Artemis (7.13). Her presence is not contained there however, as news of a foreign woman taking sanctuary in the temple spreads quickly. It reaches the trial, causing further uproar among the crowd and the suspension of Clitophon’s tortures (7.14). Leucippe’s influence emanates outward from the temple, averting Clitophon’s impending death at the scene of his trial. When Clitophon hears that this woman in the temple may in fact be Leucippe, he states that “life began to return to me [ἀναβιοῦν]” (7.15). He literally begins to “resurrect” (ἀναβιώω) at news that his lost love could be alive. Freed of his bonds, Clitophon rushes to the temple. Even a hint of a trace of Leucippe can bring life to those heading toward death.

The scene at the temple is a macabre comedy, as a man convicted of murder stands beside the living woman he admitting to killing. The absurdity compounds when the city officials suggest that they would uphold Clitophon’s murder conviction. In response to this, the priest of temple gives a grand speech. “The girl killed [by Clitophon],” the priest says, “said by you to have disappeared [ἀνηρηθῆσθαι], you can see here living [ζῶσαν βλέπεις].” The priest thus emphasizes not only that Leucippe is living, but that she is *visible*. “This is not the girl’s ghost [εἶδωλον],” he continues. “The Lord of Hades did not allow a dead girl to rise from the dead to testify against you! [οὐκ ἀνέπεμψεν ὁ Ἄϊδωνεύς κατὰ σοῦ τὴν ἀνηρημένην]” (8.9). Here the priest admits that simply

⁶² Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 66.

seeing Leucippe does not mean that she is truly there. He emphasizes that this woman standing before the crowd is not a ghost. His speech reassures those attending this spectacle, and those reading the spectacle as well. Leucippe's appearance has been as alluring as it has been confounding throughout the entirety of the narrative. She wavers between life and death, phases in and out of sight, and slips between absence and presence. The text appears to assure itself that Leucippe is in fact there, that she is not a ghost. This possibility continues to haunt the narrator and Clitophon until the very end of the story.

The tale concludes with the city acquitting Clitophon of all charges and hosting a grand dinner celebrating the reunion of the star-crossed lovers. Only here, on the final pages of the novel, do Clitophon (and the reader) discover how Leucippe escaped her apparent death at sea. She switched places with another (unfortunate) woman, living to (falsely) die another day (8.16). Clitophon and Leucippe finally marry, and after the ceremony set sail for Tyre and then home to Byzantium (8.19). The story trails off there, and Clitophon's narration ends without returning to the original scene in the garden. The anonymous narrator from the beginning of the story is missing. This provocative ending leaves the story open, missing the expected closure and completion.⁶³ Where is Leucippe? Why is Clitophon in Sidon (and not in Tyre nor Byzantium)? If the two are now married and together, why does Clitophon appear so despondent? In the opening framing of the novel, Leucippe's presence was clearly felt despite her now glaring absence.

⁶³ For a survey of scholarly attempts to make sense of this conundrum, see I. D. Repath, "Achilles Tatius' 'Leucippe and Cleitophon': What Happened Next?," *The Classical Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2005): 250–65.

Conclusions without Closure

Judith Perkins argues for a socio-economic distinction between the novelistic *Scheintod* and Christian resurrection. The false deaths of Leucippe and others affirm “the elite’s ability to avoid being swallowed up and to preserve their identity and position as partners in the new regime of Roman imperialism.”⁶⁴ Certainly the sacrifice of other lives at the expense of Leucippe reflects notions that “some have bodies more value than others in society.”⁶⁵ But, Clitophon and Melite respond affectively to these false deaths in ways that make them feel real. These affective experiences of true and false deaths call into question that very distinction. Moreover, *Scheintod* is not fully isolatable in *Leucippe and Clitophon* or the other novels. It participates in numerous temporal, bodily, and visual disruptions. It is spectrality, which hints at how this text is haunted in ways more subtle and fundamental than Perkins suggests.

Leucippe’s ever-shifting “image” is not just an artistic flourish used by Achilles Tatius to describe her beauty or Clitophon’s love for her. As Scott Elliott argues, “These characterizations should not be dismissed too quickly as mere colorful accounts and clever summarizations.”⁶⁶ It is instead constitutive of her entire characterization. The text draws the reader’s gaze to Leucippe. Yet, that gaze becomes hazy and confused. Where is she? What is happening to her? Is she alive? Is she there? She is felt and seen when visibly gone, and elusive when visibly apparent. Like Callirhoe and other novelistic protagonists, her presentation on the borders of seen and unseen takes place in concert

⁶⁴ Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 52.

⁶⁵ For more on this, see Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Clitophon*, 216; Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era*, 55.

⁶⁶ Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark’s Jesus*, 115.

with her representation on the borders of life and death. These dynamics within *Leucippe and Clitophon* take place in a narrative that appears out of sync with time.

The plotting of the text messes with linear time as it begins at some unknowable moment after the narrative events have occurred. Yet, this framing narrative never resolves. The text employs a Greek style evocative of a bygone era, all within a world and a time far from the power centers of Rome. This resonates with the broader emphases in the so-called Second Sophistic, as seen above. “Achilles Tatius writes a novel which tracks across the Mediterranean with no mention of any aspect of imperial rule.”⁶⁷ When this text takes place is a strategic unknown, which highlights the spectrality of past, present, and future. As Whitmarsh says, “the promise of closure overhangs the wandering narrative,” but that closure never comes.⁶⁸ The ending of the text resists comprehension, like *Leucippe* herself. This illusive characterization amid incomprehensible times and endings shows the spectrality that shapes *Leucippe and Clitophon*. It also signals the kinds of connections this text has with the Gospel of John, which both point to the haunting affects of the Roman Empire’s metaphysical globalization,

The Spectral Gospel (of John)

The Gospel of John, in its own way, draws the readers’ attention to its protagonist. Jesus in the Gospel of John talks about many things, but himself most of all. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God/Heaven, tells parables, and offers ethical maxims. In the Gospel of John, the words coming out of Jesus’ mouth are more often than not about *him*. Even the arguments he has with the Pharisees and others

⁶⁷ Goldhill, “The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict,” 156.

⁶⁸ Tim Whitmarsh, *Narrative and Identity in the Ancient Greek Novel: Returning Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 183.

are typically about himself. Much as *Leucippe and Clitophon* draws the reader's attention to the character of Leucippe, the Gospel of John focuses sharply on the figure of Jesus. This proves to be just the beginning of the intersections of Jesus and Leucippe. As Achilles Tatius's text showed, these efforts to focus on Leucippe in fact reflect larger cultural discourses. The more intensely these texts focus on an individual person, the more elusive and confounding they become.

Jesus is physically absent from the pages of John's Gospel. "Although there are plenty of references to 'flesh' and 'glory' in the Gospel," Colleen Conway explains, "there is no description whatsoever of Jesus' body."⁶⁹ She argues that "this *lack* of description itself may be an indicator of gender and social status."⁷⁰ This is part gospel's construction of a "high" Christology,⁷¹ which is also "a particularly *masculine* Christology." John "presents an image of Jesus as one who ranks above all others and models the traits that defined ideal masculinity in the first-century Greco-Roman world."⁷² Conway argues that the absence of physical descriptions of Jesus participates in this presentation of Jesus in the Gospel of John. "[D]escriptions of a wounded body potentially meant a glimpse at a vulnerable or feminized Jesus." But, "the Gospel

⁶⁹ Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*, 149.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷¹ For some of the different takes on John's "Christology," see e.g., Sharon H. Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999); James F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology: Legitimation and Development in Johannine Christology*, vol. 111, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Pamela E. Kinlaw, *The Christ Is Jesus: Metamorphosis, Possession, and Johannine Christology*, vol. 18, Academia Biblica (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Tom Thatcher, *Greater than Caesar: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

⁷² Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*, 143.

provides the reader little opportunity for such a glimpse.”⁷³ There are tensions of high and low status in this text’s characterizations, as Perkins observed in the novels. The Gospel of John paradoxically focuses intensely on the figure of Jesus but lacks of any physical descriptions, which connects with numerous dynamics in this text and others.

Fleeting glimpses of Jesus’ body in John’s gospel may say a great deal. The contours of Jesus’ body can be traced, for instance, by observing the clothing that clings to his flesh. John the Baptist says he is unworthy to untie the sandals on Jesus’ feet (John 1:27). As Conway and others observe, this hint about the coverings of Jesus’ body situates John as subservient to Jesus.⁷⁴ While Jesus’ actual appearance is absent from the text, the clothing that outlines that appearance renders him present in an important way. Small details such as this illustrate larger dynamics of absence and presence throughout John’s gospel below. As with the characterization of Leucippe, this tension of absence and presence is not a quirk of the text reducible to style. Rather, it intersects with the complicated roles of resurrection and spectrality in the Gospel of John. As the narrative hones in on Jesus, it situates him at the borders of life and death while raising questions about how past, present, and future relate. In a text so concerned with people knowing who Jesus is, all of this combines to render the very notion of knowledge unstable.

A Metaphysical Gospel

⁷³ Ibid., 150.

⁷⁴ e.g., Musa W. Dube, “Savior of the World but Not of This World: A Post-Colonial Reading of Spatial Construction in John,” in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 127; Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*, 144.

Like *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the Gospel of John's story begins in a place and time distinct from the bulk of its narrative.⁷⁵ Unlike the synoptic gospels, the Jesus of John's gospel does not begin the story on earth. In this prologue, Jesus is instead "with God in the beginning [ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν]" (John 1:2). He is the "word" (ὁ λόγος), God's creative divine agent who makes the "the world" (ὁ κόσμος) and everything in it (1:1-10). He descends from his cosmic home to the world, taking on "flesh" (σὰρξ) in order to live "among us" (1:14).⁷⁶ Jesus was thus absent from the world before he was present in it. Yet, his presence in the flesh signifies his former absence from the world as the divine λόγος. This narrative framing of the Gospel of John thus narrates Jesus' journey from elsewhere and elsewhen to the here and now.⁷⁷

This narration of Jesus' once and current presence is not a simple linear tale. C. K. Barrett notes that the prologue to John's gospel "can be read as Hellenistic philosophy and as rabbinic mysticism, can also be read as history."⁷⁸ Bultmann famously distanced the prologue from Judaism, seeing the roots of this λόγος Christology in Hellenism.⁷⁹ Yet,

⁷⁵ The prologue to the Gospel of John is "one of the most well traveled of scholarly roads." Ed L. Miller, "The Johannine Origins of the Johannine Logos," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112, no. 3 (1993): 445.

⁷⁶ The Egyptian Kalasiris in *Chariclea and Theagenes* explains that "when gods and spirits descend to earth or ascend from earth, they very occasionally assume the form of an animal, but generally they take on human shape [εἰς ἀνθρώπους δὲ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἑαυτοὺς εἰδοποιοῦσι]" (Heliodorus, *Chariclea and Theagenes* 3.13).

⁷⁷ For a compelling reading of the unifying cosmological themes of the Gospel of John, see Adele Reinhartz, *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel*, vol. 45, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

⁷⁸ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction With Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1978), 129.

⁷⁹ e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, vol. 2 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 3–14; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A*

the story evokes the Genesis creation account in some fashion.⁸⁰ Daniel Boyarin connects John’s prologue with ancient Jewish biniterian theologies. Reading John 1:1-14 as a midrash on Genesis, Boyarin sees the λόγος making three separate attempts to enter the world. The first attempt fails as the λόγος “was in the world...and the world did not recognize him [ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω]” (1:10), indeed “his own did not receive him [οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον]” (1:11). Then, the λόγος comes again and is received by some people, who get to be “children of god [τέκνα θεοῦ]” (1:12-13). The third, and final, arrival of the λόγος occurs in verse 14 when it “became flesh and lived among us [σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήσωμεν ἐν ἡμῖν]” (1:14).⁸¹

Mayra Rivera describes the spectral dynamics of the prologue, saying, “The beginning of the story—a story that is already a community's remembrance—is a repetition of other beginnings and of other scriptural proclamations of beginning, of fall into darkness, of the failures of creation as it was expected to be.”⁸² This short framing narrative is in fact multiple overlapping stories of the attempted incursion of Jesus’ presence. This spectral tripling of Jesus connects with a “question of repetition,” as Derrida puts it, for “a specter is always a *revenant*. One cannot control its comings and

Commentary, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, The Johannine Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 21–27.

⁸⁰ D. Moody Smith, “Johannine Studies since Bultmann,” *Word & World* 21, no. 4 (2001): 343–51.

⁸¹ Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 89–111.

⁸² Mayra Rivera, “Ghostly Encounters: Spirits, Memory, and the Holy Ghost,” in *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera, Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquia 7th (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 126.

goings because it *begins by coming back*.”⁸³ As with other texts broadly construed as participating in the so-called Second Sophistic like *Leucippe and Clitophon*, this text engages in a complicated negotiation between past and present. In this way the framing narrative of the Gospel of John portrays Jesus’ presence arriving as the *λόγος*, but its arrivals are repetitious re-arrivals.

The ensuing narrative of the Gospel of John takes place in the shadow of Jesus Christ’s descent from the cosmic center of the heavens to the periphery of creation. Throughout the gospel, Jesus speaks of his eventual ascension and return to the heavens that reside above. Talking to the Pharisee Nicodemus, Jesus says that “no one has ascended [οὐδεις ἀναβέβηκεν] into heaven except the one having descended [ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς] from heaven” (John 3:13). The text situates Jesus as the sole arbiter of the boundary between the above and the below, simultaneously exploiting and disciplining the ambiguous relationship between the two. Later, he asks his disciples, “what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending [τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀναβαίνοντα] to where he was before?” (6:62). He has been above already, and it appears that he alone will return whence he came.

However, the verb tenses of these two passages raise additional questions. The quote from chapter 6 indicates that Jesus will ascend in the future, whereas the quote from chapter 3 suggests Jesus already ascended at least once before. Jesus having already ascended to heaven is “hard to visualize,”⁸⁴ and some have suggested that these are the words of a later redactor.⁸⁵ These passages and others inspired Raymond Brown to

⁸³ Emphasis original. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 11.

⁸⁴ Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 195.

⁸⁵ e.g., Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 213.

remark that the Gospel of John has “a strange timelessness or indifference to normal time sequence.”⁸⁶ This is where repetition and first time collude in a spectral figure like Jesus, as time bends around him in John’s gospel.⁸⁷

These same questions of past, present, and future occur when Jesus discusses resurrection. This topic arises after a group of Jews accuse Jesus of blasphemy (5:18). “Just as the Father raises the dead and makes them alive” (ὡσπερ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ), he explains, “so also the Son makes alive whomever he wishes [οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὗς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ]” (5:21). The present tense of these sentences could have “a generalizing force without any consideration of time,” leaving open the possibility that they refer to future events.⁸⁸ However, Jesus says that whoever believes “has eternal life” (ζωὴν αἰώνιον). They are not judged, but “have been transferred out of death and into life [μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν]” (5:24). The future hope of resurrection and eternal life is available here and now. “An hour is coming and is now” (ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν), continues Jesus, “when the dead [ὅτε οἱ νεκροὶ] will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those hearing will live [οἱ ἀκούσαντες ζήσουσιν]” (5:25). The time is both coming and here now.

John’s Jesus goes on, saying, “An hour is coming in which all of those in graves will hear his [the Son of Man’s] voice.” (5:28). He explains that all will “come out” (ἐκπορεύονται) to either the “resurrection of life” (ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς) or the “resurrection

⁸⁶ Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29:132.

⁸⁷ Again echoing Derrida on the specter and *hauntology*. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

⁸⁸ Harold W. Attridge, “From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer, vol. 222, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 5.

of judgment [ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως]” (5:29). After insisting that resurrection is available now, this passage ends with futurity. Wright claims that a future expectation is John’s primary orientation, with events like the raising of Lazarus explaining the feelings of immanence.⁸⁹ Others suggest that 5:28-29 is a mere redactional aberration.⁹⁰ Neither of these approaches account for the complex admixture of future, past, and present in this (and other) scene(s). This is both “immanence and desire for resurrection,” as Derrida puts it, “*One does not know* if the expectation prepares the coming of the future-to-come or if it recalls the repetition of the same, of the same as ghost.”⁹¹

These samplings from the Gospel of John illustrate its famed dualisms.⁹² The prologue introduces Jesus as “the light” (τὸ φῶς), which “the darkness” (ἡ σκοτία) cannot overcome (1:5). Jesus’ power over life and death is signaled there as well, for “life was in him [ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν]” (1:4). John’s gospel constructs an endless series of hierarchical binaries. The repeated emphasis on above vs. below, and Jesus’ descent and ascent, provides a spatial illustration of these hierarchies. For Jesus to move people “out of death and into life” values life over against death. These binaries flow throughout the text, yet they are prone to deconstruction.⁹³ The text’s struggle to distinguish past, present, and future highlights these slippages. In John’s gospel the “paradox of the Son of Man is that even when on earth he is in heaven,” explains C. K. Barrett, “effectively the Son of Man

⁸⁹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 665.

⁹⁰ e.g., Hans Christian Kammier, *Christologie Und Eschatologie: Joh 5,17-30 Als Schlüsseltext Johanneischer Theologie*, vol. 126, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 188–90.

⁹¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 44–45.

⁹² Indeed, Ashton says, “The Fourth Gospel announces its dualism clearly and unequivocally from the very first page.” John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. 387–417.

⁹³ Stephen Moore, *Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 45.

is in both places at once.”⁹⁴ John’s constant negotiation of these binaries displays the spectrality of the text. The text draws the reader’s gaze toward Jesus, insisting that people *believe in* him. However, what exactly is knowable about him proves illusive. The text situates Jesus himself amid these complex binary relationships. To know Jesus is to know the nature of this metaphysics.

Amid these metaphysical orderings, the Gospel of John also performs mappings of true and false in relationship with life and death, much a *Leucippe and Clitophon* raised questions about the relationship between truth and falsity in death. The Johannine prologue again introduces this, saying that Jesus “was the true light [ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν]” (John 1:9). It goes on, claiming that Jesus was “full of truth [πλήρης...ἀληθείας]” (1:14).⁹⁵ Indeed, “the truth” itself “came through Jesus Christ [ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο]” (1:17). The text aligns both truth and life in the figure of Jesus. Death then, necessarily aligns with falsity in their oppositional relationship with life and truth. John’s gospel repeatedly aligns Jesus with truth (e.g., 4:23-24; 5:31-33; 6:55, etc.) and life (e.g., 3:15-16; 4:13; 5:21-29; 5:39-40; 6:51-54, etc.). The narrative strains to keep these oppositions in place, but Achilles Tatius’s novel suggested how such oppositions of true vs. false come undone in death. The story of Lazarus shows how John’s mappings of life and truth are more illusive than they appear.

⁹⁴ C. K. Barrett, *Essays on John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 110–11.

⁹⁵ Here I emphasize John’s construction of the “truthiness” of Jesus. However, numerous commentators read “truth” here as representing the Holy Spirit (Abbott), God’s covenant with Israel (Dodd, Barrett, et al), or even as “enduring love” (Brown). See, e.g., Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 175–76; Barrett, *Essays on John*, 167; Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29:14; Edwin A. Abbott, *Johannine Vocabulary: A Comparison of the Words of the Fourth Gospel with Those of the Three*, Ancient Language Resources (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 281; Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 81–83.

Time for Lazarus

The story of the resurrection of Lazarus is central to the Gospel of John, and it deals with Jesus' power over the life-death binary. An odd detail marks the beginning of this story. After noting that Lazarus is ill, and that he is the brother of Mary and Martha, it clarifies that "Mary was the one who anointed the lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair" (John 11:2).⁹⁶ The text situates Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet in the past, but this event has not happened in the narrative. This event from the past is absent from the narrative's past. The story of Mary anointing Jesus in the Gospel of John takes place in the *future*. This event occurs later in the narrative, in chapter 12. Many scholars see this as either a later redactional addition,⁹⁷ or an assumption by the author that the reader already knows this fact.⁹⁸ However, this jumbling of narrative time at the beginning of the story of Lazarus's resurrection further illustrates how life and death are inextricably woven together with past, present, and future. When one is transgressed, the others betray similar transgressions. This rupture in linear time shows spectrality at work. The story of Lazarus coming back from the dead is bookended by narrative events that appear out of order, as life and death themselves are out of order.

News of Lazarus' illness reaches an unimpressed Jesus, who signals the unreality of Lazarus' impending death. "This illness does not lead to death [Αὕτη ἡ ἀσθένεια οὐκ

⁹⁶ The verbs "anointed" (ἀλείψασα) and "wiped" (ἐκμάξασα) are aorist participles subordinated to the main verb "was" (ἦν), which is in the imperfect. While the imperfect can imply ongoing action, here it certainly indicates action in the past, which is compounded by the inclusion of the aorist participles. For fuller comments on the Greek here, see Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 390.

⁹⁷ e.g., Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John Volume 2: Commentary on the Gospel of John*, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 490.

⁹⁸ e.g., Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 614–615.

ἔστιν θάνατον],” he says (11:4a). At first glance, this is a false statement, since Lazarus’ illness does lead to his death. Is Lazarus’ death a false one, like those befalling Leucippe? Jesus qualifies this seemingly erroneous assertion by saying the illness is “for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (11:4b). Later, Jesus again appears to be mistaken when he says, “Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awaken him” (11:11). The disciples take Jesus at his word, saying that “if he [Lazarus] has fallen asleep, he will be healed” (11:12). While some commentators blame the disciples for misunderstanding Jesus,⁹⁹ that is not clear. Again, Jesus appears to not expect Lazarus to die, and his disciples trust his omniscience. Everything that Jesus says and does at the beginning of this passage indicates that Lazarus will not die.

The narrator steps in to clarify that Jesus was in fact speaking about Lazarus’ “death” (τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ). Moreover, the text explains that the disciples were confused, since “they thought that he was talking about the rest of sleep [τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ὕπνου]” (11:13). Jesus himself crushes any ambiguity immediately, however, saying “plainly” that “Lazarus died [Λάζαρος ἀπεθάνεν]” (11:14). This confusion over Lazarus’ illness and death proves ironic, as it leads directly to Jesus’ own death.¹⁰⁰ This confusion over real or false death, seen before with Leucippe, will continue to haunt this scene as well as Jesus’ own (false?) death.

⁹⁹ e.g., Larry W. Hurtado, “Remembering and Revelation: The Historic and Glorified Jesus in the Gospel of John,” in *Israel’s God and Rebecca’s Children Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado and Alan F. Segal*, ed. David B. Capes et al. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 199; Wahle, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 492–93.

¹⁰⁰ As Michaels puts it, “Ironically, the sickness that Jesus says is not ‘toward death’ as far as Lazarus is concerned will in the end result in *his own death*.” Emphasis original. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 616.

Jesus follows his declaration of Lazarus's death with a confusing statement that highlights the tensions at play in this scene. The NRSV renders the next sentence as "For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe" (11:15). This flattens the complex grammar of Jesus's statement. It could also read, more literally, "I rejoice on your account in order that you may believe that I was not there" (καὶ χαίρω δι' ὑμᾶς ἵνα πιστεύσητε ὅτι οὐκ ἤμην). The combination of clauses forces the translator to make interpretive choices. The more literal translation touches upon the spatial and temporal confusion around Jesus' knowledge about the death of Lazarus. It is necessary, to show Jesus' power, that he was "not there." Jesus was absent at the death of Lazarus, but he still knows that he died. He rejoices that the disciples might believe that he was in fact not present at the death of his beloved friend. These "not so clear" words reveal the contradictory logic of Jesus' knowledge of events elsewhere.¹⁰¹

Thomas chimes in, saying, "Let us go, so that we may die with him also" (11:16). The awkwardness of Thomas's suggestion is met with silence, as the group heads to Bethany. They do not go die with Lazarus, nor is such an idea uttered again. Many scholars suggest Thomas means that they should die with Jesus,¹⁰² despite Lazarus being the more obvious contextual and grammatical referent.¹⁰³ This passage already stretches the credulity of the reader and the characters of the story. Perhaps Thomas picks up on the tensions of truth vs. falsity in Jesus' statements, or that this is an expectation of a false death like that seen with Leucippe and others. Time itself is out of sync, and the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 621–22.

¹⁰² e.g., Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 394; Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29:432; Wahldt, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 493.

¹⁰³ Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 624.

statements of Jesus and others begin to resist comprehension. As these characters go down the road where they will watch a dead man rise from the grave, comprehension becomes difficult.

This story offers a number of specific details in terms of time. The text specifies that Jesus remains where he is for two days after learning of Lazarus's illness (11:6). Jesus says that there is "twelve hours of daylight" in a conversation with Pharisees (11:9). By the time Jesus arrives in Bethany, he discovers that Lazarus has been in his tomb for "four days" (11:17). For a text notable for its timelessness,¹⁰⁴ the Gospel of John becomes very specific with regard to time in this portion of the story much like other studies of the dead rising throughout this project. This specific timing further underscores how much time is out of joint surrounding the story of Lazarus's resurrection. Past and future events bleed together around this pericope. However, the plotting of Lazarus's rise from the grave appears deliberate and careful by comparison. This plotting of a traversal of life and death appears to warp the time around itself, creating new folds and wrinkles that are impossible to iron out.

The lack of comprehension in this scene multiplies in the conversations in Bethany. When Jesus and his disciples arrive, Martha confronts him saying, "Lord, if you were here, my brother would not have died" (11:21). Jesus' non-presence at the death of Lazarus is stressed again. While his absence was before connected with his impressive knowledge of things unseen, here it connects with Lazarus's actual death. Martha suggests that it was not the illness that led to his death. Rather, Jesus' absence was the

¹⁰⁴ Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29:132.

cause.¹⁰⁵ “Your brother will rise up [Ἀναστήσεται ὁ ἀδελφός σου]” (11:23), he responds. “I know that he will arise at the resurrection [Οἶδα ὅτι ἀναστήσεται ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει] on the last day,” she says in return (11:24). Jesus and Marth appear to be talking past one another. In order to clarify his intentions, Jesus declares, “I am the resurrection and the life [Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή]” (11:25). This is a bold and nonsensical statement if there ever was one.¹⁰⁶ Martha speaks of the expected resurrection of the dead on the day of God’s judgment, and Jesus responds by introducing himself. Not only that, he is “the life,” which is a vague metaphysical claim. What on earth could it mean for someone to be “the life”?

The phrase “I am the resurrection and the life” aligns Jesus with life itself. Moreover, once again life is situated hierarchically over death. Jesus aligns himself with the positively coded side of this binary relationship. He follows this up with further clarification: “everyone living and believing in me never dies [πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ]” (11:26). While “believing” in Jesus in this (con)text is another vague imperative, clearly the text is aligning devotion to Jesus with the expectation of resurrection. Not just resurrection, but never dying.¹⁰⁷ This raises questions about Lazarus’s death. Is this another false death? Does Lazarus only appear dead, but will in fact never die like Leucippe?

¹⁰⁵ Michaels notes that Martha’s “remark could be read either as a mild rebuke or as a tribute to Jesus’ love and power to heal.” Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 630.

¹⁰⁶ Urban C. von Wahlde calls this an “elliptical statement.” Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 487–88.

¹⁰⁷ “For the believer, life is a reality even in the face of death. Indeed, the life that comes with belief in Jesus eternally negates death.” Attridge, “From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel,” 10.

Resurrection is again immanent,¹⁰⁸ embodied in Jesus.¹⁰⁹ His words unambiguously elevate life and the living over death and the dead. Jesus and his resurrection are the way to access this life. He asks Martha if she believes this to be true, and she gives an evasive answer naming him as “Messiah, the son of God, the one coming into the world [ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος]” (11:27). Jesus is the one actively coming into the world, according to Martha, in a perpetual and timeless (but not timely) state of arriving.¹¹⁰ Jesus’ statements raise further questions of life, truth, and death. His words resist comprehension for both the reader and the characters in the story, who make their own contradictory statements.

Martha is far from the only person affected by Lazarus’ supposed death. Mary echoes her critique of Jesus, saying that Lazarus “would not have died” (οὐκ ἄν...ἀπέθανεν) if Jesus had been there (18:32). She reiterates Lazarus’ death while blaming Jesus for it. “The Jews” likewise raise this questioning critique (18:37). The text notes that Jesus sees Mary “weeping” (κλαίουσιν), and these same Jews “weeping” (κλαίοντες) as well (18:33). Jesus himself then “wept” (ἐδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς). The affective experience of the loss of Lazarus emanates outward from his tomb to those gathered there. But, why is Jesus weeping? He stated before that Lazarus’ illness would not lead to death. Moreover, he stated that all who believe in him would *never die*. He also

¹⁰⁸ Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 364–65.

¹⁰⁹ Here I go against scholars who read this verse as entirely within a future eschatology, e.g., Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 396; Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29:434; Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 488.

¹¹⁰ cf. Michaels, who says that Martha’s “intent is not to fix the time of his ‘coming,’ present or future, but to define him as ‘the Coming One.’” Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 633.

suggests that Lazarus will rise up, seemingly immanently. If Lazarus has not died, will never die, and will rise up, then why does Jesus weep?

The *Scheintod* scenes in *Leucippe and Clitophon* illustrated that tensions between true and false deaths were in fact unresolvable for others around them. Scholars have wondered why Jesus cries in the lead up to Lazarus' resurrection. His "reaction is surprising" for many.¹¹¹ Is he upset over hypocrisy or unbelief?¹¹² Perhaps he feels his own forthcoming death.¹¹³ I contend that scenes like this reside at the tensions of real and unreal around death, and within the questions of truth and falsity. The affect of true or false deaths proved equally real for both Melite and Clitophon throughout Achilles Tatius's novel. Jesus, Mary, and others weep for a man supposedly not dead or dying, as the novelistic characters mourned their (falsely) lost loved ones. Such felt responses to the supposed death of another underscore the uncertainty that surrounds such an event.

Jesus arrives at Lazarus's tomb. The description of the cave evokes Jesus' own tomb that appears later in the narrative. The stone lying against the opening is a similar barrier that separates the living from the dead. Jesus will enter and exit a tomb much like this one. Lazarus's resurrection echoes Jesus' own rise from the grave that occurs later in narrative time, again proving this story to be a wrinkle in the boundary between past and future as well as life and death. Jesus commands that the stone be removed from the tomb, but Martha protests. "Lord," she says, "he already smells, for it is the fourth day

¹¹¹ Ibid., 636.

¹¹² e.g., Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 398; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 406.

¹¹³ e.g., Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29:435.

[τεταρταῖος γὰρ ἐστίν]” (11:39).¹¹⁴ Again, the narrative evokes the specificity of linear time, here as the odoriferous distance between the living and the dead. Yet this distance, and the boundaries between life and death that it implies, is not insurmountable. The story has questioned the truth of Lazarus’s death from the beginning, after all. Jesus responds, “Did I not tell you that if you believe you would see the glory of God?” (11:40). Like *Peter Pan*’s Tinker Bell who required the audience’s belief in order to be raised from near death, Jesus indicates that he needs the belief of others in order to raise Lazarus from the dead. If this is so, the ensuing events indicate that Martha has more belief than she indicates.

After the tomb is opened, Jesus prays and calls out to the dead man lying within. “Lazarus,” he shouts, “come out!” (11:43). The text draws the readers’ eyes onto the reanimated body of Lazarus. “The one having died [ὁ τεθνηκώς] came out with his feet and his hands bound in grave clothes, and a cloth around his face” (11:44). The text again reiterates that Lazarus has died, a necessary emphasis given the confusion over true and false deaths throughout the story. The contours of Lazarus’s resurrected body are well defined. This one who had died now shambles forth into the light from his darkened tomb. While the reader can see the mummy-like body waltzing out of the cave, Lazarus’s own vision is obscured by the cloth on his face. As explored before, vision is a central component of encounters with the dead throughout ancient literature and modern theory. The difficulty inherent in seeing the dead makes comprehending them all the more

¹¹⁴ Several commentators note that the stench of this scene serves to distinguish it from the story of Jesus’ body in its tomb, since there myrrh and aloes are used to embalm Jesus’ body (John 19:39-40) to prevent a stench. See, e.g., Ibid., 29:426; Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 505; Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 641–642.

difficult.¹¹⁵ Of all those present, Lazarus himself may have the poorest comprehension of these events due to his obscured vision.¹¹⁶ “Untie him,” Jesus commands, “and allow him to go” (11:44).

Some commentators question how the raising of Lazarus relates to Jesus’ forthcoming resurrection. Indeed, some say that this is just a “resuscitation,” thus categorically *not* a resurrection. Instead, a scholar like Michaels cites John 12:18, saying that the raising of Lazarus is a “sign” of Jesus’ resurrection.¹¹⁷ Modern scholars thus appear to question whether Lazarus’s death is truth or fiction. The categorical impulses of scholarship concerning transgressions of life and death arise again. However, distinctions between “resuscitation” and “resurrection” appear to be more about theology and exceptionalism than history or close reading. The connections between Lazarus and Jesus are overt in John’s gospel. Some in fact see this scene as the “hour” foretold by Jesus’ in which people in graves will come out (5:28-29).¹¹⁸ The eschatological tensions of past, present, and future in the Gospel of John thus make themselves felt here as well. Time becomes unhinged, pulled in multiple directions, when this dead man comes back to life.

The undead Lazarus exiting his tomb at Jesus’ command is undoubtedly the climax of the pericope, and one of the climactic moments of the Gospel of John. However, the text does not linger to savor the moment, instead taking an immediate detour. Rather than witnessing the unraveling of the reanimated Lazarus, the reader is left

¹¹⁵ “*It is* something that one does not know,” says Derrida, “and one does not know if precisely it *is*, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence.” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 5.

¹¹⁶ Which in turn obscures the “visor effect” that Derrida describes, where the dead “looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there.” *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹⁷ Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 646.

¹¹⁸ e.g., Attridge, “From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel,” 11.

with only the cloth-bound outline of his body as the text moves on. While “many” of the Jews “believed” in Jesus after this resurrection, “some” complained to the Pharisees (11:45-46). The chief priests and the Pharisees, calling together the “council” (συνέδριον),¹¹⁹ wonder what they are going to do about this man performing “many signs” (11:47). “If we leave him like this,” they continue, “all will believe in him, and the Romans will take both our [holy] place and our nation” (11:48). Here, through the voices of the Pharisees and chief priests, the text evokes the clashes between Jews and the Romans that occurs decades after his death (and resurrection).¹²⁰

Caiaphas, the high priest, interrupts this conversation. “It is better for you,” he says, “that one man should die on behalf of the people and not all of the nation perish” (11:50). The text glosses these words as a prophecy that “Jesus was about to die on behalf of the nation.” “And not on behalf of the nation only,” the text continues, “but also in order that the children of God, those having been scattered, may gather into one” (11:51-52). Not only are Jesus’ deeds linked with the Jewish wars with Rome, but his death is supposed to spare them destruction and unify them as one. “Therefore,” the text states, “from that day they planned that they would kill him [ἀπ’ ἐκείνης οὖν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐβουλεύσαντο ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτόν]” (11:53). John’s Gospel notes that “the Jews” have been interested in killing Jesus for some time (e.g., 5:18; 7:1, 19, 25; 8:37, 40), but this is the moment desire becomes plot and prophecy. Jesus’ raising of Lazarus directly leads to the Jewish plot to kill him.

¹¹⁹ The only time this word is used in the Gospel of John. Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 517.

¹²⁰ Michaels makes the connection explicit, noting, “Some reads would have viewed this as God’s punishment on the Jews for rejecting and crucifying the Messiah.” Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 649.

In this way, Jesus' own death and resurrection would not occur without him resurrecting Lazarus. These two men traversing life and death are intimately connected. The narrative plotting of Jesus rising from the dead depends upon Lazarus doing the same. Jesus' words in chapter 5 concerning the "is coming" and "now" of resurrection make themselves felt in the Lazarus story. Past and future both press in upon this story, as it likewise bleeds forward and back. As Attridge notes, the "tension between present and future eternal life remains formally unresolved."¹²¹ All of this occurred in a warping of time, as Mary of Bethany performed an action in the past that has not yet occurred. Jacob Kremer calls the raising of Lazarus the greatest and final sign in the Gospel of John.¹²² Yet, Lazarus's death was called into question by numerous details throughout the story, as well as scholars who describe the scene as a mere resuscitation. These questions suggest the ways that "false death" haunts the scene, signaling how truth and falsity themselves are open questions. Lazarus's intimate connections with Jesus thus raise additional questions about the latter's death (and resurrection) as well. This sets the stage well for Jesus' own resurrectional departure.

The Coming One is About to Leave

Jesus takes a long time to prepare for his departure in the Gospel of John, saying goodbye to his disciples for over three chapters (13:36-16:33). He emphasizes repeatedly that he is about to leave. "I am going to the Father" (ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα), he says (14:12). "Now" (νῦν), he emphasizes, "I am going to the one having sent me [ὑπάγω πρὸς

¹²¹ Attridge, "From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel," 11.

¹²² Jacob Kremer, *Lazarus: Die Geschichte Einer Auferstehung: Text, Wirkungsgeschichte Und Botschaft von Joh 11, 1-46* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1984), 21.

τὸν πέμψαντά με]” (16:5). Indeed, Jesus “came from the Father,” but *now* he says, “I am leaving the world and am going to the Father [ἀφήμι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα]” (16:28). He is thus not only leaving, but returning whence he came.

Jesus’ coming departure also raises questions about sight, for he says that “in little time the world will no longer see me” (μικρὸν...ὁ κόσμος με οὐκέτι θεωρεῖ). “But,” he says, “you will see me” (ὕμεῖς δὲ θεωρεῖτε με). Jesus qualifies this contradiction, saying that it is “because I live and you also will live [ὅτι ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε]” (14:19). The world will not see Jesus after his coming departure, but his disciples will. This, Jesus says, is because he lives and they too will live. However, as I noted before, Jesus (like Leucippe) is remarkably difficult to see in this text.

The alignment of Jesus and his disciples with “life” (versus death) allows them to see him even when the world cannot. Jesus reiterates this, saying “in little time you will no longer see me [μικρὸν καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτε με], and again in little time you will see me [παλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με]” (16:16). Scholars are divided over whether Jesus here refers to his resurrection or a later eschatological second coming.¹²³ These repetitious teachings likewise cause confusion among the disciples (16:17-18), and Jesus’ response to this confusion (16:19-28) appeases them (16:29-30) despite not answering their

¹²³ For example, Bultmann read these passages as both resurrection and *parousia*, while Barrett more or less agreed. Ashton sees it as only *parousia*, while Segovia interprets the time as that between Jesus’ death and resurrection. Brown took a different track, seeing this time as that between Jesus’ departure and the arrival of the Paraclete. For more on these views, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, XIII-XXI: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 29A, The Anchor Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 730; Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 493; Fernando F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 246; Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 31; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 581.

questions. Jesus' coming and goings play on the slippery relationships between absence and presence, and between seen and unseen, proving incomprehensible to his audience.

Jesus' pending absence is not permanent, as his presence always seeps into other places and times. "If I go [ἐὰν πορευθῶ] and prepare a place for you," he says, "I am coming again [πάλιν ἔρχομαι] and will receive you to myself" (14:3).¹²⁴ "I am coming to you" (ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς), he reiterates (14:18). As has been the case already in John's gospel, this spectral Jesus will come by coming back. His presence will be felt in another way as well, through the "Advocate" (ὁ παράκλητος). This "Helper" is the "Spirit of Truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας]" (14:17; 15:26), the "Holy Spirit [τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον]" (14:26). This spiritual agent will be sent by God (14:16, 25), or Jesus himself (15:26; 16:7), and will continue to teach the disciples after Jesus is gone (14:26). In this way, Jesus' disciples can expect to know more about him after he is gone from them.¹²⁵ This spiritual helper slices through time and absence, providing more of Jesus' presence than when he was on earth. Jesus' pending impermanent absence thus paradoxically leads to an increase in knowledge about him.

These tensions of presence/absence and seen/unseen prove similar to the representational dynamics of Leucippe in Achilles Tatius's novel. John's gospel appears to engage (or reflect) in its own ways the same Second Sophistic era epistemology

¹²⁴ Michaels notes that this "is the only instance in the entire New Testament in which Jesus speaks of 'coming back' or 'coming again', and thus is the only explicit evidence in the Gospels of a 'second' coming of Jesus." Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 771.

¹²⁵ Hurtado notes here and elsewhere that in the Gospel of John there is a "clear emphasis on the agency of the Spirit in effecting a greater understanding of Jesus' person and significance than was conveyed and apprehended during his earthly ministry." Hurtado, "Remembering and Revelation: The Historic and Glorified Jesus in the Gospel of John," 203.

outlined before by Goldhill.¹²⁶ Jesus can be gone but seen, he can be unseen but felt. In both the Gospel of John and *Leucippe and Clitophon*, absence leads to an overflow of felt presence. These texts draw the reader and other characters to gaze upon and consider their protagonists, but that gaze reflects a spectral admixture of presence and vision, all within incomprehensible reworkings of time. Jesus and the Paraclete are one of the ways that the Gospel of John shows how these texts engage in complex negotiations of the relationships between the present and (unknowable) futures.

This farewell discourse sets up the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection scenes in John's Gospel. "The topic of resurrection does not explicitly surface in these discourses," notes Attridge, "but the eschatological horizon does, and it does so in a way that reinforces the 'realized' pole of the resurrection antinomies of the earlier chapters."¹²⁷ This section does not obviously evoke resurrection, but the spectral problematics involved with resurrection elsewhere in the Gospel of John do arise. Jesus will be absent, but seen; he will be coming, but invisible. His comings and goings in the farewell discourses bring about an immanent future, and a dislocated present. These contradictions will only grow as the narrative progresses.

Is it Finished?

The specter of resurrection risen up with Lazarus continues to haunt Jesus at his arrest. While "the Jews" have pursued his death since Lazarus came back to life, Jesus ultimately hands himself over to them in an easy manner. Surrounded by Judas and a cadre of "soldiers and servants of the chief priests and the Pharisees" (John 18:3), Jesus

¹²⁶ Goldhill, "The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict," 192.

¹²⁷ Attridge, "From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel," 13.

confirms to them that he is the Jesus of Nazareth they are looking for (18:5, 8). He only asks that they let his disciples go. When Peter attempts to resist, Jesus asks him, “Should I not drink the cup which my father has given me?” (18:11). God, his father, has laid this before Jesus. He allows, or even directs, these events leading to his ascension onto a Roman cross. Jesus’ captors take him to the high priest Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. This connection to chapter 11 is clear enough, but the text goes further. “It was Caiaphas,” the narrator explains, “who counseled the Jews that it is better for one man to die for the people” (18:14). The scene of Jesus’ arrest thus links with the plotting that occurred after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. This event from the past, where life and death were transgressed, bleeds into the present narrative while signaling things to come.

Jesus is dragged from Annas to Caiaphas, and then to Pilate. “What accusation do you bring against this man?” Pilate asks (18:29). Jesus’ captors respond, saying, “Unless this man was doing evil, we would not have delivered him to you” (18:30). Michaels notes that “they have no real answer for Pilate.”¹²⁸ The clear lack of specifics harkens back to the misapprehension—or rather, the incomprehensibility—of Jesus’ earlier teachings and actions. Pilate tells the crowd to judge Jesus according to their own laws, but “the Jews” respond by saying that “it is not lawful” for them “to kill anyone [ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα]” (18:31).¹²⁹ Pilate asks Jesus what he has done (18:35). Jesus

¹²⁸ Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 916.

¹²⁹ Brown remarks that in general, the Romans had exclusive power over life and death, and only occasionally would grant execution rights to the people. Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah, From Gethsemane to the Grave, Volume I: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 371.

responds with a rambling answer about his kingdom being “not from this world [οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου]” (18:36), evading Pilate’s question.

Some commentators see this discussion of Jesus’ kingship as an eschatological declaration, though the truth of this is uncertain. Thus, Jesus’ kingship resides not elsewhere, but *elsewhen* in the future.¹³⁰ Pilate asks if Jesus is a king, to which he responds, “you say that I am a king.” This is a bit of a lie, as Pilate merely asked if Jesus was a king, and Jesus himself says that he has a kingdom. The potential falsity of Jesus’ statement is covered over by his immediate claim that he came “to testify to the truth” (18:37). “What is truth?” asks Pilate (18:38). This philosophical discourse between Jesus and a Roman governor on kingship and the nature of truth is as impressive as it is confusing. Jesus and Pilate talk past each other, with Pilate not understanding his conversation partner. The tensions of truth and falsehood arise again as the story speeds toward Jesus’ death. Pilate does not stay for an answer to his question about truth, instead going back to the crowd. Truth remains an open question here.

The narrative is stuck in a loop, with Jesus on trial over and over, Pilate running between Jesus and the crowd, and the same evasive conversations repeating themselves. Time is stuck. In this timeless moment the Jews say that “according to the law he [Jesus] must die because he made himself the Son of God” (19:7). It is not clear what “law” they reference here, rendering the charge hollow. Pilate evokes the timeless moments from the gospel’s prologue when he asks Jesus, “Where are you from [Πόθεν εἶ σύ;]?” (19:9). The prologue is where Jesus was first aligned with truth and life. He previously spoke

¹³⁰ e.g., Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 922–23; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 654.

endlessly about his home in the heavens,¹³¹ but now remains silent.¹³² Eventually Jesus says to Pilate, “You have absolutely no power over me unless it was given to you from above [εἰ μὴ δεδομένον σοι ἄνωθεν]” (19:11). The mapping of the above and below occurs again along the path to Jesus’ death and resurrection. There is no sense of recognition or understanding for Pilate, who hands Jesus over for crucifixion out of exasperation.

During the trial and crucifixion, the clothing around Jesus continues to give hints about the shape and character of his incomprehensible body. After Pilate flogs Jesus, some soldiers “wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe” (19:2). These derisive fashion choices cast Jesus as a king, albeit a false one, during this debasing trial. The classic Johannine irony of this scene highlights the simultaneity of Jesus’ ascending and descending stature.¹³³ These same soldiers took the clothes that once covered the body of Jesus, dividing them among themselves. His tunic was “seamless, woven in one piece from the top” (19:23). The significance of this one-piece tunic is difficult to decipher, though it may suggest a certain level of high status for Jesus while his status in society could not be lower up on the cross.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Indeed, Michaels notes that this “is the perfect opportunity for Jesus to say something like ‘You are from below, I am from above. You are from this world, I am not from this world’ (8:23).” Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 935.

¹³² von Wahlde notes the irony of this moment, given how frequently questions of Jesus’ home are asked and answered throughout John’s gospel. Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 784.

¹³³ By “irony,” I mean that the soldiers’ actions and statements are truer than they know. For more on “irony” in the Gospel of John, see Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985).

¹³⁴ Barrett discusses a number of potential significances for this seamless garment. There are possible resonances with Josephus’s discussion of the high priest’s tunic (Josephus, *Antiquities* III, 161), Philo’s concept of the cosmos-unifying Word (Philo, *On Flight and*

The soldiers cast lots to see who among them would now own this fancy garment (19:23-25), which John glosses as fulfillment of scripture (Psalm 19:24). It is difficult to ignore the power that these soldiers possess over Jesus' body as they decide who will possess his clothing. Their haggling over this tunic draws the readers' eyes down and away from the unrobed and unmanned Jesus hanging on the cross nearby. During these scenes of trial and crucifixion, the clothing by which one can trace the contours of Jesus' body construct a complex character, simultaneously framing him as high status man and vulnerable unman.¹³⁵ The gendered tensions of high and low status glimpsed among the male protagonists in the novels appears here in John's gospel. The spectral manner in which Rome's imperial presence shapes these figures arises again.

The final moments on the cross leading to Jesus' death raise questions of their own. Jesus announces to those gathered, "It is finished [Τετέλεσται]" (19:30). He then bows his head, and "gave up his spirit [παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα]" (19:31). Many commentators note how Jesus bowing his head before giving up his spirit adds to the voluntary nature of these actions.¹³⁶ Some see this spirit-giving within the scheme of the eschatological coming of the spirit.¹³⁷ Though, John does not portray Jesus' spirit as the same sort of active agent as Acts did in the previous chapter. Jesus' words announcing, "It is finished," stand out for many scholars. His task is accomplished. "Much of the

Finding 110-112), Psalm 22:24, and the story of Joseph and his coat in Genesis 37:1-35. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 550.

¹³⁵ For the distinction between "men" and "unmen" in the ancient Greco-Roman world, I reply upon Stephen Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and Around the Bible* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 135-146.

¹³⁶ This interpretation stretches at least back to John Chrysostom (*Homilies on John* 85.3). For more on this, see Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 964.

¹³⁷ e.g., Brown, *The Gospel According to John, XIII-XXI: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29A:931.

gospel leading up to chapter 19 has pointed to the cross as the moment of glorification and to the ‘seeing’ that provides healing,” explains Attridge. “Jesus himself declares on the cross that his work is complete.”¹³⁸ This has raises questions over why the Gospel of John continues after this point. Given that “Jesus’ death on the cross is already his exaltation and glorification,” Bultmann noted, “his resurrection cannot be an event of special significance.”¹³⁹ Jesus claims that it is finished, but in fact the story goes on. Is he truly finished, is this another false end?

Never-ending Appearances

The length of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances in the Gospel of John are outmatched only by their perplexity. Mary Magdalene weeps in Jesus’ vacated tomb and sees two angels sitting in there, “one at the head and one and at the feet where Jesus’ body was lying” (20:12).¹⁴⁰ They ask her why she weeps, and she answers nonplussed, “They took away my lord, and I do not know where they placed him” (20:13). Her nonchalant affect while conversing with two angels would appear especially striking were it not for what happens next. Mary turns to see “Jesus standing there, but did not know that it was Jesus” (20:14). The text specifies that she “sees” (*θεωρεῖ*) Jesus, but that does not lead to recognizing him. Vision, appearance, and understanding are called into

¹³⁸ Attridge, “From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel,” 15.

¹³⁹ He continues, saying, “No resurrection is needed to destroy the triumph which death might be supposed to have gained in the crucifixion. For the cross itself was already triumphant over the world and its ruler.” Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2:410.

¹⁴⁰ Rowan Williams argues that these two angels evoke the Cherubim from the Ark of the Covenant, and signal the paradoxical ways that the resurrected Jesus remains an active presence in the life of the community. Rowan Williams, “Between the Cherubim: The Empty Tomb and the Empty Throne,” in *Resurrection Reconsidered*, ed. Gavin D’Costa (Oxford: OneWorld, 1996), 87–101.

question in this post-resurrection scene. “Woman, why do you weep?” asks incognito Jesus. Mary’s crying over the supposed death and lost body of Jesus evokes the weeping by Jesus, the other Mary, and the Jews over the supposed loss of Lazarus. It likewise displays the similar affective responses to the (false) deaths and absences of Leucippe. “Whom do you seek?” Jesus asks (20:15) Mary thinks (δοκοῦσα) that she is speaking with “the gardener [ἡ κηπουρός]” (20:15), a figure Stephen Moore describes as “a person on the lower rungs of the social ladder, a slave or common laborer.”¹⁴¹ Far from some glorified cosmic being, the post-resurrection Jesus appears lowly and unrecognizable.¹⁴²

The resurrected Jesus appears much like Leucippe. When Clitophon supposed her to be dead after one of her many “deaths,” he mistook her for a slave woman when he saw her (*Leucippe and Clitophon*, 5.17). There is a distinct lack of comprehension when encountering and viewing the (supposedly) dead, who appear so marred as to be of lower class and station. This is a “*non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present*.”¹⁴³ Similar misrecognitions of the supposedly dead occur in other novels (Xenophon of Ephesus, *Anthia and Habrocomes* 5.10, 12; Chariton, *Callirhoe* 8.1.8). These similarities raise questions regarding how these phenomena relate. Some have suggested that John may be relying on this novelistic device.¹⁴⁴ Perkins argued that Clitophon’s misrecognition of Leucippe as a slave reinforced notions of elite Greek identity.* Does John construct a similar elite identity for Jesus? Conway certainly suggests as much.* The absent-present bodies of Jesus and Leucippe appear in these scenes amid complex

¹⁴¹ Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 71.

¹⁴² “The initial encounter reveals the nature of the physical form of the risen Jesus. He is not immediately recognizable.” Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 839.

¹⁴³ Emphasis original. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xix.

¹⁴⁴ Huprich, “John 20,” 15–22.

negotiations of socio-cultural identity. The misrecognitions in *Leucippe and Clitophon* unveiled the falseness of Leucippe's deaths. Similar tensions of truth and falsity appeared in the story of Lazarus, and Mary's inability to recognize Jesus suggests that similar dynamics may be at play. These disrupted articulations of truth, presence, life, and identity signal the spectrality of these characters.

Jesus' post-mortem appearance is so different that Mary asks him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you placed him and I will take him" (20:15). She thus asks Jesus directly what he has done with his own body. Misunderstanding bleeds into understanding when Jesus says "Mary" aloud to her. Mary signals her "turn" (στραφεῖσα) to comprehension when she says, "in Hebrew," "Rabbi!" (20:16). After this encounter she goes to the disciples and announces, "I have seen [Ἐώρακα] the Lord" (20:18).¹⁴⁵ However, her report elides the fact that when she first saw the risen Jesus that she did not recognize him. Her proclamation does not include the difficulties of her meeting with him.¹⁴⁶ The veracity of her words comes into question then, much like the veracity of the deaths of Leucippe, Lazarus, and now Jesus.

After Mary identifies Jesus as her teacher, he responds by saying, "Do not touch me." Perhaps Mary reached out to touch this hard-to-recognize Jesus in front of her to confirm his material reality. Some commentators see Jesus' command as preventing

¹⁴⁵ For the relationship of this verse with understandings of Mary Magdalene as a prophetic figure, see Mary Rose D'Angelo, "I Have Seen the Lord': Mary Magdalen as Visionary, Early Christian Prophecy, and the Context of John 20:14-18," in *Mariam, the Magdalen, and the Mother*, ed. Deirdre Good (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 95–122.

¹⁴⁶ Her proclamation also elides the fact that, as Michaels explains, "We are not told how the encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene ended." Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 1003.

Mary from touching him at all.¹⁴⁷ Others read this command as a request for Mary to cease presently holding on to him.¹⁴⁸ The logistics of this request are difficult to comprehend.¹⁴⁹ Regardless, no touching was allowed though, as Jesus says, “I have not yet ascended [οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα] to the Father” (20:17). “The relationship between Mary and Jesus has changed,” says Rivera, “and Jesus' body exhibits the ungraspable nature of his now spectral presence.”¹⁵⁰ This detail, where Jesus tells Mary not to touch her because he is going to ascend to heaven, goes unremarked upon in the text as he sends her off to report what she has seen to the disciples.

The text then gets specific about time for the next scene, stating that it is “early evening” (ὀψίας) on “that day” (τῆ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη). It goes further, clarifying that it is the “first day of the week” (τῆ μιᾷ σαββάτων). Then, in one deft sentence, the text sets up Jesus’ miraculous actions while also continuing its demonization of its opponents. “The doors were locked where the disciples were,” the text explains, “because of fear of the Jews.” It is into this locked room where “Jesus came and stood in their midst [ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον]” (20:19). Much like the similar scene in the Gospel of Luke, the language here is sparse and matter-of-fact. Jesus performs a miraculous act—appearing out of thin air in a locked room—but the events are conveyed with all the drama of a *Dick and Jane* book. This no-nonsense portrayal of a fantastic event simultaneously draws attention to and away from Jesus’ miraculous post-resurrection

¹⁴⁷ e.g., Bultmann who argues that this command is issued “in order to restrain her.” Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 687.

¹⁴⁸ Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 98 n. 86.

¹⁴⁹ cf. Brown, who calls these confusions “a false problem” in his analysis of the scene. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, XIII-XXI: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 29A:1011–1017.

¹⁵⁰ Rivera, “Ghostly Encounters: Spirits, Memory, and the Holy Ghost,” 128.

abilities.¹⁵¹ “Peace to you,” he says upon materializing in the room (20:19). He then “showed his hands and his side to them.” This implied proof of Jesus’ identity causes the disciples to “rejoice” at “having seen [ιδόντες] the Lord” (20:20). Here the text reverses course, as seeing the dead suddenly leads to recognition and believing.¹⁵²

However, Thomas was not at this closed doors meeting with Jesus. The others say to him, “We have seen [Εωράκαμεν] the Lord,” again emphasizing their visual encounter with the risen Jesus. As with Mary though, the initial lack of comprehension of these encounters is left out. Thomas famously responds with his defiant retort, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and I put my hand into his side, I will never believe” (20:25). The veracity of Jesus’ resurrection (and death) remains in question. The text again plots the progression of time before an appearance of the post-resurrection Jesus, stating that his next apparition happens “after eight days.” Again, despite “the doors being locked,” “Jesus came [ἔρχεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς] and stood in their midst” (20:26). He wastes no time in addressing Thomas’s skepticism. “Put your finger here and see my hands,” Jesus says to Thomas, “bring your hand and put it into my side” (20:27).¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ “Miraculous it may well be, but if it is a miracle, the miracle is not the point. The accent is not on *how* but on the simple fact *that*” Jesus came. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 1007–1008.

¹⁵² Foster sees this scene as part of John’s overall apologetic, or polemical, stance during the resurrection scenes. “The Johannine narrative emphasizes two aspects of these appearances: (a) they were miraculous, since the doors were shut; and (b) they were not ephemeral visions, since the physicality of Jesus is highlighted.” Foster, “Polymorphic Christology,” 71.

¹⁵³ There has been some debate about the contrast between Jesus’ commands to Mary to not touch him, versus his command to Thomas to touch him. For some explorations of these differences and similarities, see Dorothy A. Lee, “Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 58 (1995): 37–49; Sandra M. Schneiders, “Touching the Risen Jesus: Mary Magdalene and Thomas the Twin in John 20,” in *Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of*

Having just materialized in the room, Jesus calls for Thomas to touch and see his body, to witness and feel the marks of crucifixion upon it. Thomas' famous reply indicates that he has indeed moved from "doubt" to "belief," exclaiming, "my Lord and my God!" (20:28). However, the text does not indicate that Thomas heeds Jesus' commands. He no doubt sees something, but his lack of touching is a curious absence. Jesus' own response confirms Thomas's non-tactile experience of his risen body, asking, "Have you believed because you have seen [ἑώρακάς] me?" He continues, saying, "Blessed are those who have not seen [οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες] and have believed" (20:29).¹⁵⁴ The repeated emphasis on sight again undercuts the idea that Thomas touched Jesus, who had just appeared in a locked room out of thin air. If this scene is apologetic in its thrust, as many have interpreted it,¹⁵⁵ it cannot fail to ensure the stability it desires.¹⁵⁶ Despite Thomas' dominical declaration of his belief, his questions of truth remain open.

These marks of crucifixion are again overt traces of imperial power over life and death left upon Jesus' body. The holes in Jesus' form provide another tension to the

John, ed. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 222* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 153–76.

¹⁵⁴ Scholars debate whether the story of Thomas in the Gospel of John is part of anti-Thomas polemic. For varying positions on this, see, e.g., Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, esp. 69–156, 176–179; April D. DeConick, "Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen' (Jn 20:29): Johannine Dramatization of an Early Christian Discourse," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration*, ed. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 381–98; Ismo Dunderberg, *The Beloved Disciple in Conflict?: Revisiting the Gospels of John and Thomas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁵⁵ e.g., Paul Foster, who argues, "Avoidance of misinterpretation of the appearance in the context of the fourth gospel is attempted by stressing the physicality of Jesus as he stands in the presence of the disciples bearing the scars of his crucifixion. The emphasis on bodily presence is very likely intended as a corrective to docetic notions that Christ did not suffer in the flesh." Foster, "Polymorphic Christology," 72.

¹⁵⁶ "Revelations of empty tombs, an ungraspable earthy body recognizable through teary eyes and felt in its woundedness: these do not add up to material evidence." Rivera, "Ghostly Encounters: Spirits, Memory, and the Holy Ghost," 129.

story's mappings of past and present, and life and death. Tat-siong Benny Liew argues that they exist as a reminder of colonial violence inflicted upon colonized bodies, and prevent an easy assimilation to the Gospel of John's spiritualizing leanings.¹⁵⁷ As Rivera explains, "The wounds in Jesus' body are traced on the pages of a text that...is in turn responding to life in the death zone of colonialism by inscribing and describing it."¹⁵⁸

The complex dynamics of presence and absence in this scene operate under the globalizing expansion of this "death zone" under Rome's Empire. The questions of life, death, and truth that it leaves open likewise remain as traces of this imperial presence.¹⁵⁹

Jesus' final appearance to his disciples has likewise been interpreted as having an apologetic thrust. However, the passage begins by stating "After these things, Jesus manifested [ἐφάνηρωσεν] himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias." The text again prefaces this event by stating that "He appeared [ἐφάνηρωσεν] in this way" (21:1). This scene where the disciples supposedly interact with Jesus in the flesh is cloaked in the language of visions. Some interpret this doubling of apparitional language as an issue of sources.¹⁶⁰ Again, however, I see this as part of the spectrality of (the resurrected) Jesus' representation in the Gospel of John. The confusion amplifies as the disciples do not fully comprehend Jesus. While they are out fishing on the sea, they converse with Jesus on the shore, but they "did not realize that it was Jesus" (21:4). This lack of

¹⁵⁷ Tat-siong Benny Liew, "The Word of Bare Life: Workings of Death and Dream in the Fourth Gospel," in *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature*, ed. Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 167–94.

¹⁵⁸ Rivera, "Ghostly Encounters: Spirits, Memory, and the Holy Ghost," 128.

¹⁵⁹ For additional explorations of the traces of empire both subtle and overt in the Gospel of John, see, e.g., Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 2006, 45–74; Carter, *John and Empire*; Thatcher, *Greater than Caesar*.

¹⁶⁰ e.g., Wahldt, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 879–90; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 701.

recognition recalls Mary Magdalene, which makes her absence from this scene all the more conspicuous.¹⁶¹ Rather, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” and Peter recognize Jesus, leading the entire group to meet him at the shore where he invites them to join him for breakfast.

Jesus’ eating of fish and bread in front of the disciples is often read as an apologetic sign in defense of a material and fleshly resurrection. However, none of these actions necessarily would indicate anything out of the norm for a phantom or reanimated corpse in antiquity.¹⁶² The text explains that “this was now the third time that Jesus appeared [ἐφανερώθη] to the disciples having been raised from the dead [ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν]” (21:14). However, as von Wahlde notes, “this is the *fourth* appearance if the appearance to Mary is included.”¹⁶³ Scholars explain this discrepancy as either the text only counting appearances to male disciples,¹⁶⁴ or due to conflicting sources used in this passage.¹⁶⁵ However, the apparitional language highlights the spectrality of Jesus’ appearances. So, disruptions of time and narrative plotting are to be expected. The text establishes Jesus interacting with the disciples after his death and resurrection, but does so in a confusing manner. He resists comprehension for both the characters and the readers as the text forces all involved into a certain state of unknowing.

Mary’s encounter with the risen Jesus evoked his expected ascension to heaven, which brings up a paradox that unravels at the end of John’s Gospel. Jesus forbids Mary

¹⁶¹ As noted by Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 1031.

¹⁶² e.g., Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 50–51.

¹⁶³ Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 884.

¹⁶⁴ Michaels provides an overview of this issue, and finds the focus on male disciples only unconvincing. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 1041–1042.

¹⁶⁵ e.g., Robert Tomson Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 66; Wahlde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 884–890.

from touching him because he has “not yet ascended to the Father.” His future ascension to the heavenly realm from which he came is a recurring theme in the text. When talking with Nicodemus earlier in the story, Jesus says, “no one has ascended [οὐδείς ἀναβέβηκεν] into heaven except one having descended [ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς] from heaven” (John 3:13). “It is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up [ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου],” he continues, “in order than everyone believing in him may have eternal life [ζωὴν αἰώνιον]” (3:14). Just as the text fashions Jesus as the arbiter of life and death, it situates him as the controller of the above and the below. His ability to descend to earth and ascend to heaven is directly linked to his ability to grant eternal life. The text simultaneously exploits and disciplines the ambiguous relationships between these binary conceptual pairs. He has been in heaven before, and he alone will return there (6:62). The spectrality of these statements, echoing the farewell discourses, reverberates in the air when Jesus tells Mary not to touch him because he has not yet ascended.

Jesus’ ascension, repeatedly referenced in the Gospel of John, is a popular image found in several early Christian texts. As seen in the previous chapter, Luke-Acts portrays Jesus’ removal to heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-10) in a manner that resists comprehension and confounds linear time. The longer ending of the Gospel of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) also states that the resurrected Jesus “was taken up to heaven [ἀνελήμφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν] and sat down at the right hand of God” (16:19). References can be found in canonical epistolary texts like Ephesians 4:8-10 and perhaps 1 Timothy 3:16 as well. Several other texts like the *Apocryphon of James* and the *Book of Thomas the Contender* portray Jesus ascending to the heavens in different ways. As seen in the previous

chapters, many other figures ascended the heavens in antiquity as well.¹⁶⁶ However, John's gospel features *no* ascension scene. Jesus repeatedly points toward his future absence via ascension throughout the narrative, yet such an event is absent from the narrative.¹⁶⁷ Some explain that this ascension happened in Jesus' rising up to the cross, or in the silence after appearing to Mary in the garden.¹⁶⁸ Despite saying that he will leave the world and return to heaven, Jesus is still *there* at the end of the story.

This produces a spectral admixture of presence and absence where Jesus is always about to leave but never really gone. John's repeated references to Jesus' actions beyond the gospel narrative further complicates this. At the end of chapter 20, the text reads, "Jesus did many other signs before his disciples which have not been written in this book (20:30). Rather than end there, however, the text goes on to tell the aforementioned tale of Jesus sharing a fish dinner with his disciples by the Sea of Galilee. After this pericope, the final lines of the Gospel read, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written one by one I do not think the world itself would have room for all the books being written" (21:25). Thus, not only does Jesus not ascend to heaven at the end of the story, he appears to be still on earth doing all sorts of things not written in

¹⁶⁶ See also the summaries of other ascension scenes as well as further Christian developments of ascension scenes in Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, esp. 47–61, 153–176; Miller, *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity*, esp. 26–90, 150–200.

¹⁶⁷ For an exploration of the relationship between resurrection and ascension in the Gospel of John, and in particular in relationship with Matthew 28:9-10, see Reimund Bieringer, " 'I Am Ascending to My Father and Your Father, to My God and Your God' (John 20:17): Resurrection and Ascension in the Gospel of John," in *Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 222 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 209–35.

¹⁶⁸ As Attridge puts it, "Was the ascension yet to come or had it taken place after Jesus left Mary in the garden (more likely)." Attridge, "From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel," 17.

John's gospel. Some scholars explain this as a later redactional addition to the text,¹⁶⁹ of which there is no textual evidence. The text uses the absence of these stories to point to the ever-abiding presence of Jesus elsewhere beyond its own pages. In this way, Jesus appears to be more present outside the text than within. He is an embodied series of overlapping paradoxes. He is present yet never really there, present yet about to leave, about to leave but always there, and more absent than present, which itself figures a kind of *omnipresence*.

Yet, the text commits the reader to a certain radical kind of unknowing. "Blessed are those who have not seen and have come to believe," Jesus says (20:29). There is a commitment to there being more of Jesus' teachings, activity, and presence than the reader (or writer) can ever comprehend. Luke-Acts put Jesus' postmortem actions into writing. While John's Gospel does as well, it is the refusal of writing that produces the greatest spectral effect. John signals more by *not* writing than could be done by narrating more of Jesus' actions. This unfinished ending also reflects the gospel's larger uncertainties about time. Is Jesus still there? Will the coming one return again if he never leaves?¹⁷⁰ The text claims with its last lines that this testimony is "true [ἀληθής]" (21:24). However, questions of truth have remained open from for the death (and resurrection) of both Jesus and Lazarus, as they were with Leucippe as well. Like *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the Gospel of John does not return to the world of its prologue. There is a

¹⁶⁹ e.g., Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 575, 588; Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel*, esp. 65–78, 201–04; Wahde, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 836–907.

¹⁷⁰ "The overall thrust of the resurrection stories...seems to reinforce the 'realized' dimension of the Johannine resurrection theme. And yet, all the stories are grounded in the presence of one who came back from the dead, in however mysterious a form" Attridge, "From Discord Rises Meaning: Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel," 19.

spectral density to how Jesus is rendered in space and time, both pre- and post-resurrection, and it makes him unknowable.

Open Endings

Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon* draws the reader's attention to the character of Leucippe. However, neither the reader nor her lover Clitophon can keep track of her. Her repeated (false) deaths situate her at the borders of life and death. As in the other novels, the spectral language of ghosts and apparitions suffuses her characterizations. Her image and presence are felt long after she is gone. When others see her, she appears to die. Indeed, when others see her, they often do not recognize her at all. The novel commits its characters to not knowing if Leucippe is alive or dead. These events occur in an unknowable elsewhere and elsewhen, far from Rome's global gaze. Time is out of joint in this story, as the prologue and ending do not resolve. The narrative commits the reader to not knowing where Leucippe is, for she is missing from the prologue and the ending provides no closure.

Scheintod arises among these other narrative operations. Together they illustrate the spectrality that constitutes the novel. I agree with Perkins that these false deaths reflect existence under Roman rule. However, I argue that *Scheintod* works within the text's conflicting overall negotiations of life and death, absence and presence, and past and present. It is part of the spectrality of the text that points to the ways this novel is haunted. This next navigates much more than elite Greekness under the Roman Empire. It is a "story of absences felt as presences,"¹⁷¹ and vice versa. It navigates life itself, the feelings of absence and loss, and the nature of the other. Indeed, the spectrality of

¹⁷¹ Van Wagenen, "An Epistemology of Haunting," 290.

Leucippe's character gives these negotiations of self and other an incomprehensible answer. Her identity and location are illusive, ending as open questions.

The Gospel of John also draws characters and readers to gaze upon its protagonist, despite Conway's observation that his physical body is missing from the text's pages. The resurrected Jesus in John proves to be a spectral configuration, whose materiality and identity are difficult to know. "Yet, even before those ghostly scenes," says Rivera, "the gospel exhibits symptoms of haunting; temporal disjuncture is one of those symptoms."¹⁷² The prologue to the gospel is a repetitive whirlwind of a story, where Jesus comes into the world by coming back. It sets up the gospel's metaphysical interests, with various "aboves" and "belows." Jesus' statements about eternal life and resurrection happening now, while also happening in the future, create confusions in time. The negotiations of life and death in the resurrection of Lazarus occurred within a fold of linear time. Those temporal uncertainties grow as Jesus claims that he has come but will leave, that he has descended and will ascend, and yet never actually leaves by the end of the story.

In John's Gospel, Jesus really is "the most spectral of specters."¹⁷³ The text puts forth unresolvable tensions of immanent and future eschatology. This spectrality of time coincides with the apparitional language of Jesus' resurrection. Both before and after his death, Jesus confounds the narrative's repeated emphasis on knowing and believing in him. He is misunderstood and, like Leucippe, misrecognized repeatedly. Questions of truth, life, and death fill the stories of Leucippe, Lazarus, and Jesus. Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus proves to be a paradoxical simultaneity of absence and presence.

¹⁷² Rivera, "Ghostly Encounters: Spirits, Memory, and the Holy Ghost," 126.

¹⁷³ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 180.

He is above and below, at the center and at the periphery, both here and not here. There is more of him outside the text than within, which makes knowing him impossible. These spectral dynamics of life, presence, and time hint at the ways the text is haunted.

These texts negotiate questions of life and death in similar ways. John's gospel situates life over against death, alongside truth over against falsehood. However, as with the other binary oppositions in the text, the logics involved in their orderings become confused. Questions of truth and death were unresolved in the story of Lazarus. Jesus' death, and subsequent resurrection, also raised questions of veracity. *Leucippe and Clitophon* displayed the affective commonality between true and false deaths. The weeping responses to the deaths of Lazarus and Jesus, despite their apparent unreality, reinforce the dynamics observed in Achilles Tatius' novel. Neither of these texts provide a single comprehensible answer to the truth or falsity of death. Rather, they both articulate the spectral tensions of truth and fiction in death (and resurrection). In the end, Pilate's question to Jesus remains unanswered.

These texts portray Jesus and Leucippe in their own renditions of complex personhood. John's Gospel and Achilles Tatius's novel provide the feeling that "those called 'Other' are never never that."¹⁷⁴ Leucippe and Jesus are spectral presences for those readers and other characters who attempt to see them. They themselves become "that special instance of the merging of the visible and the invisible, the dead and the living, the past and the present."¹⁷⁵ The texts inspire efforts to comprehend them, but one can only do so incomprehensibly.¹⁷⁶ Their spectrality hints at how they bear the

¹⁷⁴ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 4.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁷⁶ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 10.

(in)visible marks of empire's globalizing imperial presence. The violence of the Rome's empire colludes and collides with the larger metaphysical conditions that make these kinds of representations possible. No matter how these texts relate to one another, I see them in a non-oppositional relationship. Regardless of their social investments in social status,¹⁷⁷ they are both haunted by the shifting metaphysical landscape of the Judeo-Greco-Roman world of the first centuries CE. It is within this thick air that these texts produce unresolved negotiations of self and other outside of time, and between life and death. They own the epistemological and ontological indeterminacy that occurs in empire's wake.¹⁷⁸ In this globalized imperial context, questions of identity, truth, presence, and life become increasingly important. Both the Gospel of John and *Leucippe and Clitophon*, in their own ways, provide a haunting alternative where truth and identity prove unknowable.

¹⁷⁷ Perkins's arguments concerning real vs. false deaths maps onto novelistic vs. elite, or Christian vs. Greek elite. But, Perkins does not address the Gospel of John in particular. Mary mistaking Jesus for a gardener in his postmortem state connects with the same ideology Perkins saw in Clitophon's mistaking Leucippe for a slave. Perhaps then, these texts reflect similar social locations. It is impossible to say for certain, though both The Gospel of John and *Leucippe and Clitophon* are engaged in complex negotiations (or negations) of cultural identity amid numerous other spectral dynamics.

¹⁷⁸ Here I try to hold in tension the differences between Gordon and Derrida's approaches to haunting. Gordon pushes her understanding of haunting more toward a kind of ontology, where she sees Derrida leaning more toward epistemology. With the idioms of haunting and spectrality I thus try to see the ambiguous limits of both being and knowing in these texts. Gordon, "Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity," esp. 5–7; Buell, "Hauntology Meets Posthumanism: Some Payoffs for Biblical Studies," esp. 35–38.

CHAPTER FIVE

AFTERLIVES:

CONCLUSIONS RISEN BUT NOT YET ENDED

There I remain: trapped between my past and your perpetually recurring present. Readers, breathers, onlookers, breathe on us and we tremble into life, we begin to move. Turn the page and we fall still. The choice is always yours; and if you linger over us, we know you do so for your reasons, never ours. Now that my wearisome task is once more at an end, I can only hope that I and my ghostly colleagues have served you well.

- Dan Jacobson, *The Rape of Tamar*

Ray, has it ever occurred to you that maybe the reason we've been so busy lately is because the dead *have* been rising from the grave?

- Winston Zeddermore, *Ghostbusters*

The selective individual conjurations performed in this project together paint a larger tableau. The resurrection stories of in Mark, Luke-Acts, and John mix together with many other spectral moments in their texts. Turn their pages quickly enough and a specter of Jesus emerges with a presence both overwhelming and elusive. Focus intently on his body, resurrected or otherwise, and it slips between living and dead throughout the narratives. Past, present, and future mingle, mangling one another in numerous ways. These tales are themselves haunted by other figures in scholarship and history: the Roman Emperors, Jewish Martyrs, novelistic heroes, and more. They each participate in the broader unstable circumstances of truth, presence, identity, life, and time in this era. The idiom of spectrality makes these complex and contradictory details arise a bit more clearly. Moreover, haunting provides a manner of reading these materials together in ways that do not reproduce the categorical (and theological) mystifications of so much tradition and scholarship.

Together the spectrality of these texts and figures hint at larger haunting presences and circumstances. The rupturing event that was Rome's conquering of the Mediterranean produced innumerable affects. Among them was that the relationships between life and death, presence and absence, and past, present, and future felt increasingly undecidable. The status of the human in the midst of these kinds of changes was, and remains, an open question. The spectral representations of Jesus, the Emperor, Martyrs, and romantic heroes show how they were haunted by these unacknowledged but always felt culture-wide dynamics. Time and space were simultaneously stretched and contracted in the unification of the Mediterranean, while boundaries between the living and the dead became porous. The lines between absence and presence were rendered illusory through countless textual, cultic, and material representations throughout the Roman Empire. Truth and identity became pressing questions, and rendering them unknowable could be its own kind of radical alternative.

By situating the stories of Jesus' resurrection and other spectral narratives from the ancient world in the metaphysical globalization of Rome's empire, I am not suggesting that this is their *origin*. Rather, it helps trace the outlines of the discourses in which they participate. I aim to see the ways that the affective presence of a globalizing imperial power left (in)visible marks upon representations from this period. The spectrality of the gospels, 2 Maccabees, novels like *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and various representations of the Roman Emperors together manifest some of the many ancient attempts at coming to grips with these kinds of spectral questions. Thus, these are not isolated incidents, but representations of discursive shifts occurring elsewhere and

elsewhen. I have attempted to breathe in the thick air of these other worlds, and feel the contours of the groundless ground upon which they stand.

Our present globalizing moment is likewise marked by renewed questions of the human and its status between numerous deconstructable binary oppositions. This project has proceeded under the suggestion that our modern posthumanist explorations are connected to the premodern,¹ Like others before me, I presume that there are ephemeral connections between the affective experiences of modern globalization and the globalizing moments of premodern eras. The present and future are imbricated with the past in ways not yet fully comprehended. In this conclusion, I offer several more ways to think about these questions of life, presence, and time in the ancient world, and today.

Echoes Forward and Backward

The readings in the previous chapters have been provisional and idiosyncratic, drawing out spectral hints of the haunted landscape of the ancient world. I do not, however, think that the instances of spectrality envisioned in this project are isolated. On the way to my concluding remarks, I want provide additional glimpses of where I see spectrality operating with and through resurrection. These texts are supplemental conjurings to the close readings in the preceding chapters, more provisional gestures. Yet, I hope that these additional Christian explorations of life and death both illustrate the larger arguments of this project, as well as point toward where more work can be done.

Acts of Paul

The martyrdom account within the apocryphal *Acts of Paul* tells its own tale of life and death. A young man named Patroclus, who was a “cup-bearer of Caesar,”

¹ e.g., Seaman, “Becoming More (than) Human,” 250; Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body*, esp. 341.

climbed into a high window in order to hear Paul speak. Unfortunately for Patroclus, Satan caused him to fall and die (ἀπέθανεν). Paul senses that this has occurred and orders his companions to go find a boy who has “fallen, already about to die” (πεπτωκότα [...] ἤδη μέλλοντα ἐκπνέειν). The dying Jesus in the Gospel of Luke hovers just beyond the page here, as he “died” (ἐξέπνευσεν) with the same exhaling and dispiriting vocabulary (Luke 23:46). His haunting presence certainly foretells the events to come, as ghosts are wont to do. Paul’s companions bring the body before the crowd, which responds with fear at the sight of the dead/dying Patroclus. Paul then invites everyone to “mourn to our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that the boy might live” (κλαύσωμεν πρὸς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ἵνα ζήσῃ ὁ παῖς), naming the specter whose traces were already felt in the narrative. Everyone must mourn to their living-dead Lord in order that this dead boy might in fact live. Upon the crowd’s lamentations, “the boy took breath” (ἀνέλαβεν τὸ πνεῦμα ὁ παῖς). Rather, the boy took in “spirit.” After losing his invisible life-agency due to his fall, he breaths it back in at the beseeching of someone who did the same (*Acts of Paul, Martyrdom of Paul* 1).²

Transgressions of life and death continue throughout this text. Word of Patroclus’s death reaches Emperor Nero, who becomes quite sad. However, when Caesar’s servants tell him that “Patroclus lives” (Πάτροκλος ζῆ), Nero becomes frightened (εὐλαβεῖτο) and would not move. Frequently haunted by ghosts of all sorts, Nero has good reason to fear the dead. Upon seeing Patroclus he cries out, “Patroclus, are you alive?” Patroclus calms Caesar’s fears by assuring him that he is indeed alive, again

² For the English translation I rely on and adapt from that found in J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); for the Greek text I rely on the Thesaurus Lingua Graeca which uses R. A. Lipsius, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Mendelssohn, 1891).

evoking the specter of the resurrected Jesus who calmed fears. He explains that Paul “raised me when I was dead” (ἤγειρέν με τεθνηκότα), and pledges loyalty to his new “king of the ages” (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων) Jesus Christ. The enraged Nero throws Patroclus and others into prison, solidifying his contempt for Paul and the other Christians (*Martyrdom of Paul* 2). This contempt culminates in the removal of Paul’s head (*Martyrdom of Paul* 5). After fearing what the risen Patroclus might be, Nero goes on a rampage that results in the death of the man who raised him.

A simple beheading cannot keep this Paul down. After the execution, a group of philosophers and centurions gather with Nero. The text says that “Paul came about the ninth hour” and then “stood before them all” (ἔστη ἔμπροσθεν πάντων). The text specifies the passing of time as the undead Paul nonchalantly waltzes back onto the scene. Much as the risen Jesus miraculously and simply stood before his disciples (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26), Paul now appears before Caesar and others. “I am not dead” (οὐκ ἀπέθανον), says Paul, “but I live in my God” (ἀλλὰ ζῶ ἐν τῷ θεῷ μου). The text affirms Paul as living, no longer dead. After condemning Nero for his bloodshed, Paul “departed” (ἀπῆλθεν) from there (*Martyrdom of Paul* 6).

The story renders the re-headed Paul living and present before Caesar and others, but leaves numerous open questions. There is no indication that this appearance of Paul is the same body beheaded before. The resurrection of Patroclus was one of clear bodily continuity. The suddenness of Paul’s appearance after his death calls this into question, especially since he is given a grave (*Martyrdom of Paul* 7). Indeed, this freely moving phantom Paul comes and goes in ways that question the materiality of his post-mortem existence. There is a simultaneous stretching and compressing of time and space that

occurs alongside the supposed transgressions of life and death. Likely written decades after the latest of the canonical Gospels surveyed above, this story is shot through with the same spectrality of the early Roman Imperial era.

1 Corinthians

The specter of Paul is in fact a frequent reading partner for scholars studying the resurrection stories of the Gospels. His writings contain the oldest recorded references to Jesus, and thus play a pivotal role in scholarly mappings of resurrection. These writings too are haunted by the pervasive questions of presence and life. “Though I am absent in body [ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι],” says Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, “I am present in spirit [παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι]” (1 Corinthians 5:3). Here Paul plays on the separability of the visible body (σῶμα) and invisible spirit (πνεῦμα) to render himself present in the affairs of the Corinthian community. Paul tries to make himself spectral in an effort to bolster his commands. Yet aside from his own letters, we know little about how haunted these “in Christ” Corinthians were by Paul. There are plenty of reasonable alternatives to the issues at hand, and Paul’s astral projections may not have been as solid as he asserts. Even so, this play of bodily absence and presence in the letter’s rhetoric displays the sort of mundane manifestations of the spectral logics in view in this project.

This specter of Paul appears in a letter that also deals extensively with resurrection. 1 Corinthians contains a quick summary of the Jesus story: he died, he was buried, and he “was raised” (ἐγήγερται); all of this was according to the scriptures (1 Cor 15:3-4). This roots the story of Jesus’ transgression of death in a nebulous past, mixing the ancient history of the scriptures with the more recent history of Jesus. The text then contains the earliest known written version of Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus “appeared”

(ὤφθη) to Cephas, and then to the twelve (1 Cor 15:5). Then he “appeared” (ὤφθη) to a group of more than five hundred people, most of whom are alive though “some have died [ἐκοιμήθησαν]” (15:6). Paul recounts these resurrection appearances of Jesus amid a tacit acknowledgement of harsh boundaries between life and death. While Jesus was raised from the dead, some of those who saw him have in fact died. He goes on to say that Jesus “appeared” (ὤφθη) to James and then all of the apostles (15:7). Last of all, he “appeared” (ὤφθη) to Paul himself (15:8). This narration of Jesus’ death and resurrection is rife with ambiguities despite its clear intentions otherwise.

Despite some protestations to the contrary,³ a number of scholars have pointed out that Paul’s description of Jesus’ resurrection sounds like that of a typical ancient post-mortem appearance.⁴ Indeed, the repeated use of “appeared” (ὤφθη) to describe the post-resurrection encounters with Jesus resonates strongly with stories of disembodied specters explored in the preceding chapters. This narration does not distinguish between the appearance of Jesus to Cephas or James on the one hand, and Paul himself on the other. Placing himself in that sort of resurrectional and apparitional continuity is certainly a claim to status and authority. However, the language involved adds levels of spectrality to all of these resurrection appearances.

The language of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 relies on numerous hierarchical binaries, with life and death looming large. Death is defeated (15:26, 54-56), and (Jesus’) resurrection is victorious over it (15:55). The binary of body and spirit are likewise deployed. Resurrection changes the “material body” (σῶμα ψυχικόν) into a “spiritual

³ e.g., Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, esp. 312–360, 372–398.

⁴ e.g., Smith, *Revisiting the Empty Tomb: The Early History of Easter*, esp. 27–45.

body [σῶμα πνευματικόν]” (15:44-46). The material is thus mapped to death and defeat, while the spiritual is mapped to victory and life. But, death is necessary for the change to occur. For many, the change from perishable to imperishable only occurs via death. This change from physical to spiritual requires the death of the former for the change to the new. As Paul says, “That which you sow does not come to life [οὐ ζῶποιεῖται] unless it dies [ἐὰν μὴ ἀποθάνῃ]” (1 Cor 15:36). The very logic of Paul’s metamorphosing resurrection necessitates death. Death thus becomes a necessary component of something supposedly victorious over it. Paul’s notion of resurrection thus cannot escape spectral imbrications of life and death.

Paul’s arguments are haunted though, and we must attend to these other spectral voices.⁵ He is making an argument for his understanding of resurrection, hinting at the ways in which other voices have already suggested alternatives. Many in Corinth may have had alternative mappings of body and spirit.⁶ Indeed, they may have had alternative mappings of resurrection. 1 Corinthians pushes resurrection into the future, as something to be expected later. It is possible, likely even, that others argued for different negotiations of time in this traversal of life and death.⁷ These resurrectional tensions of present and future have played out in numerous ways throughout this project, and additional alternatives no doubt leave their haunting traces in Paul’s letters.

⁵ As referenced before, see Johnson-Debaufre and Nasrallah, “Beyond the Heroic Paul: Toward a Feminist and Decolonizing Approach to the Letters of Paul.”

⁶ See, e.g., Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

⁷ Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul’s Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Antoinette Clark Wire, “Rising Voices: The Resurrection Witness of New Testament Non-Writers,” in *On the Cutting Edge: The Study of Women in the Biblical World: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, ed. Jane Schaberg, Alice Bach, and Esther Fuchs (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), 221–29.

The Gospel of Matthew

The resurrection stories of the Gospel of Matthew are less elusive than that found in Mark, and not as anxious as those in Luke or John. Even so, Matthew's gospel contains its own unique ambiguous engagements with the shifting metaphysics of life and death. The moment of Jesus' death on the cross echoes the scenes from the other gospels. Immediately after Jesus "gave up his spirit" (ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα) the text says the curtain of the temple torn in two and the earth shook (Matthew 27:50-51). Not only this, but at the same time "the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had died were raised [τὰ μνημεῖα ἀνεώχθησαν καὶ πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν]" (Matt. 27:52). The very moment of Jesus' death triggers a number of events in Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew says that a resurrection of untold numbers of people occurred alongside Jesus' death. As often happens with these transgressions of life and death, time folds upon itself around this event. The text goes on to say that these risen saints "went out from the tombs" (ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων) and "entered into the holy city and appeared to many" (εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς). However it now specifies that this vacating of tombs did not occur until "after his [Jesus'] resurrection" (μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ), contradicting the previous sentence's implication that this occurred concurrent with Jesus' death (Matt 27:53, cf. 27:52). Indeed, the narrative of Jesus' removal from the cross continues in the following verses (27:54-56). In Matthew's Gospel the death of Jesus convenes a mass transgression of life and death via an out of joint resurrection that happens both now and in the future. These nameless risen saints are made present in ways disruptive of time.

The Gospel of Matthew has its own apologetic complexities around the presence of the resurrected Jesus. The women visiting the Jesus' tomb "grasped his feet" (ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας) when he appeared to them (28:9). This gesture toward the materiality of Jesus' resurrected body pales in comparison to the anxious moments of the Gospels of Luke and John. Rather, there are two references to rumors that the disciples actually stole Jesus' body from the tomb (Matt. 27:62-66; 28:11-15). While the Gospel of Mark implies that the resurrection story may be invalid, the Gospel of Matthew attempts to outright exorcise this haunting possibility. Such bolstering efforts, however, cannot eliminate strange details about the tale.

An angel appears when the women approach the tomb, which frightens the guards so much that they "became like dead people [ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροί]" (Matt 28:4). The angel then reports that Jesus "was raised from the dead" (ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν) while these guards remain in their dead-like state (28:5-6). The angel tells them to report Jesus' resurrection to the disciples, and that he is going ahead of them to Galilee where "you will see him [αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε]" (28:7). It is unclear whether this "you" includes the women or not. Their journey to the disciples and Galilee is interrupted with some form of an answer though, as "suddenly Jesus encountered them [ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπήντησεν αὐταῖς]" (28:9). This oddly material encounter affirms that the *disciples* will meet the risen Jesus in Galilee. Indeed, the apostolic encounter with the risen Jesus specifies that they "saw him" (ἰδόντες αὐτὸν), though "some doubted" still after this vision. This mountain meeting evokes the transfiguration with all of its own complexities and contradictions (Matt. 17:1-8). Jesus closes the text by saying that "I am with you every day [ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας], until the completion of the age" (28:20). In a moment

evocative of a visionary experience, Jesus renders himself omnipresent in the lives of his male followers. How and in what form Jesus remains present is an open question, as is his precise existence between (or beyond) life and death. Time itself cannot put limits upon the resurrected Jesus in Matthew's Gospel.

Treatise on the Resurrection

“What, then, is the resurrection?” (ΕΥ ΘΕ ΤΑΝΑΚΤΑΚΙΣ) the anonymous author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* asks (*Treatise on the Resurrection* 132).⁸ Given the complex and contradictory dynamics in even the simplest resurrection tales, this second century CE text expresses reasonable confusion. “Do not think the resurrection is an illusion” (ΝΗΜΕΘ ΜΠΩΡ ΑΜΕΥΕ ΑΤΑΝΑΚΤΑΚΙΣ ΧΕ ΟΥΦΑΝΤΑΚΙΑ), the author continues, “it is no illusion, but truth! [ΤΕ ΟΥΦΑΝΤΑΚΙΑ ΕΝ ΤΕ ΑΛΛΑ ΟΥΜΗΕ]” (*Treatise on the Resurrection* 137-141). The word in Coptic for “illusion” here is φΑΝΤΑΚΙΑ, the same as the Greek φαντασία. Literally meaning “a making visible,” it is closely related to φάσμα and φάντασμα which are common words for appearances of the dead. “We have believed,” continues the text, “that he rose from among the dead [ΧΕ ΑΓΤΩΟΥΝ ΑΒΑΛ ΞΝ ΝΕΤΜΑΟΥΤ]” (*Treatise on the Resurrection* 80-81). These are strong words affirming the resurrection. But what is it? Jesus “vanquished death” (32), he “swallowed it up” (46) “he became the destruction of death” (82). The valorization of life over death seems clear, except for what the text has to say about life itself.

⁸ Also known as the *Epistle to Rheginos*. For the English translation I primarily rely on that provided by Peel, while I rely on Layton's presentation of the Coptic text with some reference to his translation. The pagination is based on the Coptic text. See Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Treatise on Resurrection from Nag Hammadi*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 12 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979); Malcom Lee Peel, “The Treatise on the Resurrection (I,4),” in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 52–57.

Resurrection in this text unveils the fiction of life and death itself. Rather than resurrection being an “illusion,” the text argues that the “cosmos is an illusion [οὐφάντασια | πᾶς κόσμος]” (150). Resurrection defeats death, but it in a new way. Rather than assert life over death, or ultimately even spiritual over material, the *Treatise on the Resurrection* goes a different direction. Resurrection in this text unveils the fiction of mappings of life and death, because it unveils the fiction of the world itself. It is thus a displacement of the life-death question. Scholarly mappings of this texts as “gnostic” or even “Valentinian” risk rendering this text’s arguments as too parochial.⁹ Instead, it engages the open questions of life and death in its own ways. Much as Rome’s omnipresence was a kind of spatial and temporal disruption in the ancient Mediterranean, this text configures its own kind of cosmological disruptions by means of resurrection.

Resurrection’s Endings

I argue that these and other ancient Christian texts, especially those addressing resurrection, engaging these larger discourses concerning life and death, presence and absence, and past, present, and future. The dynamics visible in these examples cut across time and standard scholarly typologies. The death and resurrection of Jesus in Matthew triggers mass transgressions of life and death while eradicating linear time. Texts typically mapped as “orthodox” or “heretical” are always already haunted by these open questions, and they grapple with them in myriad ways. 1 Corinthians and the *Treatise on*

⁹ e.g., Layton, *The Gnostic Treatise on Resurrection from Nag Hammadi*; Ryann Elizabeth Craig, “Anastasis in the Treatise on the Resurrection: How Jesus’ Example Informs Valentinian Resurrection Doctrine and Christology,” in *Resurrection of the Dead: Biblical Traditions in Dialogue*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 249 (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2012), 117–134.

the Resurrection similarly proclaim resurrection as a victory over death, albeit in ways that call into question the hierarchies they seem to hold.

Haunting calls into question the ancient and modern polemical categories that would separate texts like these. An amorphous text like the *Martyrdom of Paul* resonates with the materials seen throughout this project, signaling the ways in which resurrection participates with many other traversals of life and death. Indeed, the manner in which all of these texts are haunted should force us to look beyond “Christian” materials to the broader ancient Mediterranean world. The examples could go on, with many countless ghosts speaking to the ways they themselves were haunted by the unsettling globalizing presence seen throughout this project. Listening to these ghosts will shift our historiographical endeavors and alter the shapes of our histories. Recognizing that these sorts of questions are indeed open also becomes a recognition of the responsibility inherent in how one then answers them.

Metaphysics Matters

Tertullian, in his treatise *On the Apparel of Women*, traces female sins back to the biblical Eve of the Book of Genesis. Indeed, for Tertullian Eve bears the responsibility for the first human sin. She is thus the initial cause of all human punishment. It is on account of this sin that every woman adorns herself in gaudy clothes and fancy jewelry. These accoutrements are “the baggage of woman in her condemned and dead state, arranged as if for the pomp of her funeral” (Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women* 1). In this way, Tertullian maps life and death so as to align “death” with “woman.” This hierarchical organization of the metaphysics of “life” and “death” is not a harmless philosophical exercise.

There are real and material effects of Tertullian's mapping. Women become the proverbial "bottom" of this binary relationship, and this ordering has echoes throughout history. How one navigates "life" and "death" are thus powerful tools with long-lasting effects. Caroline Walker Bynum's argument about resurrection's formative impacts upon western constructions of the human subject is instructive here. Tertullian's writings have influenced writings on resurrection for over a millennium. He was deeply invested in fleshing out resurrection, and controlling the boundaries between life and death. This facilitates the kind of metaphysical maneuvers seen here with regard to gender, and signals the power of such orderings.

Sexism and other violent ideologies are shot through with these kinds of foundations. Perhaps no contemporary issue displays the importance of the modern mapping of metaphysical categories than the debate around abortion rights in the United States. In a culture that unquestionably situates "life" over against "death," to claim that one's ideological position is "pro-life" is an immensely powerful maneuver. It is a metaphysical framing of the discussion that necessarily casts its opposition as "pro-death." Such PR campaigns tap into hidden foundations, fortifying their position in a manner almost inexplicable to its opposition.¹⁰ Among the many damaging results is the endless parsing out of what counts as life and not-life, as the mystifying contraceptive

¹⁰ For some of the debates about the role of metaphysics in abortion debates, see, e.g., Earl Conee, "Metaphysics and the Morality of Abortion," *Mind* 108, no. 432 (1999): 619–46; Francis J. Beckwith, *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Nathan Nobis, "Abortion, Metaphysics and Morality: A Review of Francis Beckwith's *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice*," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 36 (2011): 261–73.

debates displayed after the passing of the Affordable Care Act.¹¹ This colludes with end of life debates (the so-called “death panels”), as questions of what counts as living or dead and who gets to answer these questions enter courtrooms and media.¹² These mappings reflect the “familial, nucleated, heteronormative temporalities” that Carla Freccero hopes spectrality can unseat.¹³ Invisible metaphysical foundations haunt all of these debates and their material effects. Indeed, the fierceness of these discourses no doubt point to the ways in which the questions of life and death are felt as increasingly open.

Western Christianity’s resurrection theologies play their own roles in all of this. The seemingly unquestioned valorization of life over death implied by Jesus’ resurrection has countless ripple effects. Jesus becomes a conquering hero, one who doesn’t just transcend death but conquers it. He tramples upon his enemies. The image of *Christus Victor* is a fantasy with violent implications despite its liberative leanings. “The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26). The living Christ destroys all comers, with death being the final foe. “Death has been swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54). There is no possibility for a healthy relationship with death or the dead, for death is an enemy to be defeated. Jesus Christ “abolished death and brought life and immortality” according to 2 Timothy 1:10. Theologies past and present, especially

¹¹ For an impressive treatment of the role of metaphysics in contraception debates, see Debrah Raschke, *Modernism, Metaphysics, and Sexuality* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2006), esp. 169–172.

¹² Jason Millman, “It’s Time to Bury the ‘death Panel’ Myth for Good. Is This the Way to Do It?,” *The Washington Post*, September 17, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/09/17/its-time-to-bury-the-death-panel-myth-for-good-is-this-the-way-to-do-it/>.

¹³ Freccero, “Queer Spectrality,” 196.

those of an orthodox bent, echo these victorious claims.¹⁴ Death becomes the bottom of the hierarchy, while life is on top. This colludes with ordering presence over absence (or visible over invisible). Such hardenings of metaphysical foundations have untold effects on social orders

However, the conjurations performed here indicate that (Jesus') resurrection is much messier business. The stories envisioned in this project are complex, filled with ambiguities concerning presence and life. Spectrality fills these narratives, which signals deep fundamental open questions. Indeed, our present moment is continually haunted by late ancient and medieval theologies of resurrection, but such theologies are themselves haunted by alternative visions. The posthuman developments in late capitalism's global domination hint at the increasing hauntological affects of these alternative specters of Jesus. There is a spectrally liberative possibility here, if we truly attend to these ghosts. If we listened to these ghosts, if we speak to these ghosts, perhaps we can envision the alternative possibilities they (dis)embody. The hidden hierarchical foundations of our social orders can be seen for their artifice, and new alternative futures might emerge.

¹⁴ For some discussions of what is known as the "*Christus Victor*" model of atonement, based on early Christian texts like these, see, e.g., Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003); James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds., *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006).

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